media release

NEW SOUTH WALES MINERALS COUNCIL LTD

Ref: 55/12
21 June 2012

RIO+20 'POVERTY PROTESTORS' BETRAY HARDWORKING NSW FAMILIES

Today's planned Sydney protest of the Rio+20 conference by political activists ideologically opposed to coal mining deliberately ignores the thousands of families across NSW who rely on mining for their livelihood.

The deep irony of today's cynical protest calling for an end to coal mining is that the objectives of Rio+20 are to find ways of reducing poverty, advance social equity and ensure environmental protection.

Australians should be proud of the positive role our exported coal plays in providing cheap and reliable energy to some of the poorest parts of the world. Nothing does more to alleviate poverty and increased living standards than the provision of affordable and reliable energy.

It's also hard to see how threatening the jobs of hardworking Australians furthers the cause of reducing poverty and improving social equality.

According to the ABS May Quarter Data 2012, there were over 90,000 people directly employed in mining and minerals processing in NSW; there are 17,087 people employed in the coal producing regions of the Hunter alone.

Figures from a survey of major NSW mining companies shows that there are at least 3,800 Sydney businesses supplying the industry, employing a further 7000 workers. These include manufacturing and mechanics to professional services like environmental science and education and training.

In addition to this, it's estimated that around 318,000 indirect jobs are supported by the mining industry in NSW.

Further to this, NSW mining royalties from coal alone totalled $1.4 billion in 2011-2012. This significant revenue helps deliver nurses, teachers, police officers, hospitals and infrastructure improvements across the State; direct and practical measures to fight poverty and promote social equality.

NSW mining is working hard to provide jobs and ensure we have a responsible approach to environmental management.

The organisations protesting today, such as Aidwatch and Quit Coal espouse the need to reduce poverty in Australia and across the globe. Yet advocating the end to responsible coal mining in NSW represents a direct threat to the jobs and livelihoods of thousands of workers and their families across NSW.

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