

**23 January 2007
MEDIA RELEASE**

STATE'S YOUTH WITH A MIND FOR MINING

Young people from across NSW are benefiting from a fantastic introduction to the mining industry and university life during a special program in the Illawarra this week.

The summer school program is run by the NSW Minerals Council in association with the University of Wollongong and BHP Billiton and provides ten secondary students from the Illawarra and Central West with access to mining experts, mining industry personnel and a mine visit.

NSW Minerals Council CEO Dr Nikki Williams said the three-day program was a great opportunity for young people to get a real understanding of the mining industry.

"The NSW Minerals Council runs several programs to provide young people with practical knowledge about mining to assist with their career planning choices.

"We recognise that the future of the Australian mining industry depends on the youth of today choosing a career in this very important sector of the economy.

"These summer schools are designed to provide opportunities for secondary school students to experience university study and to learn about pathways into minerals-related courses such as mining engineering and to meet and interact with mining personnel and mentors from the industry.

"Mining is an integral component of life in NSW – and without it, most of the modern technology we all rely on would cease to exist. That is why it is so important to inspire the youth of today to make choices that sustain this industry," Dr Williams said.

The ten students participating in the program are from Illawarra Grammar School, West Wyalong High School, James Sheahan Catholic High School in Orange and Bathurst's St Stanislaus.

The program also involves the students participating in mining engineering and geoscience activities, visiting the Appin Colliery as well as presentations and mentoring from BHP Billiton personnel.

ENDS

Vision/Picture opportunity: 0930 to 1130 Wednesday - students completing mining engineering and geoscience activities with University of Wollongong personnel. (Please phone number below for venue details.)

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