

TERRITORY READY

Building Territory capability
for the next generation of
resource development



NORTHERN
TERRITORY
DIVISION

VALUE

The difference Territory
mining makes

CAPACITY

Strengthening
Territory workforce

OPPORTUNITY

Unlocking
Territory potential

Acknowledgement of Country

The Minerals Council of Australia acknowledges and pays its respects to past, present and future Traditional Custodians and Elders and the continuation of cultural, spiritual and educational practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



FOREWORD

Strengthening the Territory for the next generation

The Northern Territory has a unique opportunity to build on its strengths as a globally significant minerals producer. As demand grows, so does the opportunity to create lasting benefits for Territorians through jobs, skills, business growth and regional development.

This report sets out the industry's contribution and practical opportunities to strengthen Territory capability and competitiveness.

These opportunities cannot be taken for granted. In a competitive global market, investment depends on a skilled workforce, capable businesses and a competitive operating environment.

Mining already generates substantial economic and social benefits, but building that capability is what will ensure the next generation of Territorians shares in them.

That requires partnership. Industry, government, education providers and communities all have a role in building that capability.

Cathryn Tilmouth

Executive Director, Northern Australia



Mining powers the economy today, while building the opportunities for tomorrow. That's the difference Territory mining makes.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The opportunity is here. Is the Territory ready?

The Territory has a strong minerals industry and a substantial pipeline of future projects.

Converting this opportunity into lasting local benefits requires a capable workforce, competitive businesses, supporting infrastructure and the right conditions for investment.

Mining projects take years to develop. Building capability before construction begins will help the Territory capture more local jobs, expenditure and long-term benefits.

OPPORTUNITY | The project pipeline

16

**Advanced mining projects
in the pipeline**

\$6.1B

**Planned capital
investment**

3,200

Potential construction jobs

2,800

Potential operational jobs

Source: Northern Territory Geological Survey, Mining Developments in the NT, August 2026¹.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The difference Territory mining makes

Mining already creates significant economic and social value across the Territory.

Future mining projects could create jobs, strengthen regional economies, support Territory businesses and deliver lasting economic and social benefits for Territorians.

Realising this opportunity requires a capable workforce, strong businesses, supporting infrastructure and a competitive investment environment.

Territory Ready examines mining's current contribution and what is needed to maximise future benefits.

\$4.6 B

Generated value from
Territory mining

\$1.2 B

Direct spending in the
Northern Territory

\$617.4 M

Goods and services purchased from
859 Territory businesses

5,447

Territory workforce

\$514.3 M

Payments to government

\$6.2 M

Supporting 95 community
organisations

Source: Lawrence Consulting, NT minerals sector economic contribution study 2024–25²

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Building Territory capability starts now

Eight actions bring industry, government, education providers and regional stakeholders together to help the Territory capture more value from minerals development.

- 01 Strengthen the evidence base for Territory value**
 Continue measuring mining's economic contribution and undertake more detailed expenditure and supply chain analysis to inform policy, investment and opportunities for Territory participation.
- 02 Strengthen Territory Participation**
 Build the capability and competitiveness of Territory businesses, improve their visibility to mining companies and strengthen relationships to help them compete for work.
- 03 Invest in strategic common-user infrastructure**
 Prioritise infrastructure that reduces costs, strengthens supply chains and supports future minerals development and regional growth.
- 04 Build local capacity in strategic occupations**
 Develop Territory-based education and training pathways in critical technical, professional and emerging occupations where sustained demand supports local delivery.
- 05 Target specialist attraction and retention**
 Focus attraction and retention on occupations where targeted action can build long-term Territory capability, supported by professional development, mentoring and career progression.
- 06 Strengthen the future workforce**
 Build connected pathways from school through VET and tertiary education into employment, expanding opportunities for young people, women, Aboriginal Territorians and other underrepresented cohorts.
- 07 Coordinate workforce development**
 Align industry, government and education initiatives through shared workforce planning, demand forecasting and targeted investment.
- 08 Support participation through infrastructure and liveability**
 Plan workforce growth alongside housing, childcare, healthcare, education, and regional services.

Introduction

Growing the minerals industry's contribution to the Northern Territory

The minerals industry encompasses the full project lifecycle, from exploration and discovery through development, construction, operations, rehabilitation and closure. It already makes a substantial contribution to the Territory's economy, businesses, workforce and communities. Future minerals development creates an opportunity to build on that contribution and capture more value for Territorians.

Realising that opportunity is not simply about increasing local content. It means understanding where Territory capability is strong, where it can realistically grow, where specialist expertise is needed, and the conditions that allow businesses and workers to compete and participate.

Territory Ready brings together economic, workforce and industry evidence to identify where targeted action can strengthen Territory capability while maintaining the competitiveness needed to attract investment.



INTRODUCTION

From mineral potential to Territory prosperity

Growing global demand for critical minerals, precious metals and industrial commodities is driving investment in new mining projects and reshaping global supply chains.

The Northern Territory's resources supply minerals for everyday life, advanced technology and the energy transition.

In a competitive global market, investment flows to the jurisdictions offering the strongest combination of opportunity, certainty and competitiveness.

A snapshot of minerals and metals critical to modern life

Public infrastructure

Schools, roads, public transport, water and electricity.

Fe Iron	C Carbon	Mn Manganese
Cu Copper	Zn Zinc	Al Aluminium

Advanced medicine

Medical imaging, devices, cancer diagnosis and treatment

Be Beryllium	Ta Tantalum	Bi Bismuth
Ag Silver	Mo Molybdenum	Ti Titanium

Lifestyle technology

Smartphones, home appliances and entertainment systems.

Au Gold	Si Silicon	Cu Copper
Pd Palladium	Al Aluminium	Sn Tin

Advanced manufacturing

Robotics, automated systems and materials.

Sb Antimony	Ga Gallium	Bi Bismuth
Be Beryllium	Ge Germanium	Te Tellurium

Energy transition

Solar panels, wind turbines, battery storage and EVs.

Li Lithium	Ni Nickel	Co Cobalt
Ree Rare earths	Cu Copper	U Uranium



INTRODUCTION

A pipeline of opportunity

Mining already delivers significant economic value across the Territory. The next generation of projects provides an opportunity to grow that contribution even further.

The Territory has an established minerals industry and a substantial pipeline of projects progressing from exploration through feasibility, development and production. Capturing the full value of this pipeline will depend on the Territory's competitiveness, workforce and local business capability.

INDUSTRY SNAPSHOT

Current Industry^{1,2,3}

9 operating mines
\$4.36B mineral production
5,447 direct jobs
\$130.7M exploration

Future Pipeline¹

16 developing projects
\$6.2B planned CAPEX
3,200 potential construction jobs
2,800 potential operational jobs



Exploration

1,000's of projects



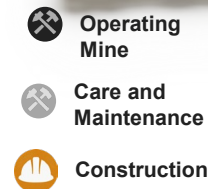
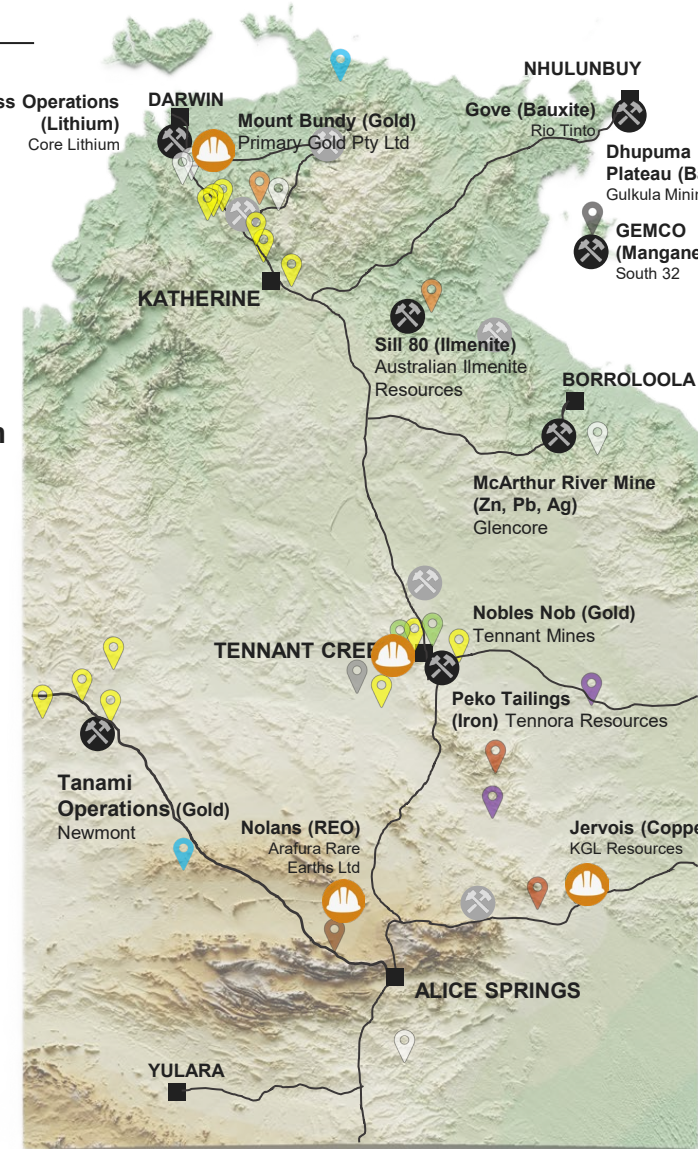
Feasibility

16 projects



Approved

6 projects



Developing projects

Copper (Green circle), Gold (Yellow circle), Iron (Orange circle), Rare Earths (Brown circle), Manganese (Purple circle), Phosphate (Purple circle), Tungsten (Red circle), Uranium (Blue circle), Zinc (Grey circle), Other (White circle).

TERRITORY READY



Construction

4 projects



Operation

9 mines



Closure/Rehabilitation

9 projects in care and maintenance

INTRODUCTION

Building tomorrow's mineral pipeline

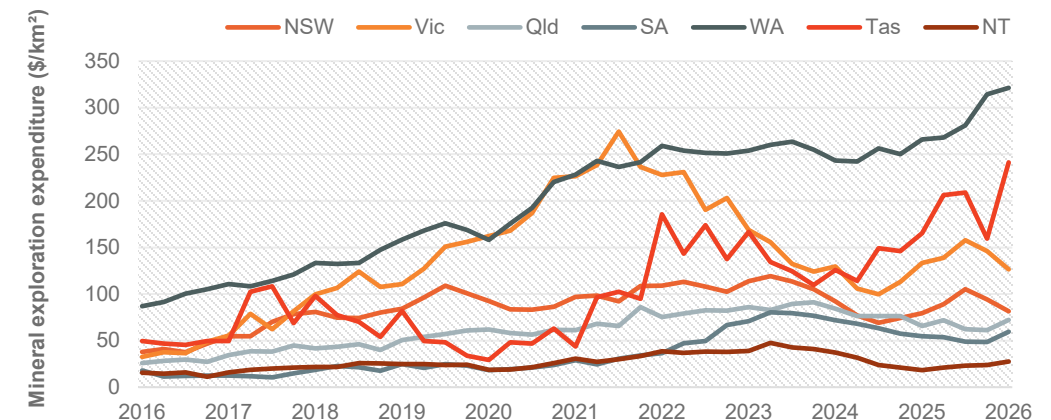
Today's project pipeline was built on yesterday's exploration. Tomorrow's opportunities depend on the exploration happening now.

