MINING A DEEP VEIN OF EMPLOYMENT

Yesterday’s Australian Bureau of Statistics labour force figures showing the breakdown of employment by sector highlights just how important mining has become for job creation in the Territory.

Between November 2007 and November 2008 the number of people employed in the mining sector in the Territory jumped from 3000 to 5000. The 2000 full-time jobs created in mining kept the Territory from going backward over the past 12 months with the total number of full-time jobs in the Territory increasing from 86,300 to 86,900.

“The buoyant full-time job numbers in the mining industry have already been slashed in recent months and are at risk of collapsing completely,” says Kezia Purick, Deputy Opposition Leader.

There have already been 200 job losses at McArthur River which now may close down completely taking another 300 position with it. GBS has closed putting 200 employees out of work and Matilda Minerals have shed staff. Add potential job losses from Rio Tinto’s operations at Alcan Gove and the Ranger uranium mine and the impact on the overall Territory job market is obvious.

“The Territory Government has been very quick to take credit for the resources boom and the associated economic benefits that flowed into the wider Territory economy.

“Now is the time to put its money where its mouth is and act decisively to ensure McArthur River isn’t shut down and additional investment in both the exploration initiative and the drilling assistance program keep many of the smaller companies afloat.

“Just yesterday the Federal Treasurer, Wayne Swan, was pleading with mining companies to hold onto their workforce as long as possible to ease the immediate impact of the world economic downturn

“I can tell you from experience that companies in the resource sector are little moved by sentiment – what they react on is cold hard logic.

“At the moment the Territory Government is sending the completely wrong message regarding its intentions for the sector.

“Malandirri McCarthy’s delight in the halt of production at McArthur River and Paul Henderson’s refusal to consider additional investment incentives are dangerous attitudes at times like this.”

Further comment: Kezia Purick 0408 992 887