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## **Job Market overlooked as Major Stakeholder**

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With 75 projects currently underway across the Australian Resource Sector, together with 267 less advanced projects listed by the Australian Bureau of Agriculture and Resource Economics (ABARE), the mining industry alone is looking to generate more than 60,000 new jobs in the next five years. Simply put, confidence in mining is high.

Not a day goes by without the general media in Australia dedicating significant space to the looming skills shortage, with companies consistently issuing press releases about their latest project, resource find or financial performance. The average Australian – either working in the industry or not – is left in no doubt that mining is the sector to be in.

If the availability of skills is one of the major issues impacting project viability and steady-state operations, why then don't companies recognise the job market as a critical stakeholder in their business? Why don't companies communicate with the job market with the same consistency and focus they do their shareholders or current employees?

General job postings and brand advertisements aside, mining sector companies are essentially mute in this space. Instead, the media are left to report high level numbers created through individual projects or more generally across the industry, leaving the job market void of details on where those jobs will be, when they will come online, who with and how best to prepare.

Take the full page adverts recently appearing for Chevron proclaiming their support for Australian suppliers. Whilst the general sentiment is understood, would it not be more beneficial to list who those suppliers are, particularly as the bulk of the 10,000 jobs often reported for the project are with the suppliers and not with Chevron?

According to a recent US survey, the job market has two requirements of a potential employer: the truth and access. These results are further supported by a major industry survey conducted in late 2010 by The Resource Channel where respondents – and potential job applicants – listed authentic and accessible employment information as the overriding requirement in determining their next career move. More than 2,500 respondents – a combination of those already working in the industry and those seeking an opportunity to join - voiced their frustration around the lack of employment-related information coming direct from companies. The bottom line is that job seekers are crying out for engagement. They are fed up with populating recruitment databases for no gain.

Consider the effectiveness then of communicating project or operational skill requirements ahead of time; the numbers and skill types, when and what experience will be required, terms and conditions, project updates and who is awarded which particular work packages.

With most in the industry offering similar terms and conditions, roster arrangements and remuneration, a company's major differentiator will be how well they consistently amplify the positive aspects of their culture across a range of online and print media; in other words, provide value content and accessibility in a more personalised approach to the job market.

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Consider too, that at any point in time only 23% of the potential employment pool is actively looking for a job move. How do you compel the other 77% to take a closer look at your organisation, or at least have a better idea of who you are and what you offer? With consistent and transparent employment-related content which is easily accessible.

Recruitment and Communication functions need to work together on leveraging this completely overlooked, yet significant opportunity for competitive advantage. Companies need to open the door and remove the barriers; essentially, enable the job market to see inside their organisation in the same way current employees do. More importantly, companies should take the opportunity to educate the job market on their future needs by providing tips and advice on what a potential job seeker can do now to best prepare themselves for future opportunities. Companies need to remove the assumption that the job market knows about them, what they offer and what they are seeking, and start telling a story that is much broader than a simple job advert.

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**About The Resource Channel** The Resource Channel provides the Australian Resource Sector job market with a credible and accurate source of information on current and upcoming job opportunities in oil and gas, mining and mining construction. Employers and industry experts post employment, project and contract news, tips and information for the industry. The Resource Channel is a registered subsidiary of Industry Blogger Pty Ltd, ACN: 133 397 136.

The Resource Channel received the national award for the 'Best Blog Website' at the Australian Web Awards in Perth on 6 November 2010 and was awarded 'Best Industry Job Website' 2011 by Reuters International. The website attracts more than 300,000 visitors per annum.

**About Jody Elliott** With fifteen years in senior and management roles across human resources, career and organisational development, and recruitment, Jody has held positions at WMC Resources, CSR, Australian Rail Track Corporation, Santos and more recently, three years with BHP Billiton, managing the Nickel West recruitment function. She is a regular speaker at conferences and within media on sourcing and skills availability. Jody Elliott is Director and Founder of The Resource Channel.