



07 AUG, 2020

Mining lifts economy

Busselton Dunsborough Times, Busselton

Page 1 of 1

Mining lifts economy

JACKSON LAVELL-LEE

Despite a reported lack of jobs in the South West due to a downturn in tourism and hospitality, the mining sector continues to support the local economy during the COVID-19 recession.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics this week released data showing that despite severe global economic shocks from COVID-19, Australia posted a record financial year trade surplus of \$77.4 billion in 2019-20 with Australian goods exports growing by 2.5 per cent.

According to the Chamber of Minerals and Energy the mining sector contributed \$489.7 million to the South West economy in wages last financial year.

The sector also contributed \$356.5m in business purchases, community contributions and local government payments.

Chamber of Minerals and Energy director of policy and advocacy Rob Carruthers said the industry wanted its workers to be based in WA so they could contribute to local economies.

He said major companies such as Alcoa, South 32, Talison, Iluka, Abemarle and Rio Tinto created 4060 direct jobs in the South West and a further 2000 indirect jobs.

“Busselton is an important source community for FIFO workers, an element which is overlooked by local governments in some areas,” he said.

“There is also 635 other local businesses who work for mining operators providing goods and transport, services support through contractors and that speaks of the economic benefactors — businesses that rely on the mining industry in the region.”

Rio Tinto alone employs more than 1000 people in the South West and in May announced new employment opportunities.

The jobs are for apprentices, graduates and Aboriginal trainees to fill vacancies as the company progresses its development plans in the Pilbara.

The roles are a mix of fly-in, fly-out from Perth and the company’s regional FIFO hubs in Western Australia as well as residential positions in Perth and the Pilbara.

Rio Tinto superintendent community engagement regional FIFO communities, Justin Francesconi, said the mining giant was proud to offer such large employment and economic benefits to towns in the South West which were struggling.