Exploration is the foundation of future mineral development. It identifies new deposits, attracts investment and creates opportunities for local geologists, contractors and service providers long before a mine enters production.

For smaller explorers, time and capital are particularly precious. Complex land access arrangements, regulatory requirements and lengthy approval processes can divert limited resources away from on-ground exploration, reducing the Territory's competitiveness for investment.

The Mineral Development Taskforce (MDT) recognised the importance of improving the Territory's investment environment, including more efficient regulatory processes, land access arrangements and infrastructure planning. Its recommendations provide an established foundation for further reform⁴.

The Northern Territory has recorded some of Australia's lowest mineral exploration expenditure per square kilometre over the past decade.



Sources: ABS Mineral and Petroleum Exploration, Australia⁵, Geoscience Australia⁶

Barriers to exploration identified by the MDT



Land access



Red tape



Infrastructure



Access to capital

TAKEAWAY | Sustaining the Territory's minerals industry requires more than progressing existing projects. Competitive exploration conditions are essential to securing the next generation of discoveries and development.

INTRODUCTION

Understanding mining's broader contribution

Mining's contribution extends well beyond production and royalties

Mining is one of the Northern Territory's most significant industries and has been a major contributor to the Territory's finances for decades. Mining royalties have accounted for roughly one-fifth to more than two-fifths of the Northern Territory Government's own-source revenue, providing an important source of funding for public services and infrastructure.

The mining industry's contribution has traditionally been measured through indicators such as mineral production, employment and royalty revenue. While these remain important measures of the industry's scale, performance and fiscal contribution, they do not fully capture the broader economic and community value.

This report expands that picture by examining the industry's wider contribution to the Territory economy, local businesses, regional communities and workforce, alongside the opportunities and priorities that will support future growth.

Mining's contribution measured by:



**Direct
expenditure**



**Local business
and services**

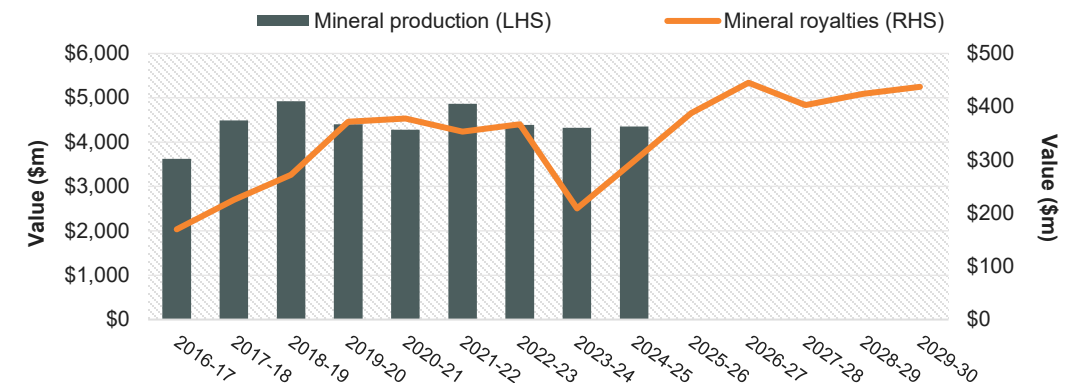


**Government
payments**

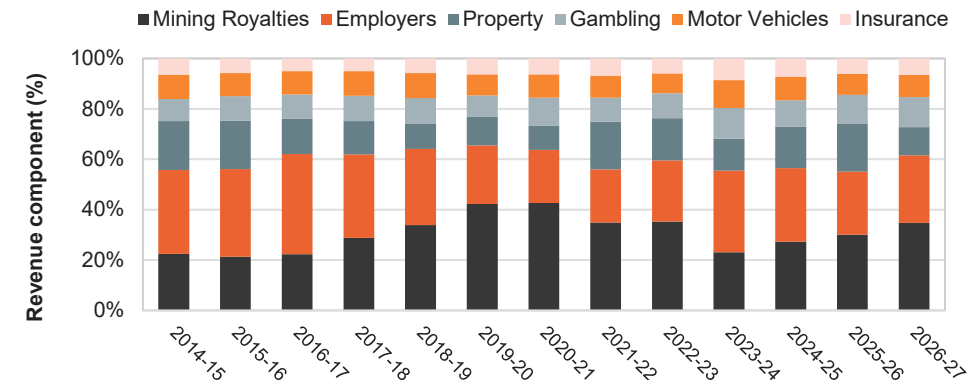


**Community
contributions**

Northern Territory mineral production and royalties over time



Components of own-source revenue over time



Sources: Royalties, from NT Treasury, Budget Paper 2 (2015-16 to 2026-27)⁷, production, Department of Mines and Energy, Mineral Production Summary (2016-17 FY to 2024-25 FY)⁸

INTRODUCTION

Building future Territory capability starts today

Mining projects are built over decades

Mining projects require significant capital investment and, on average, take 16 years to progress from discovery to production⁹.

In a highly competitive global market, investment flows to the projects and jurisdictions that offer the strongest combination of resource quality, certainty, capability and competitiveness.

Just as projects are planned years before construction begins, the workforce, local businesses and supporting infrastructure needed to deliver them must also be developed well in advance. Building Territory capability is not simply a local content objective; it is essential to ensuring Territorians are well placed to participate in the next generation of mining projects and share in their long-term economic and community benefits.

Competitiveness is influenced by:



Resource Quality

Grade, scale and deposit access



Certainty

Clear approvals and stable policy



Capability

Skilled workforce and capable suppliers



Competitiveness

Costs, productivity and infrastructure

Case Study | Creating long-term value takes time

Arafura Rare Earths: From discovery to development

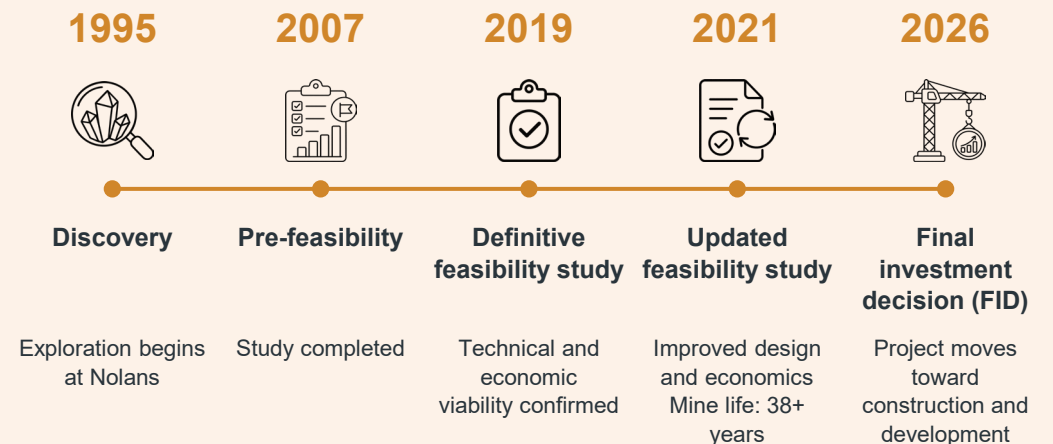
The \$1.6 billion Nolans Project demonstrates the sustained investment, planning and collaboration required to transform a mineral discovery into a major economic opportunity for the Northern Territory.

Over three decades, the project progressed through exploration, feasibility studies, environmental assessments, land access negotiations and complex financing arrangements, requiring substantial investment well before any economic return is realised¹⁰⁻¹².

Environmental approvals were only one part of the journey. Agreements with Traditional Owners, international offtake negotiations and government support, including Major Project Status and Significant Project designation, have been critical to progressing development.

With construction now underway, Nolans is expected to create more than 600 construction jobs and approximately 350 operational jobs over a 38-year mine life¹. The project demonstrates how long-term investor confidence, regulatory certainty and collaboration can unlock critical minerals opportunities and deliver lasting economic benefits for the Territory.

TAKEAWAY | Today's mining opportunities are built on decades of investment and planning. A competitive, predictable investment environment is critical to converting the Territory's mineral potential into lasting economic value.



INTRODUCTION

Building the evidence base for Territory Ready

***Territory Ready* brings together economic, workforce, business and industry evidence to understand where Territory capability is strong, where gaps remain and where targeted action can deliver greater long-term value.**

The analysis considers current industry contribution and future requirements, recognising that increasing Territory participation must go hand in hand with maintaining the competitiveness needed to attract investment and progress projects.

The study has three objectives

VALUE | Understand the economic and community value generated by Territory mining and where more can be captured locally.

CAPACITY | Assess the workforce, businesses and capabilities that underpin the industry, including where local capability is strong and gaps remain.

OPPORTUNITY | Identify actions to strengthen Territory participation, capability and competitiveness as future projects develop.

