Coal Services

Press release

NSW coal industry statistics

Sydney (Australia) 22 April, 2016

The NSW coal industry statistics for the twelve months to 31 December 2015 (calendar year 2015) show the trends of increasing coal production and export shipments has come to an end.

Over the ten years to 31 December 2014, NSW raw and saleable coal production had both been increasing at an average annual rate of over 5% with export shipments increasing at an average annual rate of 7%. The calendar year 2015 statistics show overall raw coal production fell 5% to 246 million tonnes and saleable coal production fell to 191 million tonnes. Exports fell 2% to 169 million tonnes for the calendar year 2015.

Production

At the end of December 2015 there were 42 mines operating in NSW. This follows the closure of five mines in the twelve months to 31 December 2015 and eight closures during the previous calendar year.

Overall raw coal production from underground mines fell to 69 million tonnes, down 9 million tonnes on the 2014 calendar year. Likewise, raw coal production from open cut mines fell by 5 million tonnes to 178 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 3 million and 7 million respectively from underground and open cut mines. The increase in raw coal production from underground mines in the west was due to an additional 3 million tonnes won from mines in the Ulan region.

Employment and productivity

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. The industry has lost almost one quarter of the peak workforce numbers reached in 2012-13 with production employment sitting at 19,303 mineworkers (full-time equivalent workers) at 31 December 2015. The decline in workforce numbers is expected to continue.

Overall productivity for NSW coal mines measured as production per mineworker per hour and production (output) per production employee (mineworker) both rose for the third consecutive year. Production per mineworker per hour for calendar 2015 was 9.46 tonnes up 6.3% and production per employee rose to 12,210 tonnes, up 3.7%.

Exports

NSW coal was shipped to 22 countries during the calendar year 2015. Japan remained NSW's largest export market. Export shipments to Japan for the calendar year 2015 were 74 million tonnes, up 6% on the calendar year 2014 and were almost equal to the calendar year 2013 tonnage. Shipments to China fell 37% in 2015 enabling the Republic of Korea to regain its place as the second largest market for NSW coal. The Republic of Korea accounted for 18% of the market.

The FOB value of NSW coal exports for calendar year 2015 were 14.1 billion Australian dollars. This was down from the 14.7 billion Australian dollars of the previous year. The average FOB value per tonne for the calendar year 2015 was $83.55, down $1.50 per tonne on the previous calendar year.

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About Coal Services:

Coal Services is an industry-owned organisation committed to providing critical services and expertise to the NSW coal mining industry. We operate a Specialised Health and Safety Scheme that provides an integrated suite of services aimed at preventing injury and illness in the workplace. These include occupational health and safety, workers compensation, mines rescue and training.

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.

We are jointly owned by two shareholders, the NSW Minerals Council and the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU). Our purpose, vision and values are aligned to focus on the safety and health of our industry and its workers.