

05 December 2022

Mr Adam Boyton
National Skills Commissioner
National Skills Commission
Department of Education, Skills and Employment
GPO Box 9980
Canberra, ACT 2601

Dear Commissioner

Re: 2023 Skills Priority List Stakeholder Survey

The South Australian Chamber of Mines and Energy (SACOME) welcomes the opportunity to make this submission to the National Skills Commission's 2023 Skills Priority List Stakeholder Survey (the Survey).

SACOME is the peak industry body representing companies with interests in the South Australian minerals, energy, extractive, oil and gas sectors and associated service providers.

SACOME has consulted with member companies, including major mining operators, large C&I operators, leading exploration companies and service providers to identify skills shortages impacting the South Australian resources sector and provides the following comments to the relevant Survey questions:

1. Please select the ANZSCO occupations that you would like to provide input on:

SACOME member companies continue to identify recruiting difficulties in the following groups/occupations:

Professionals

- Chemical Engineer
- Electrical Engineer
- Environmental Manager
- Geologist
- Geophysicist
- Geoscientist
- Geotechnical Engineer
- Mechanical Engineer
- Metallurgist
- Mining Engineer

- Petroleum Engineer
- Surveyor
- Controls Engineer
- ESG Advisors / Managers
- Commercial Advisors / Manager
- Supply Chain Advisors / Manager

Technicians and Trade Workers

- Diesel Motor Mechanic
- Electrical and Mechanical Engineering Draftsperson and Technician
- Electrician (General)
- Electrician (Special Class)
- Fitter (General)
- Drillers
- Metal Fabricator (Boilermaker)
- Structural Steel Erector
- Welder

Machinery Operators and Drivers

- Bulldozer Operator
- Crane, Hoist or Lift Operator
- Earthmoving Plant Operator
- Excavator Operator
- Grader Operator
- Loader Operator
- Truck Driver (General)

Labourers

- Construction Rigger
- Scaffolder
- Steel Fixer

Of the above, members have identified particular difficulties recruiting for surveyors, geoscientists, mechanical engineers, mining engineers, controls engineers, ESG professionals, commercial managers, supply chain managers, fitters, and drillers.

2. Please select the SPL rating that you recommend for each occupation, and why you recommend this rating:

SACOME recommends that all the occupations member companies have identified recruiting difficulties in be rated '**occupation in national shortage, with medium to strong future demand**'.

SACOME member companies have experienced difficulties in recruiting for these occupations in **metropolitan Adelaide and regional South Australia and Western Australia**.

3. What is the current supply of workers for these occupations as reported by your members?

SACOME member companies have indicated **the current supply of workers for these occupations is low and** the key reasons for the undersupply of workers in the identified occupations are:

- High demand for these occupations from the resources sector in other states.
- Increased competition for these occupations between South Australian resources sector projects and existing operations.
- Increased competition for these occupations from industries such as civil construction and defence.
- Challenges attracting workers to regional locations.

The increased demand for these occupations has resulted in employees pursuing opportunities with higher pay and preferred work conditions; and an undersupply of suitably qualified workers.

In regard to surveyors, SACOME member companies have raised that students are genuinely unaware of the profession/industry resulting in low University/TAFE enrolments and an undersupply of surveyors.

4. Do your members expect demand for the workforce in these occupations to change over the next 5 years?

SACOME member companies have indicated that future demand for the identified occupations in South Australia **will remain high and for roles such as controls engineer, geoscientist, fitters, and drillers, likely to increase over the next 5 years**.

SACOME member companies recognise that a significant challenge facing the resources sector over the next 5 years is ensuring enough students enrol in STEM subjects to support

a pipeline of suitably qualified professionals for the resources sector in the future **and the need to shift skills to adjust to technology advances.**

SACOME member companies are also concerned with low University enrolment numbers for some of the identified occupations, in particular petroleum engineering, mining engineering and surveying. Low enrolments compromise universities' ability to offer these programs and impacts the number of suitably qualified graduates entering the workforce. This is evidenced in the University of South Australia's decision to cease offering the Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) (Surveying) course which will no longer accept intakes after 2022.

5. Have any of your members reported using employer sponsored visa programs in the past 12 months?

Some SACOME member companies have reported using the employer sponsored visa program ANZSCO occupations in the past 12 months with mixed results. Some members have reported little success with the program, citing difficulties in recruiting and long lead times. Others have reported a smooth process and overall satisfaction with the program.

6. Would you like to provide information on any occupations not specifically covered in ANZSCO?

A SACOME member company has commented that work needs to be done to encourage school aged children consider the above-mentioned occupations as a career option while they are still at school. This will encourage school students to take appropriate study pathways to lead them into a career in resources.

SACOME heavily promotes careers in the resources sector via our 'Resources. But not as you know it' campaign which can be accessed via www.unearthyourfuture.com

SACOME thanks the National Skills Commission for the opportunity to provide feedback to the Survey and remains committed to ongoing dialogue with the National Skills Commission in relation to these matters.

Kind regards



Rebecca Knol
Chief Executive Officer