This study brings together:



Economic Contribution

Expenditure, employment and economic value



Workforce Trends

Occupations, participation, skills and capability needs



Business Capability

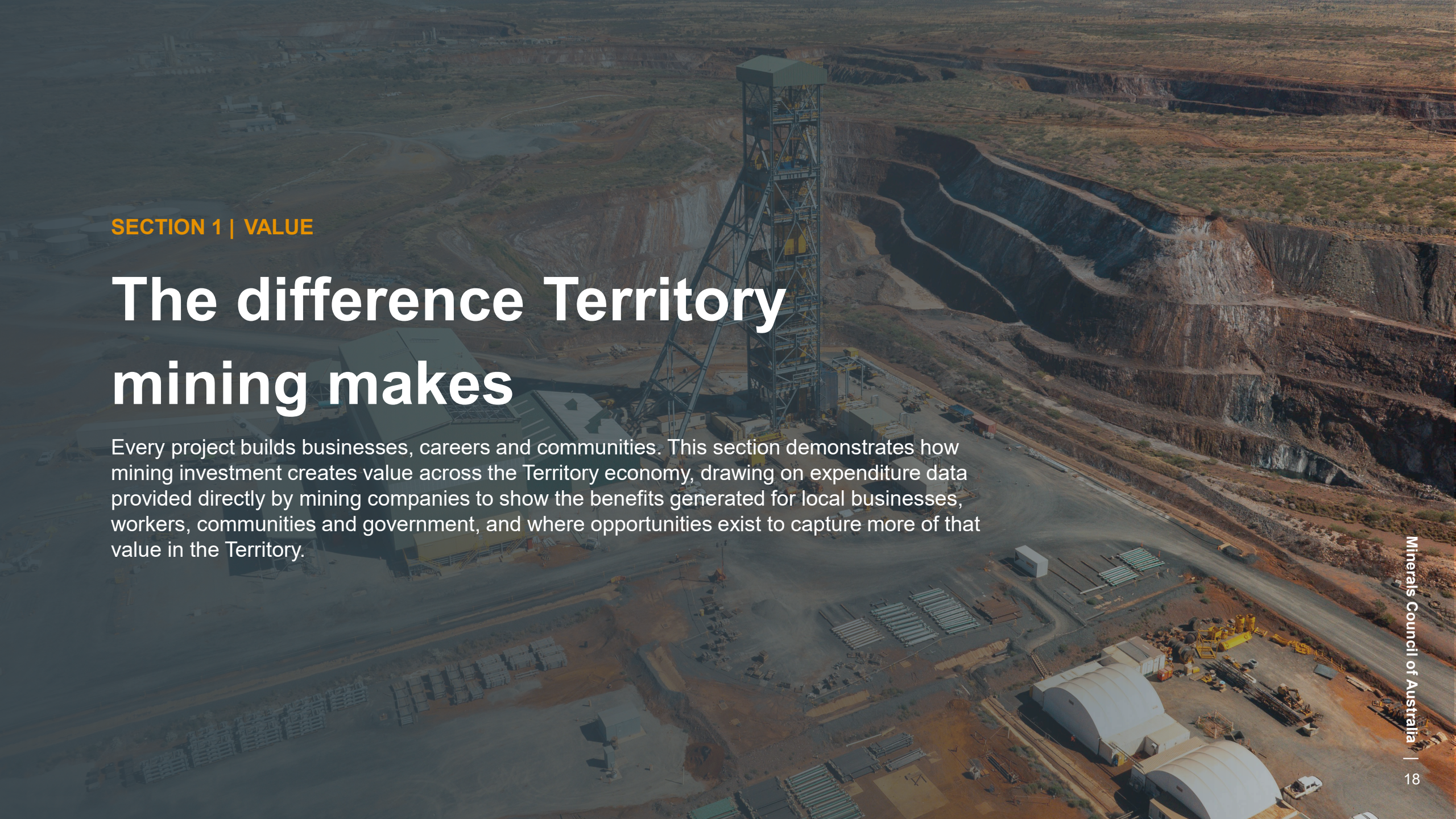
Opportunities to strengthen Territory participation.



Industry Insights

Consultation on barriers, opportunities and priorities.





SECTION 1 | VALUE

The difference Territory mining makes

Every project builds businesses, careers and communities. This section demonstrates how mining investment creates value across the Territory economy, drawing on expenditure data provided directly by mining companies to show the benefits generated for local businesses, workers, communities and government, and where opportunities exist to capture more of that value in the Territory.

SECTION 1 | VALUE

Measuring the value of Territory mining

Building a comprehensive evidence base

Mining makes a substantial contribution to the Northern Territory economy and community. That contribution has traditionally been measured through mineral production, employment and royalty revenue. These are important indicators, but only a partial picture.

To better understand this contribution, MCA NT commissioned Lawrence Consulting to undertake annual economic contribution studies using actual expenditure data supplied directly by participating mining companies, rather than estimating impacts from production value or revenue. This allows expenditure to be attributed geographically and provides a stronger basis for understanding how mining activity supports businesses, workers and communities across the Territory¹³.

Input-output (I-O) modelling traces direct company expenditure through workers and suppliers, subsequent business-to-business activity and household consumption to estimate the broader contribution to the Territory economy¹³.

Together, the 2023–24¹⁴ and 2024–25² studies establish an evidence base for measuring the industry's broader economic contribution and tracking change over time.



**Industry data
collection**



**Quality
assurance**



**Economic
modelling**



**Economic
contribution**



SECTION 1 | VALUE

The difference Territory mining makes

Mining investment generates value well beyond the mine gate

Mining expenditure flows through Territory businesses, workers, communities and government, creating economic activity well beyond individual mine sites.



\$4.6B

Generated value from Territory mining



5,447

Territory workforce including direct hire and contractors



\$254.5M

Wages and salaries to resident employees, representing \$174k per annum



\$1.2B

Direct spending in the Northern Territory



\$617.4M

Goods and services purchased from 859 local businesses



\$6.2M

In support to 95 regional community organisations



\$2.2B

Additional spending generated across the Territory



7,875

Additional fulltime Territory jobs supported across the Territory



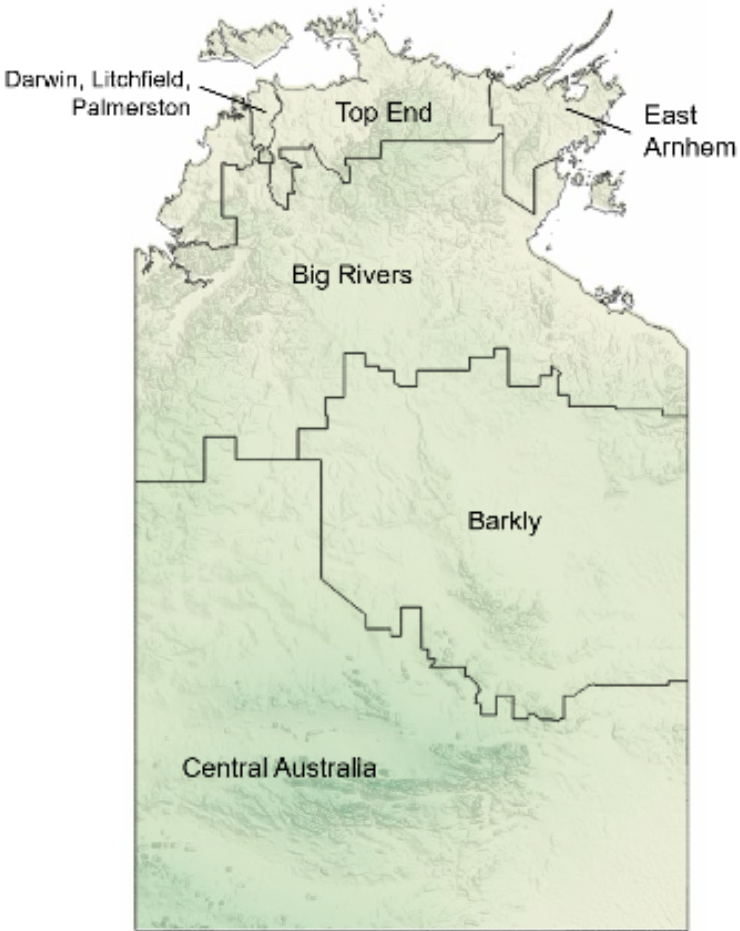
\$514.3M

Government payments, taxes and royalties to Federal, NT and local governments

SECTION 1 | VALUE

The difference mining makes across the Territory

Mining supports jobs and businesses across the Territory with expenditure in regional supply chains and service centres.



Region	Jobs	Suppliers	Spend	Value add
Darwin, Litchfield Palmerston	773	601	\$539.1M	\$1,279.8M
Top End	58	17	\$25.6M	\$34.6M
Central Australia	8	81	\$57.8M	\$72.0M
East Arnhem	143	30	\$54.1M	\$107.3M
Big Rivers	69	34	\$38.7M	\$77.1M
Barkly	12	<5	\$10.5M	\$29.0M

Understanding where mining expenditure flows helps identify opportunities to grow regional business participation and strengthen Territory supply chains.

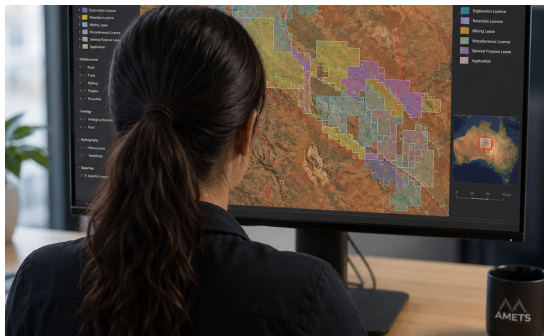
SECTION 1 | VALUE

Creating value across the mine lifecycle

Every stage of mining creates different economic opportunities

Mining creates different forms of economic and social value throughout the life of a project. From exploration through to rehabilitation, every phase supports employment, local businesses, investment and regional communities.

Exploration



AMETS

Began in the Northern Territory and has grown into a national exploration services business, supporting mineral exploration through geological, technical and field services across Australia, providing Territory expertise with national reach.

Construction



NT Link

An Alice Springs-based business supplying modular accommodation for major mining projects. The company supports 70 fabrication jobs in Darwin, prioritising local suppliers and creating jobs and training opportunities for Aboriginal Territorians¹⁵.

Operations



Palmerston Bakery

Supplies 400–550 bread products each week to McArthur River Mine. The long-standing supply relationship has helped the bakery's growth from a humble hot bread shop into a small-scale industrial operation, supporting local business growth¹⁶.

Rehabilitation



Ecoz Environmental Services

A Darwin-based consultancy supporting the minerals industry through environmental assessment, monitoring, management and rehabilitation. Its growth from 4 to 40 staff over 20 years demonstrates demand for skilled local expertise¹⁷.

SECTION 1 | VALUE

Turning mining expenditure into local business opportunity

Mining procurement supports Territory suppliers and businesses

Territory mining supports hundreds of Territory businesses across engineering, transport, environmental services, civil construction, hospitality, aviation and many other sectors. The opportunity is not simply to increase local procurement. It is to build the capability, capacity and visibility of Territory businesses so they can compete for opportunities across the mining lifecycle and grow alongside future projects.

\$617.4M

Goods and services
purchased

859

Territory businesses
contracted



Distribution across the Territory

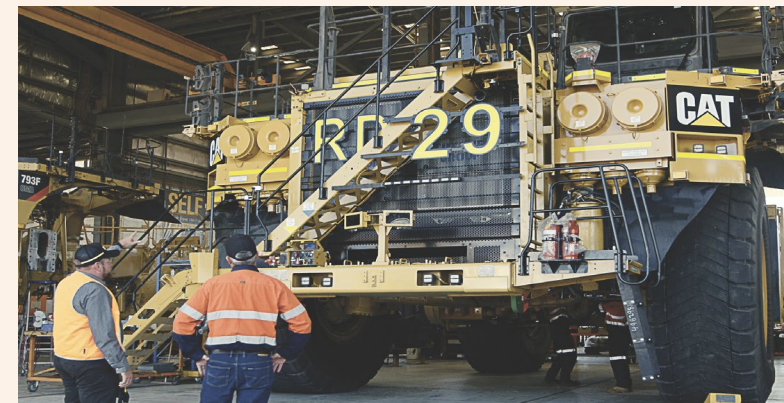
- Darwin (\$434.2M and 626 businesses)
- Outback (\$183.1M and 233 businesses)

Case study: Hastings Deering

Supporting local industry, skills and innovation

Hastings Deering has operated in the Territory for more than 75 years, supplying machinery, parts and technical services to the mining and construction industries while supporting local jobs and apprenticeships.

