

**Submission
No 4**

INQUIRY INTO FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NSW TERTIARY EDUCATION SECTOR

Organisation: Coalfield Geology Council of NSW

Date Received: 22 July 2020



Coalfield Geology Council of New South Wales

Recommendations from the Coalfield Geology Council of NSW to the NSW Inquiry into Tertiary Education

Inquiry Terms of Reference Items 1) b & 1) e

1) The employment requirements of local industry be considered in the courses that are offered by Universities

- The University of Newcastle is situated at the gateway to the Hunter Valley, hosting one of Australia's largest and most lucrative export industries – the coal mining industry. A recent decision to cut the Geology major from the Earth Science degree will deprive the industry of critical graduates who are trained in coal geology.
- Geology roles are critical in the coal mining industry; from the initial discovery of coal resources through to resource definition and mine planning. No consultation with industry has been undertaken in this decision.
- The geology major has been replaced with subjects more popular to students (climatology, spatial science), but much less valuable to industry and with poorer graduate outcomes.

2) The university support the local industries within their geographic communities

- Over the past decade, the University of Newcastle has sought to divorce itself from the coal industry.
- The local coal industry needs the support of its local university to be able to maintain a high-quality workforce.
- If local graduates cannot be trained, the industry will look to foreign students to fill these high value jobs.

3) The employment needs of industry be considered over the long term

- The mining industry operates in a cyclical nature, with boom and bust times lasting up to seven years before changing direction.
- We know that student choices follow industry demands with an approximate two-year lag.
- Decisions around courses need to consider the long-term employment trends of industry, rather than short-term course numbers.
- The mining industry (both coal and minerals) is expected to operate at current or increased levels in the coming decades.
- The requirement for trained geologists will become more critical with decreasing discovery rates of new mineral resources.



Coalfield Geology Council of New South Wales

The Coalfield Geology Council of NSW

The Coalfield Geology Council of NSW is the representative body for geologists working in the coal industry. The Council was originally formed in 1961 as the Standing Committee on Coalfield Geology of New South Wales. Over the past 50 years the Council has been a driving force in defining the stratigraphy of NSW, writing standards and codes for exploration and estimating resources, and promoting the advancement of technology in geological exploration.

The aim of the Council is the advancement of Coalfield Geology of New South Wales by activities including among other things:

- Providing a forum for the sharing of information on the geology of the coalfields of NSW and techniques for the understanding of the contained coal resources and their exploration and extraction.
- The provision of effective industry/government consultation on all matters involving coalfield and mining geology.
- Promote liaison with other Australian coal geology groups with a view to the establishment and revision of codes, standards and guidelines for exploration and mining geology.
- Exchange of ideas on geoscience techniques and terms employed in coalfield geology with a view to standardisation.
- The appropriate distribution of the results of the Council's considerations and activities.

Further information

Further information about the issues addressed above can be seen via the links below:

[University decision to cut geology major will affect region's mining: union](#)

Contact

Coalfield Geology Council of NSW

Website: <http://coalfieldgeologycouncilnsw.org/>

Address: PO Box 344, Hunter Region Mail Centre, NSW 2310