NSW coal industry statistics

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Overall raw coal production fell for the second consecutive year after a decade of unprecedented growth. The 2015-16 preliminary statistics show overall raw coal production fell 2.5% to 247 million tonnes. For the first time in fifteen years exports fell; down 1.9% to 170 million tonnes for the year.

Production

At the end of June 2016 there were 40 coal mines operating in NSW following the closure of five mines during the year and one new mine commencing production in April. Of the operating mines, 22 were open cut and 18 were underground mines, 12 of the underground mines operating longwalls.

Overall raw coal production from underground mines fell to 66 million tonnes from 77 million tonnes, down 11 million tonnes (15.4%) on the previous year. In contrast, raw coal production from open cut mines increased by 3.2%, or 5 million tonnes to 181 million tonnes.

At a regional level, and in contrast to the fall in raw coal production across most of the industry, the tonnages won in the Gunnedah coalfield increased by 24.6%. This was due to increased raw coal production of 6 million tonnes from open cut mines. Raw coal production from open cut mines in the Western coalfield also increased, due to an additional 2 million tonnes won from mines in the Ulan region.

Employment

Production employment is defined as all persons working in or about the coal mine or coal preparation plant, pertaining to its operation, whether employed by the mine owner/operator or by a contractor. Statistics at 30 June 2016 show the industry has lost 22% of the peak workforce numbers reached in June 2012 of 24,972 with production employment sitting at 19,388 mineworkers (full-time equivalent workers).

Production growth in the Gunnedah coalfield and the Ulan region, was supported by increasing employment numbers with a net increase of 258 workers in the Gunnedah coalfield and 269 additional workers in the Ulan region.

67% of total workforce was employed directly by the owner/operator of the mine and 33% were contractors.

Exports

NSW coal was shipped to 24 countries during the year. 44% of coal exports were shipped to Japan, NSW's largest export market. Export shipments to Japan for 2015-16 were 75 million tonnes, up 6.4% on the previous year. The Republic of Korea accounted for 17% of the export

shipments at 28 million tonnes, the second largest market for NSW coal. Shipments to China fell 32.6% to 20 million tonnes during the year.

The FOB value of NSW coal exports for 2015-16 was $13.2 billion Australian dollars. This was down from $14.4 billion in 2014-15. The average FOB value per tonne for the year of $77.92 is down $5.58 per tonne on the previous year.

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For more information please contact:

Belinda Ward—Marketing Manager Coal Services
Mobile: 0419 148 135
belinda.ward@coalservices.com.au

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We work in collaboration with employers, workers, Government departments and other industry partners to help identify, assess, monitor and control many risks inherent in the NSW coal mining industry. Together, we work to protect the health and safety of those working in the industry through prevention, detection, enforcement and education.

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