The company recently supported Glencore's McArthur River Mine in becoming the first mine globally to operate the Cat® 995 Wheel Loader, demonstrating the Territory's technical capability and role in mining innovation.



Case Study | GEMSA NT

Local exploration creates local opportunities

Exploration is the foundation of tomorrow's mines, but it also supports Territory jobs, businesses and specialist expertise today. From geologists and drilling contractors to equipment suppliers, accommodation providers and field services, exploration expenditure flows through local economies, including remote and regional communities.

Established in 2020, the Geological, Exploration and Mining Services Association NT (GEMSA NT) was formed in response to declining grassroots exploration and shrinking opportunities for Territory businesses. The association advocates for increased greenfield exploration to drive new mineral discoveries and future mining projects, while strengthening local industry capability.

GEMSA NT has consistently highlighted the Territory's low exploration expenditure relative to its land area, alongside challenges with land access, regulatory complexity and approval delays. These pressures can disproportionately affect smaller explorers, where limited budgets and prolonged uncertainty can determine whether exploration proceeds¹⁸.



*"If we cannot attract the risk taker,
we will not get the developer either."*

Geoff Eupene
Chair, GEMSA NT



SECTION 1 | VALUE

Creating jobs and careers

Mining creates diverse careers and opportunities for Territorians

The Territory's minerals industry supports careers across trades, operations, engineering, geoscience, environmental management, logistics and professional services. These opportunities extend across the mine lifecycle, from exploration and construction to production, rehabilitation and closure.

Beyond direct employment, mining supports career pathways, apprenticeships and training that build transferable skills and long-term workforce capability across the Territory.

5,447

Territory workforce

\$254.5M

Wages and salaries to 1,463 direct fulltime employees

51%

Workforce residing in the Territory

\$174K

Average salary

Source: Lawrence Consulting, NT minerals sector economic contribution study 2024–25²

Case study: More than a mining career

Building careers and community connections in Gove

Pete, a mechanical diesel fitter at Rio Tinto Gove, has called Nhulunbuy home since 2006. Alongside his mining career, he has volunteered with Nhulunbuy Pets and Wildlife Shelter (PAWS) since 2008 and now serves as President alongside family members and community.

Through Rio Tinto's RioGivers employee giving program, PAWS recently completed a new shelter, demonstrating how long-term mining employees contribute to the communities they call home.



SECTION 1 | VALUE

Investing in communities

Mining partnerships create lasting benefits through employment, environmental rehabilitation, education, health and community wellbeing.

Mining companies contribute directly to Territory communities through funding, employment and partnerships supporting health, education, sport and community services.

Beyond these contributions, industry also provides practical support through emergency response, firefighting, disaster recovery and community clean-up activities. This assistance draws on the personnel, equipment and specialist capabilities of mining operations, which can be particularly valuable in remote communities.

\$6.2M

Community contributions

95

Community groups supported

Source: Lawrence Consulting, NT minerals sector economic contribution study 2024–25²

Case Study | Supporting families on Groote Eylandt

Mining partnerships helping deliver essential community services

For over 16 years South 32 GEMCO has supported the Machado-Joseph Disease (MJD) Foundation, helping establish and maintain its presence on Groote Eylandt providing culturally appropriate services and support to Aboriginal people and families affected by MJD, a rare inherited neurodegenerative condition¹⁹.

“Government funding alone is just not enough to overcome these substantial barriers, and it is due to our important partnership with South 32 that we are able to be so responsive and supportive of our clients and families living with MJD.” -Nadia Lindop, then CEO, MJD Foundation²⁰



SECTION 1 | VALUE

Mining helps fund the Territory

Mining is the largest contributor to Territory own-source revenue.

Mining royalties and taxes help fund essential services and infrastructure, supporting stronger, safer and more vibrant Territory communities.

\$325.9M

**NT Government
payments**

\$1.3M

**Local Council
payments**

\$187.2M

**Federal government
payments**



Source: Lawrence Consulting, NT minerals sector economic contribution study 2024–25²

SECTION 1 | VALUE

Beyond the mine gate

Mining's economic contribution reaches businesses that may never supply a mine directly.

Mining spending on wages, goods and services flows through suppliers and households, generating further economic activity across the Territory.

Contractors buy from other local businesses. Workers spend their wages on housing, food, childcare and recreation. This spending supports jobs and incomes well beyond the mining sector.

For every direct job in mining, an additional 5.4 jobs are created across the Territory.

7,875

Indirect full time
employees

\$769M

Indirect wages
and salaries

\$1.4B

Indirect purchases of
goods and services



Construction & Civil



Transport & logistics



Training and education



Professional &
technical services



Households & local
spending



Regional communities



Hospitality and
accommodation

Case Study | From mine sites to main streets

"From a mine worker's pub feed after a swing, to big industry events like the Darwin Mining Club – it's all supporting local hospitality venues and creating jobs right across the Territory."

Cathy Simmonds
CEO, Hospitality NT



Case Study | Value beyond production

Cyclone Megan demonstrates the changing nature of mining's contribution

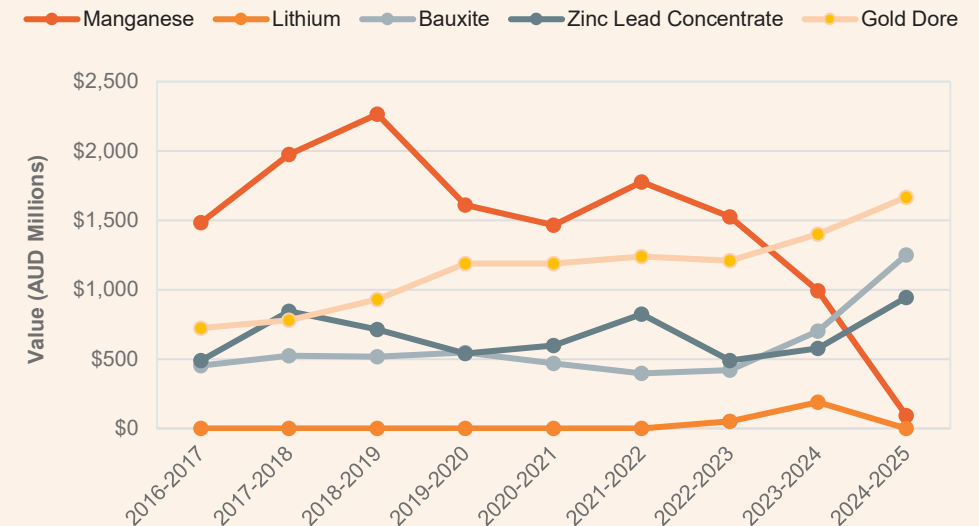
Mining is a long-term, inherently lumpy industry. Production, expenditure and revenue can shift markedly as markets change, projects evolve and unforeseen events occur.

Tropical Cyclone Megan demonstrated this in March 2024, disrupting major Gulf mining operations and contributing to a 52% fall in Territory manganese production in 2024–25⁸. Yet even as production was disrupted, mining operations continued investing in recovery and supporting their communities.

At GEMCO, more than 317,000 work hours went into rebuilding the Bararrumanja Wharf, including removing 970 tonnes of steel and 740 tonnes of concrete from the seabed. More than 1,000 employees were retained during the export suspension. When deliveries to Groote Eylandt were disrupted, GEMCO coordinated fuel supplies for approximately 14 weeks, supporting emergency services, healthcare, schools, Aboriginal corporations and the wider community²¹.

At McArthur River Mine, despite severe flooding, the mine supported helicopter evacuations, provided emergency accommodation and food supplies, helped restore communications and supplied critical observations that helped the Bureau of Meteorology reassess flood predictions for Borroloola²².

TAKEAWAY | Production and royalties tell only part of the story. Even during major disruptions, mining continues to sustain jobs, invest in infrastructure and provide critical capabilities that support Territory communities.



SECTION 1 | VALUE

Increasing Territory participation

Territory mining retains significant value at home, with opportunity to capture even more locally.

In 2024–25, around \$1.2 billion in mining expenditure stayed in the Northern Territory, supporting local businesses, jobs and regional economies².

Major projects require specialised interstate and overseas goods and services due to their scale and complexity, not a lack of local commitment. Interstate contractors also employ local workers, engage Territory subcontractors and purchase locally.

Understanding expenditure flows can identify where local businesses already compete and where capability can grow. Earlier visibility of project pipelines and procurement opportunities gives suppliers time to prepare, invest and compete.

Mining companies already help connect project demand with local capability, but increasing Territory participation also requires competitive businesses and a supportive operating environment.

TAKEAWAY | Local participation improves when project demand and Territory business capability are connected early

Case Study | Connecting Territory businesses

Early visibility of procurement opportunities

The Territory's emerging pipeline of major mining projects is creating new opportunities for local businesses to engage early with proponents and prepare for future procurement.

Supplier roadshows by Arafura Rare Earths and KGL Resources have given Territory businesses greater visibility of upcoming work packages, procurement processes and project requirements, helping them position themselves to compete.

ICN NT's supplier database provides a resource for mapping Territory business capabilities against project requirements²³.



SECTION 1 | VALUE

Territory businesses need to be competitive

Increasing Territory participation requires both capable local suppliers and the infrastructure needed to competitively connect projects and markets.

The Territory's higher cost base affects project economics and the ability of local businesses to compete for work.

- **Higher structural costs:** Freight, logistics and operating costs are elevated, particularly in regional and remote areas.
- **Infrastructure and supply-chain gaps:** Long distances, limited transport connectivity and seasonal disruption increase costs and reduce supply-chain reliability.



“Northern Australia operates in a fundamentally different cost environment from metropolitan centres. The additional challenges of distance, climate, workforce mobility and infrastructure limitations warrant federal settings that acknowledge and respond to this reality. Without reform, businesses in the North will continue competing on an uneven playing field.”

Glen Hingley,
CEO Chamber of Commerce NT, 2026²⁴

Proposed solution: shared infrastructure

A regional services hub in Tennant Creek

Regional logistics infrastructure. Shared infrastructure can reduce transport costs, improve supply-chain efficiency and lower barriers to investment, particularly in remote regions where individual projects may not have the scale to justify dedicated facilities. Infrastructure NT identifies Tennant Creek as part of a proposed network of regional logistics hubs to strengthen freight connections, support resource development and unlock opportunities for local businesses²⁵.

Proposed hub. The Tennant Creek Aviation and Accommodation Hub would combine upgraded aviation infrastructure with accommodation for essential workers, strengthening the town's role as a base for Barkly projects.

Potential benefits. With better logistics and transport connections, the hub could enable more workers to live in Tennant Creek and travel to nearby sites, support flexible rosters and create scale for local businesses to establish and grow²⁶.

SECTION 1 | VALUE

Key insights

1. Mining creates value across and beyond the project lifecycle

From exploration through to rehabilitation, mining supports Territory businesses, workers, communities and government, with expenditure generating further economic activity well beyond the mine gate.

2. The Territory can capture more value from future development

Better visibility of expenditure, project pipelines and procurement opportunities can help Territory businesses prepare earlier, compete for work and build capability.

3. Territory participation depends on competitive local businesses

Increasing local participation requires capable suppliers, but also the market connections and operating conditions that allow Territory businesses to compete effectively.

4. Enabling infrastructure can lower costs and strengthen regional capability

Strategic common-user infrastructure can reduce structural costs, strengthen supply chains and create the conditions for businesses and workers to establish closer to future projects.

5. Local capability and industry competitiveness must grow together

Maximising long-term benefits for Territorians depends on increasing local participation while maintaining the competitive investment environment needed to attract capital and progress projects.







SECTION 2 | CAPACITY

The next generation of projects needs a next generation of Territorians

The Territory has a strong existing resources workforce, but future growth will require different combinations of operational, technical and specialist capability.

This section examines where capability exists today, where gaps and opportunities are emerging and how local pathways, targeted attraction, access to specialist expertise and workforce retention can build the capability needed for the future.

SECTION 2 | CAPACITY

The Territory has a strong workforce base and room to build

The Territory minerals workforce combines strong operational capability with significant opportunity to increase local participation and strengthen specialist capability.



Total workforce



Territory-based



Fulltime workforce



Female workforce



Average age



Aboriginal participation



Machinery operators and drivers



Tradespeople



Apprentices

Sources: NT minerals sector economic contribution study 2024-25², NT minerals sector capacity scan 2024-25²⁷.

SECTION 2 | CAPACITY

Competition for skills is intensifying

The Territory's workforce challenge must be understood within a highly competitive national labour market.

The Territory is not competing for skills in isolation. Mining employers are drawing from the same national labour pool as other resources jurisdictions, construction and major infrastructure projects, while the pipeline of graduates entering some critical technical professions is tightening.

For the Territory, these pressures are amplified by a smaller labour pool and the challenges of attracting and retaining workers in regional and remote locations. Building future capability will require a combination of growing local pathways, targeted attraction, retention and continued access to specialist interstate expertise.



SKILLS SHORTAGES ARE INTENSIFYING

Mining skills shortages increased **68.5% between 2021 and 2025**, placing mining among the industries experiencing the sharpest growth in shortages²⁸.



MINING IS COMPETING FOR THE SAME PEOPLE

Mining and construction draw on many of the same trades and skilled occupations, increasing competition for workers with comparable capabilities²⁸.



THE PROFESSIONAL PIPELINE IS THINNING

Mining engineering completions have more than halved, while recent graduate numbers in geology, mining engineering and geophysics have stagnated²⁹.



REGIONAL SHORTAGES ARE HARDER TO SOLVE

Regional employers face greater attraction and retention challenges, compounded by smaller labour pools, training access, housing and essential-service constraints²⁸.

SECTION 2 | CAPACITY

Operational roles lead local capability

Operational roles have stronger local participation, while specialist and leadership roles draw more heavily on interstate capability.

Local participation is strongest across operational, trade and supervisory roles, while specialist, professional and leadership roles draw more heavily on interstate capability.

The Territory has a strong local workforce across many of the occupations that underpin day-to-day mining operations. Interstate participation is higher in specialist technical, professional and leadership roles.

This reflects both local capability gaps and the structure of a national and global industry. Some specialist, corporate and commercial functions support Territory operations while being delivered across multiple jurisdictions.

Not every interstate-based role represents a local capability gap or a realistic opportunity for localisation.

51% Territorians
Local strength in services and trades

79% Community/personal services

68% Clerical/administration

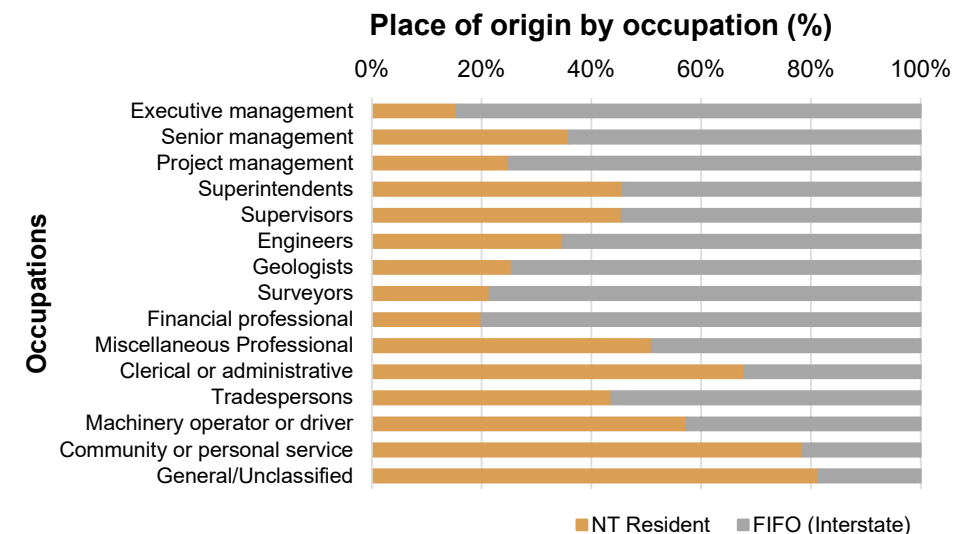
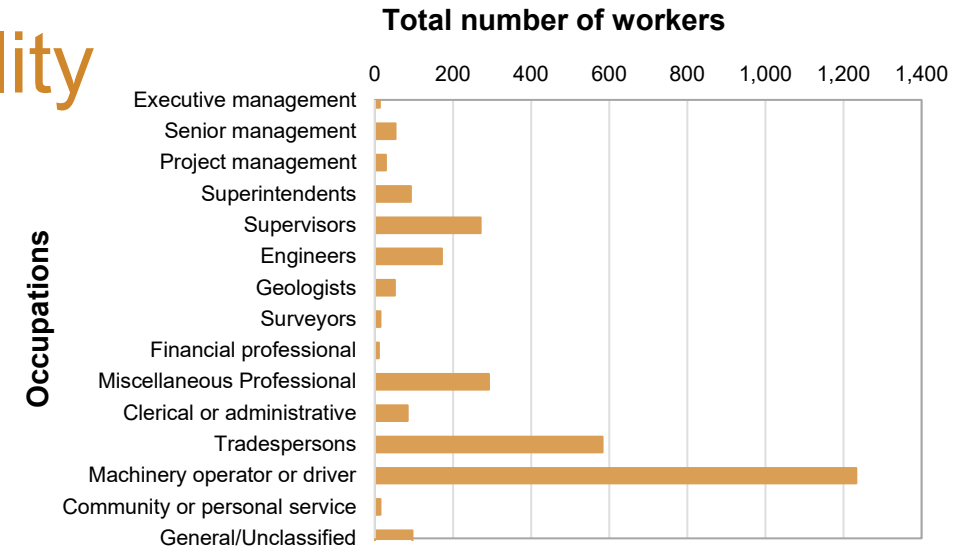
57% Machinery operators/drivers

49% Interstate FIFO
FIFO concentrated in technical and executive

85% Executive management

80% Financial professionals

75% Geologists



SECTION 2 | CAPACITY

The workforce of tomorrow is already changing

The Territory must maintain the critical skills needed today while preparing for new technologies, changing operations and the growing demands of mine closure.

Current and future mining projects require established operational capability alongside increasingly specialised technical expertise. MCA NT members identified 30 critical occupations needed to support the Territory's minerals industry, spanning four key areas of the mining lifecycle³⁰.

These occupations support exploration, development, operations, environmental management and rehabilitation. While many will remain essential, the skills required within them are changing.

AUSMASA identifies automation, artificial intelligence and electrification as increasing demand for digital, diagnostic and electrical capabilities. At the same time, increasing mine closure activity is creating greater demand for rehabilitation, closure and workforce transition capability²⁸.

Better forward workforce planning can help identify where existing capability can transition, where upskilling will be needed and where new capability must be built, attracted or accessed.

TAKEAWAY | Workforce planning needs to maintain the capability required today while preparing for the skills the industry will need next.



Exploration & Discovery

Geologist / geophysicist
Remote sensing scientist
Drilling supervisor



Mining & Processing

Electrician & electrical engineer
Mechanic & mechanical engineer
Diesel fitter



Corporate & Support

Administrator
Warehouse / logistics officer
Supervisors / Executives



Environment & Safety

WHS advisor
Environmental scientist
Community liaison / social impact manager



Future jobs

Digital and automation
Electrification
Mine closure

SECTION 2 | CAPACITY

Strong education pathways support local participation

Mapping priority occupations against Territory education and training pathways shows that Territory participation tends to be stronger where established local pathways exist.

Occupation group	Occupation	Maturity	Pathway opportunity
Geoscience	Geologist	Not established	Establish a Territory geology major; strengthen graduate field experience.
	Spatial Scientist/GIS	Developing	Strengthen local spatial capability.
Engineering	Mining Engineer	Not established	Explore university partnerships or distance delivery.
	Mechanical Engineer	Developing	Strengthen the local engineering pathway.
	Electrical Engineer	Developing	Expand graduate placements on Territory projects.
	Chemical Engineer	Not established	Explore pathways for critical minerals processing.
	Structural Engineer	Developing	Develop professional specialisation partnerships.
	Metallurgist	Not established	Support emerging processing capability.
Environment & ESG	Environmental Scientist	Established	Continue graduate and cadetship programs.
	ESG/Social Performance	Not established	Build short courses and workplace learning.
	Mine Closure/ Rehabilitation	Not established	Develop industry-led units and postgraduate training.
	Heritage Officer	Developing	Strengthen cultural heritage capability.
Trades	Diesel Fitter	Established	Expand apprentice capacity.
	Mechanical Fitter	Established	Maintain the apprenticeship pipeline.
	Electrician	Established	Expand apprenticeships; strengthen regional delivery.
Process Operations	Process Operator/ Technician	Developing	Build industry-RTO, workplace-based delivery.
Business Support	Administration	Established	Continue mining business pathways.
Supply chain	Storeperson/Logistics	Established	Align supply chain and warehousing with mining logistics.

Established local pathways

Trades
Environmental science
Administration
Storeperson

Higher Territorian participation
Maintain the pipeline and attract Territorians

Developing pathways

Engineering
Spatial science/GIS
Process technicians
Heritage officers

Opportunity to strengthen participation
Connect training with industry, placements and local careers

No established pathway

Geologist
Mining engineer
Mine Closure

Greater reliance on interstate capacity
Build, partner or attract where sustained demand supports it

Case study: The Territory's next geoscientists

The Territory has geological potential but no formal local geoscience degree

Geoscientists drive mineral discovery and project development. The Northern Territory attracted \$130.7 million in mineral exploration investment in 2024–25³, yet 75% of geologists in its minerals workforce are based interstate²⁷.

A national pipeline under pressure

Since 2019, six university geoscience departments, degrees or majors have closed, cutting Australia's geoscience teaching capacity by an estimated 20%. A further 25% of remaining capacity is under review or may face review³¹.

At the same time, demand for geoscience capability is growing across mineral exploration, critical minerals and environmental management. The Australian Academy of Science identifies geoscience as a strategically important capability facing increasing demand³².

Building the Territory's future capability

Strengthening local Earth science education and pathways, alongside university partnerships and targeted attraction, can help secure the geoscience capability needed to discover and develop the Territory's next generation of resources.

TAKEAWAY | The Territory has major exploration and development opportunities, but no local pathway into one of the occupations needed to realise it.



Case study: Building the talent pipeline through Mining Cadets

Early exposure, recognised training and direct industry connection can help turn career awareness into a pathway to employment.

The Territory Mining Cadets Program brings industry, education and training together to give secondary students a direct pathway into the resources sector. From 2027, students in Years 10–12 will combine recognised training with practical industry exposure, connecting classroom learning with real resources workplaces.

Students will gain experience through site visits, industry speakers, mentoring, workplace activities and recruitment preparation, while building transferable skills through accredited training delivered with CDU.

For industry, the program creates an opportunity to engage young Territorians before they make major study and career decisions, improve understanding of the breadth of resources careers and build relationships with the Territory's future workforce.

Building a longer-term pathway

Mining Cadets is designed as an entry point, not an endpoint. The opportunity is to build progression from school-based training into higher-level VET, apprenticeships, tertiary education and employment, aligned with the capability the industry will need in the future.

TAKEAWAY | Strong local workforce pathways start early and connect education directly with industry opportunity.



SECTION 2 | CAPACITY

Targeted attraction for the Territory

Younger technical cohorts offer the strongest opportunity to convert interstate capability into long-term Territory participation.

Workforce attraction is not simply about filling vacancies. Analysis identified occupations and workforce cohorts with greater potential to establish long-term careers and lives in the Territory.

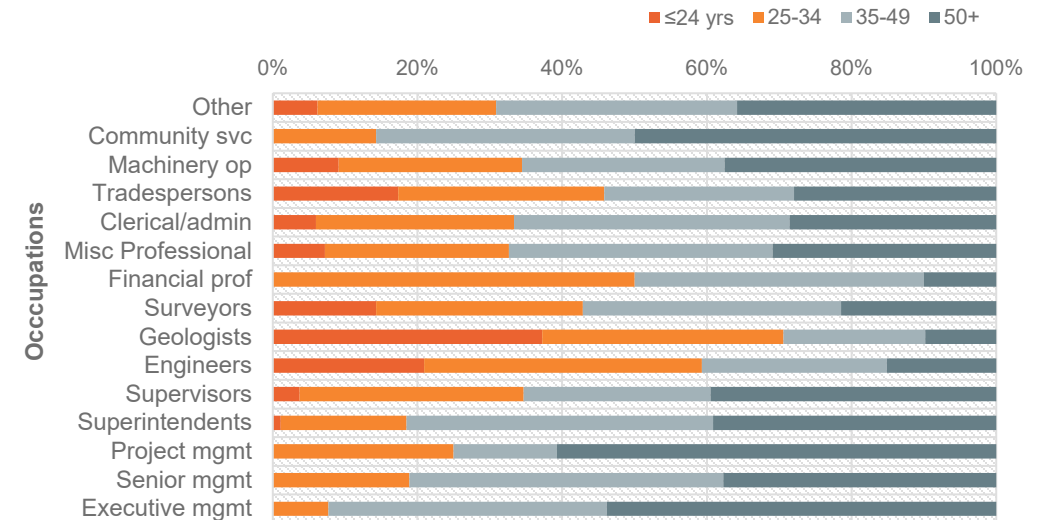
The youngest workforce groups include geologists, engineers, financial professionals, surveyors and tradespeople. ABS data shows workers under 45 are the most mobile³³, creating an opportunity to engage workers earlier in their careers.

Industry consultation also highlighted the limitations of relocation requirements alone. Members reported examples of workers relocating to the Territory to meet employment conditions, only to move interstate once those requirements ended and return to the same roles on a FIFO basis³⁰. This suggests attraction is most effective when workers have reasons to build a career and a life in the Territory, rather than relocation being treated as an end in itself.

Targeted attraction should therefore focus on younger and mid-career specialists such as engineers and geologists, supported by career progression, professional connections and the conditions that encourage longer-term Territory participation.

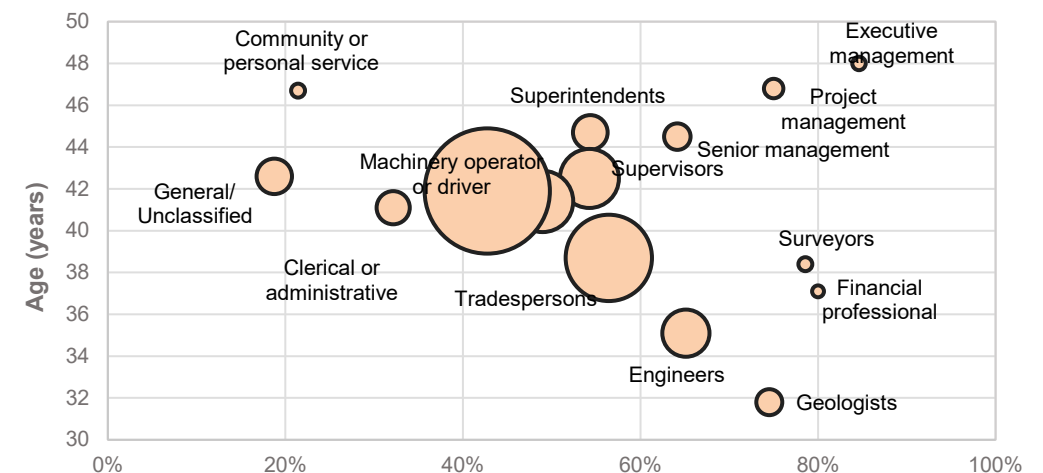
TAKEAWAY | Attraction gets people here. Retention turns attraction into lasting Territory capability.

Age Distribution by Occupation (%)



FIFO workforce

Age v. FIFO (size of bubble = no. employees)



SECTION 2 | CAPACITY

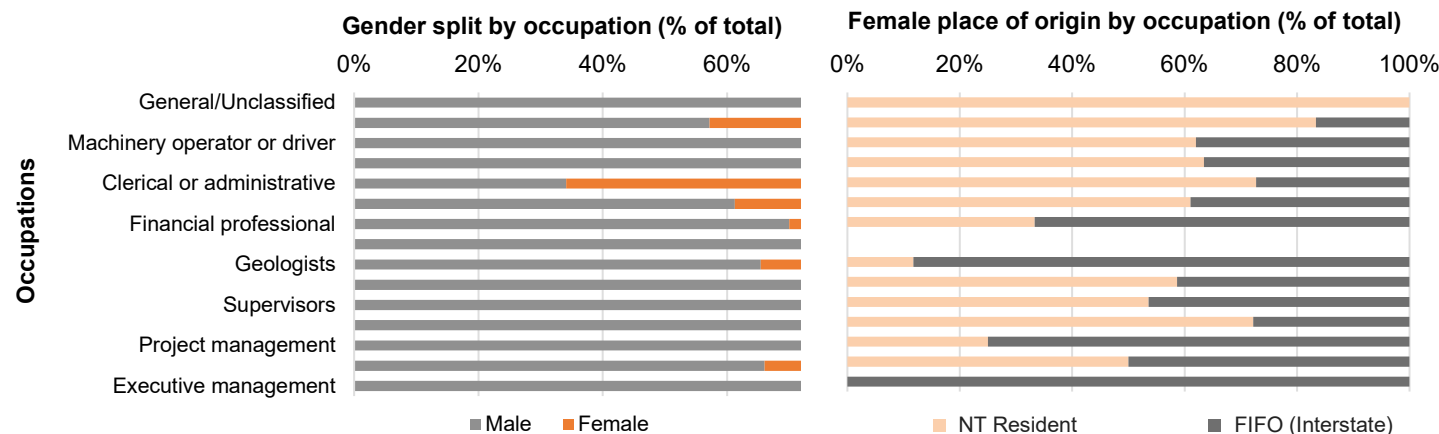
Increasing participation for Territory women

Women remain under-represented across the minerals workforce, creating significant potential to grow the Territory workforce.

Women make up around 19% of the workforce, yet 61% are Territory residents, providing a strong local base to grow participation and progression.

Participation varies by occupation. Women are concentrated in administrative and support roles, with lower representation in trades, engineering and operational roles. Geoscience is an exception, with women representing around 35% of geologists.

Leading sites are focusing on progression and retention by adapting rosters and workplace practices, supporting career development and creating pathways into technical, operational and leadership roles. The opportunity is not just to increase participation, but to support women to build long-term careers and progress across the industry.



Case Study | Women in Resources Inc.

Building connection, visibility and progression

Women in Resources Inc. connects Territory women across the resources sector through professional networks, industry events, mentoring and opportunities to build relationships across companies and career stages.

“Women are already running sites and leading teams across the Territory’s mining industry. We celebrate them through our annual awards, networking opportunities and advocacy. We shine a light on them so women and girls can see there’s a place for them here.”

Tracy Jones

Chair, Women in Resources Inc.



SECTION 2 | CAPACITY

Place-based pathways support lasting participation

Aboriginal Territorians represent around 11% of the minerals workforce. Sustained participation depends on employment pathways that recognise local communities, culture and career aspirations.

Across the Territory, industry is using local recruitment, training, mentoring and career development to strengthen Aboriginal participation. At McArthur River Mine, the Local Language Employment Program connects people from local communities and language groups with training and employment pathways and was recognised at the 2026 NT Exceptional Women in Resources Awards³⁴. Rio Tinto's Gove operations support Yolŋu employment and training through partnerships with Traditional Owner organisations, while South 32's GEMCO has supported Anindilyakwa leadership development and local apprenticeship pathways³⁵.

There is no single model. Successful pathways are shaped around local communities and connect employment with recognised skills, cultural connection and opportunities to progress.

TAKEAWAY | Successful Aboriginal employment pathways are built around community, recognised skills and long-term career opportunity.

Case Study | Levina, McArthur River Mine

From local trainee to haul truck operator

For Borroloola local Levina, a visit to McArthur River Mine's town office opened the door to a mining career.

"I've always wanted to work at the mine. I love trucks."

Through MRM's Indigenous Employment Trainee Program, Levina gained practical training and workplace support before progressing into a haul truck operator role³⁴.



Case study: Yapa Crew

Building long-term employment pathways on Country

For more than a decade, Newmont Tanami's Yapa Crew, managed by Alice Springs-based GreenGlass Consulting, has created employment and skills pathways for Warlpiri people and nearby communities, enabling participants to build mining careers while working on Country³⁶.

At Tanami Operations, the crew delivers site services, cultural heritage and Traditional Owner support, land management, maintenance and civil works. Crew members operate plant and equipment while gaining Certificate III training, licences and site-based competencies.

With employees drawn from communities across Central Australia, the Yapa Crew demonstrates how sustained partnerships between industry, local businesses and Traditional Owners can build workforce capability and enduring employment pathways in remote communities.



87%
Retention rate



60+
Into employment



12
Progressed to Newmont



50:50
Gender Mix



SECTION 2 | CAPACITY

Liveability is a retention enabler, not a side issue

Attracting workers is only half the challenge. A competitive job may attract someone to the Territory, but the decision to stay is shaped by the life they can build around it.

Industry consultation identified that housing availability and affordability, access to flights, healthcare, education and childcare, partner employment and community liveability all influence whether workers and their families can establish long-term roots in the Territory³⁰.

These pressures can be particularly significant for interstate recruits who retain strong family and support networks elsewhere. When living locally becomes difficult or costly, relocating interstate while continuing to work FIFO can become an attractive alternative.

Long-term retention therefore depends on the conditions outside the workplace as well as those within it.



HOUSING

Availability,
affordability



CONNECTION

Flights, affordability,
family connections



SERVICES

Health, education,
childcare



COMMUNITY

Events, recreation,
social connection

Case Study | Building a life in the Territory

“No homes, no workers. No workers, no homes.

But liveability is about more than housing.

Affordable flights, good schools, events, recreation and strong communities all matter if we want people to build a life in the Territory and stay.”

Ruth Palmer

Northern Territory Executive Director,
Property Council of Australia



SECTION 2 | CAPACITY

Key insights

1. The Territory has a strong workforce base to build from

Operational, trade and supervisory roles have strong local participation, providing an established capability base for future industry growth.

2. Workforce needs differ by occupation

Local participation, interstate reliance, age profiles and education pathways vary across occupations. Building capability requires targeted responses rather than a single workforce solution.

3. Strong pathways support long-term Territory capability

Education, training and employment pathways help build local participation, while sustained partnerships can connect Territorians with skills, employment and career progression.

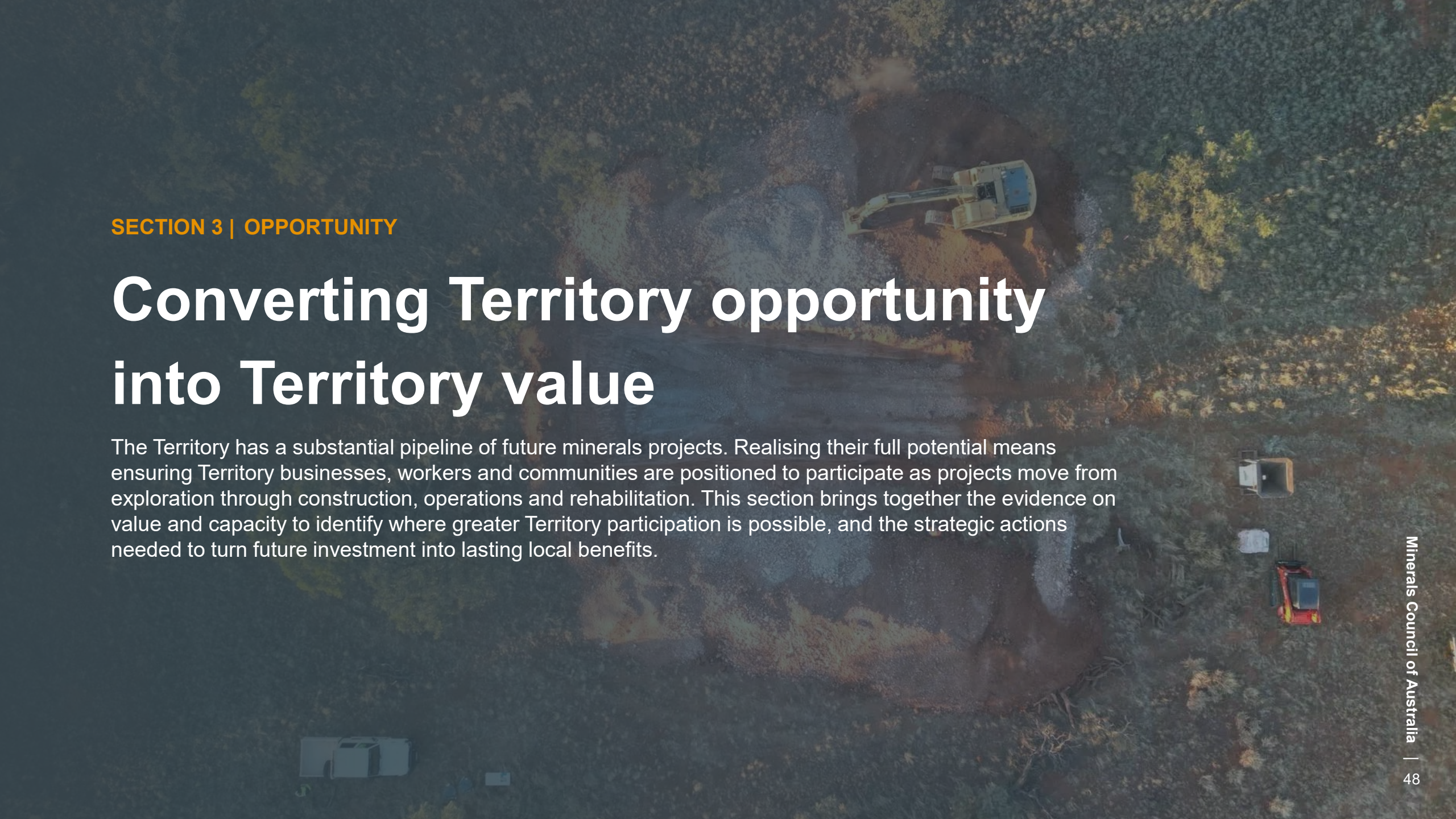
4. Attraction works best when it is targeted, and matched by retention

Younger technical cohorts offer particular attraction potential, but long-term capability depends on career opportunities, workplace practices and liveability that give workers and their families reasons to establish roots in the Territory.

5. Future workforce growth must broaden participation and prepare for changing skills

Increasing opportunities for women and Aboriginal Territorians, while preparing for emerging technical, digital and mine closure capability, will strengthen the depth and resilience of the Territory workforce.



An aerial photograph of a mining or construction site. A large yellow excavator is positioned on a pile of dark earth in the upper center. To the right, there's a smaller red vehicle and some white containers. The surrounding area is covered in sparse, dry vegetation. The overall tone is dark and industrial.

SECTION 3 | OPPORTUNITY

Converting Territory opportunity into Territory value

The Territory has a substantial pipeline of future minerals projects. Realising their full potential means ensuring Territory businesses, workers and communities are positioned to participate as projects move from exploration through construction, operations and rehabilitation. This section brings together the evidence on value and capacity to identify where greater Territory participation is possible, and the strategic actions needed to turn future investment into lasting local benefits.

SECTION 3 | OPPORTUNITY

From evidence to action

The evidence shows the Territory has strong foundations to build on and clear opportunities to capture more value from future minerals development. Eight strategic actions bring industry, government, education providers and regional stakeholders together to strengthen Territory capability, increase participation and maintain the competitive conditions needed to attract investment.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>01 Strengthen the evidence base for Territory value
Continue measuring mining's economic contribution and undertake more detailed expenditure and supply chain analysis to inform policy, investment and opportunities for Territory participation.</p> | <p>05 Target specialist attraction and retention
Focus attraction and retention on occupations where targeted action can build long-term Territory capability, supported by professional development, mentoring and career progression.</p> |
| <p>02 Strengthen Territory Participation
Build the capability and competitiveness of Territory businesses, improve their visibility to mining companies and strengthen relationships to help them compete for work.</p> | <p>06 Strengthen the future workforce
Build connected pathways from school through VET and tertiary education into employment, expanding opportunities for young people, women, Aboriginal Territorians and other underrepresented cohorts.</p> |
| <p>03 Invest in strategic common-user infrastructure
Prioritise infrastructure that reduces costs, strengthens supply chains and supports future minerals development and regional growth.</p> | <p>07 Coordinate workforce development
Align industry, government and education initiatives through shared workforce planning, demand forecasting and targeted investment.</p> |
| <p>04 Build local capacity in strategic occupations
Develop Territory-based education and training pathways in critical technical, professional and emerging occupations where sustained demand supports local delivery.</p> | <p>08 Support participation through infrastructure and liveability
Plan workforce growth alongside housing, childcare, healthcare, education, and regional services.</p> |

PRIORITY ACTION 1 | VALUE

Strengthen the evidence base for Territory value

Measure mining's economic contribution and strengthen analysis of exploration investment and supply chains to inform policy and Territory participation.

Why this matters

This report establishes a stronger evidence base for understanding the minerals industry's contribution to the Territory. Continued annual reporting will enable trends to be monitored over time, while more detailed analysis of expenditure and supply chains will help identify where and why mining expenditure occurs.

Together, these insights can inform better policy, investment and procurement decisions, and identify realistic opportunities to strengthen Territory participation while maintaining industry competitiveness.

What success looks like (2-5 years)

- Annual economic contribution reporting is established, enabling long-term trends to be monitored.
- Mining expenditure flows, supply chains and procurement decisions are better understood.
- Government and industry decisions are informed by evidence, with clearer opportunities to strengthen Territory participation.

Actions

- Continue annual minerals industry economic contribution studies, refining data collection over time.
- Undertake detailed analysis of expenditure categories, supply chains and procurement decisions.
- Identify commercially realistic opportunities to strengthen Territory participation.

Government actions

- Use economic contribution and expenditure data to inform economic development, workforce, procurement and regional policy.
- Partner with industry to improve data collection and identify supply chain opportunities.

Industry actions

- Continue participating in annual economic contribution studies and sharing relevant procurement insights.
- Use findings to demonstrate industry's contribution and identify opportunities for Territory suppliers.

PRIORITY ACTION 2 | VALUE

Strengthen Territory participation

Build the capability and competitiveness of Territory businesses to strengthen local supply chains and participation across mineral exploration, development, construction and mining operations.

Why this matters

Local participation requires more than procurement policy. Territory businesses need the capability, competitiveness and visibility to secure mining work. The Territory's relatively small market, dispersed projects and fluctuating demand can make it difficult for suppliers to invest, expand and maintain specialist capability.

Earlier engagement with mining companies can help local suppliers understand future demand, prepare for opportunities and build the capacity to compete. Stronger partnerships between industry, government and local businesses can address barriers, strengthen supply chains and increase Territory participation while maintaining an internationally competitive mining sector.

What success looks like (2-5 years)

- More Territory businesses have the capability and visibility to compete for mining work.
- Stronger relationships and earlier engagement between mining companies and local suppliers.
- Greater Territory participation in mining supply chains where commercially competitive.

Actions

- Strengthen connections between mining companies and Territory suppliers.
- Improve supplier capability and visibility of procurement opportunities.
- Increase Territory participation where commercially practical.

Government actions

- Support supplier capability and business development.
- Facilitate Meet the Buyer and supplier engagement forums.
- Align economic development programs with industry demand.

Industry actions

- Increase supplier engagement and early market communication.
- Participate in Meet the Buyer and capability-building initiatives.
- Work with Territory businesses to identify local opportunities

PRIORITY ACTION 3 | VALUE

Invest in strategic common-user infrastructure

Invest in strategic common-user infrastructure to reduce costs and strengthen regional competitiveness.

Why this matters

The Territory's scale, remoteness and dispersed projects increase the cost and complexity of moving goods, services and people. These challenges affect the competitiveness of local suppliers and the viability of future minerals projects.

Strategic common-user infrastructure can reduce costs, improve supply-chain reliability and help Territory businesses compete for more opportunities. Aligning infrastructure investment with future project demand will strengthen regional capability and support long-term industry growth.

What success looks like (2-5 years)

- Agreed industry-government priorities for strategic common-user infrastructure.
- Investment-ready business cases developed for priority projects, including opportunities for Australian Government funding.
- Minerals sector demand better integrated into Territory infrastructure planning and investment decisions.

Actions

- Prioritise common-user infrastructure that improves project and supply-chain competitiveness
- Align infrastructure planning with future minerals development and regional demand

Government actions

- Align infrastructure investment with the minerals project pipeline
- Progress priority road, rail, port, energy and logistics infrastructure
- Partner with industry to secure Australian Government funding and investment

Industry actions

- Share project pipeline, freight and infrastructure requirements
- Identify constraints affecting project and supplier competitiveness
- Provide evidence to support priority infrastructure business cases

PRIORITY ACTION 4 | CAPACITY

Build local capacity in strategic occupations

Building capability in occupations critical to future industry growth

Why this matters

Workforce demand is not simply about headcount. While machinery operators, tradespeople and supervisors make up much of the resources workforce, smaller specialist occupations are equally critical to future industry growth.

Geoscience, ESG, mine closure and rehabilitation, process operations and mine engineers all require specialised skills, yet have limited Territory-based education and training pathways.

Reliance on interstate talent and training can constrain local capability, particularly as new projects advance and demand for specialist skills increases. Strengthening these pathways will help build a more resilient, locally skilled workforce and support the next generation of Territory projects.

What success looks like (2-5 years)

- Territory-based pathways exist for agreed strategic occupations
- Industry, education providers and government deliver those pathways together
- More Territorians enter strategic technical and professional careers in resources
- Reliance on interstate education pathways has fallen for agreed occupations

Actions

- Strengthen Territory-based pathways into strategic occupations
- Expand education and training in strategic and emerging disciplines
- Increase awareness of strategic occupations with limited Territory pathways.

Government actions

- Support the development and expansion of Territory-based pathways in priority occupations
- Align CDU and training provider qualifications, short courses and microcredentials with industry demand signals
- Back curriculum development where Territory delivery is needed

Industry actions

- Co-design occupation-specific pathways with training providers
- Provide site exposure, mentors and work-integrated learning placements
- Share workforce demand signals to shape course design and career outreach.

PRIORITY ACTION 5 | CAPACITY

Target attraction and retention

Strengthening specialist capability and Territory participation

Why this matters

FIFO has long been a feature of the Territory resources workforce, particularly in specialist and leadership roles where local labour pools are limited. The priority is not eliminating FIFO, but identifying occupations where greater Territory participation can deliver lasting benefits.

Targeting younger and mid-career specialists, including engineers and geologists, offers particular potential to strengthen continuity, succession and knowledge retention.

Success requires more than relocation campaigns. Training pathways, professional networks, partner employment, housing and liveability all influence decisions to establish long-term roots in the Territory.

What success looks like (2-5 years)

- Greater Territory participation in specialist occupations
- A balanced workforce model that strengthens local capability while retaining FIFO where needed
- Mentoring, professional networks and career development sustain specialist capability
- The Territory is widely recognised as a place to build a long-term resources career.

Actions

- Identify priority occupations and opportunities to strengthen Territory-based participation
- Target attraction and retention in priority specialist occupations
- Build specialist capability through mentoring, professional networks and leadership development.

Government actions

- Target attraction and retention support to occupations in demand
- Link specialist attraction with housing, settlement, partner employment and regional liveability measures
- Co-invest in mentoring, professional networks and development.

Industry actions

- Build progression pathways from operational roles into technical, supervisory and leadership positions
- Expand mentoring, peer networks, succession planning and leadership development for specialist workers
- Trial practical retention supports.

PRIORITY ACTION 6 | CAPACITY

Strengthen the future workforce

Building a connected talent pipeline from education to employment

Why this matters

The Territory needs a talent pipeline that engages Territorians early, keeps contact through school and training, and connects them to real jobs in the resources sector.

That means early awareness in primary schools, visible role models, clear routes into VET and tertiary study, and targeted support for women, young people and underrepresented cohorts – a learning-to-work pathway that makes resources careers visible and accessible.

What success looks like (2-5 years)

- An education-to-employment pipeline runs from primary school through to industry
- More students, career changers and underrepresented groups enter the resources workforce
- Career pathways across the mine lifecycle are visible and understood
- Schools, VET, universities and industry work as partners on workforce development.

Actions

- Build a connected pipeline from school to employment
- Promote careers across the mine lifecycle
- Expand participation through mentoring and outreach
- Strengthen education and industry partnerships

Government actions

- Invest in career awareness, VET, cadetships and tertiary pathways
- Support participation by women, young people and underrepresented groups
- Support partnerships linking education and training to employment
- Support recognition of prior learning and targeted upskilling

Industry actions

- Provide placements, site visits, supervisors and mentors
- Partner with education providers to align training with demand
- Recognise transferable skills and support entry into technical and operational roles

PRIORITY ACTION 7 | CAPACITY

Coordinate workforce development

Aligning existing initiatives behind a shared workforce plan

Why this matters

The Territory has strengths in operational pathways, technical trades, environmental science and industry-led workforce partnerships. However, initiatives often operate independently, limiting opportunities to share resources, scale successful programs and respond to emerging workforce needs.

The challenge is not a lack of programs, but ensuring investment is coordinated and informed by future industry demand. Stronger alignment between industry, government and education providers will help direct training investment where it is needed most. The priority is to connect and build on what already works, rather than create another workforce system.

What success looks like (2-5 years)

- Workforce planning is coordinated across industry, government and education providers
- Investment is guided by shared data and future project demand
- Existing initiatives are aligned, expanded and delivering measurable results
- The sector has a recognised, evidence-based workforce planning framework

Actions

- Build on existing workforce strengths and successful programs
- Formalise industry-government workforce coordination through MCA NT
- Align project demand, training delivery and education investment through shared forecasting

Government actions

- Participate in coordinated workforce planning
- Identify program duplication, gaps and opportunities to scale
- Use workforce forecasts to guide training investment and evaluation

Industry actions

- Lead workforce planning through MCA NT
- Share project demand and priority skills gaps
- Participate in coordinated pilots and evaluations

PRIORITY ACTION 8 | CAPACITY

Support participation through infrastructure and liveability

A Territory where workers and families choose to stay

Why this matters

Jobs alone do not attract or retain workers. Housing, childcare, healthcare, education, connectivity and community liveability all influence whether families move to the Territory and stay.

For interstate recruits, housing pressures, limited services and family considerations can make FIFO more attractive than permanent relocation. These challenges are particularly significant in regional communities, where access to essential services can be limited.

Future workforce growth must therefore be planned alongside the infrastructure and services needed to support it.

What success looks like (2–5 years)

- More workers and families establish long-term roots in the Territory
- Liveability is central to workforce attraction and retention
- Housing and essential services keep pace with workforce growth
- Government and industry efforts are better coordinated

Actions

- Align workforce, infrastructure and liveability planning
- Improve relocation and settlement support
- Strengthen regional communities and essential services

Government actions

- Integrate workforce needs into housing, health, childcare, education and infrastructure planning
- Support family relocation and settlement initiatives
- Target regional investment at known retention barriers
- Advocate for migration settings aligned with Territory workforce needs

Industry actions

- Promote the Territory as a place to build a life, not just a roster
- Partner locally to support community connection and settlement
- Provide practical relocation support for Territory-based roles

CONCLUSION

The Territory has the foundations to capture more value

Mining already makes a substantial contribution to Territory jobs, businesses and communities. The Territory also has strong existing workforce and business capability to build on. Future benefits are not automatic: capturing more value will require targeted capability development while remaining competitive for workers and investment.

Foundations for future growth



Build on strengths

Build on the Territory's existing workforce, local businesses and established education and training pathways.



Target the gaps

Focus on skills, infrastructure and supply-chain gaps where the Territory can realistically build capability.



Stay competitive

Grow Territory participation alongside industry competitiveness.

The Territory has strong foundations. The opportunity is to build on them strategically.

CONCLUSION

The opportunity is here. The Territory can be ready

The Territory has a substantial pipeline of future minerals projects with the potential to create jobs, strengthen businesses, support regional communities and generate long-term economic value.

Mining projects take years to move from discovery to development. The workforce, businesses, infrastructure and partnerships needed to capture their benefits must be built before construction begins.

Territory Ready is not about making everything local. It is about identifying where the Territory can realistically build capability, where it should attract or access expertise, and how coordinated action can turn future development into lasting Territory value.

Building Territory capability starts now.

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