



AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION PRETORIA

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Australia supporting sustainable mining in Africa

The scale of Australian resource interests in Africa remains significant, despite challenging global economic conditions, with strong support from the Australian Government.

Australian minerals and resource companies have current and potential investments in Africa worth more than US\$40 billion. Over 200 Australian companies are working in mining in Africa with more than 700 projects in exploration, extraction and processing.

“Australian companies bring advanced technology and high standards of environmental management and occupational health and safety to Africa. Above all, they are committed to working in partnership with local communities, which includes up-skilling local workforces”, said Australia’s High Commissioner to South Africa, HE Mr Graeme Wilson.

Australia’s presence at the 2014 Mining Indaba conference will be bigger than ever, including 63 Australian companies and an Australian Government delegation.

The Premier of Western Australia, the Hon Colin Barnett MEd MLA, will be attending and giving a keynote address on Wednesday 5 February.

Mr Bruce Gosper, CEO, Australian Trade Commission (Austrade), will also be participating together with a team of senior officials from Austrade, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Export Finance and Insurance Corporation (EFIC).

“This year, Australia will be hosting a number of sustainable mining events and supporting companies through two Australian Government locations: the large commercial Australia Lounge and an official Ministers’ Lounge”, said Mr Wilson.

“The Ministers’ Lounge provides a great space for Australian companies to discuss investment projects with local Ministers responsible for mining and resources. The Australia Lounge is an important venue for commercial networking and for Australian officials to inform relevant African counterparts about our sustainable mining initiatives”, Mr Wilson added.

Africa has been a focus of the Australian Government’s Mining for Development initiative since it was first launched in 2011. The initiative aims to assist governments to leverage their mineral wealth for economic growth and poverty reduction. Managed well, mining can drive innovation, generate the revenue needed to fund critical social services such as education and healthcare, and directly and indirectly create the jobs that lift people out of poverty.

“Australia is a resource-rich country with substantial experience in both mining and development. We are also a significant recipient and effective manager of foreign investment in mining. Australia is well-placed to share this experience and assist African countries wanting to develop and overcome the challenges of a growing mining sector,” said Mr Wilson.

Australia was the first donor to commit financial and technical support to the African Minerals Development Centre (AMDC), a joint initiative of the African Union, African Development Bank and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA). The Centre, launched in December 2013, will constitute a strategic hub for implementation of the Africa Mining Vision and will coordinate technical support to AU member states to better manage their extractive industries.

Australia is also supporting the development of the African Mineral Skills Initiative (AMSI), a public-private partnership that focuses on building the capacity of African institutions to deliver quality minerals skills education and training.

Additionally, Australia provides education and professional development assistance in mining related areas. In 2013, Australia hosted around 170 participants from 27 countries and 5 African organisations on mining study tours to Australia. These study tours have enabled officials to see first-hand both the good and the bad of Australia's experience in managing its mineral wealth. The Australian Government also offers postgraduate training opportunities through the Australia Awards scholarships. In 2013, Australia Awards scholarships were awarded to 128 individuals, from 34 African countries, for studies related to the mining sector.

To kick-off the 2014 Mining Indaba, this year Australia is co-hosting a two-day pre-conference sustainable mining roundtable in partnership with the World Bank Group. The first day of the event (2 February) will focus on developing solutions to Africa's mining-related infrastructure gap. The second day (3 February) will focus on opportunities to improve the enabling environment for mining investment in Africa, including in minerals geo-data.

Additionally, in partnership with the African Union, Australia is organising an event on 'Rolling out the Africa Mining Vision' (Monday 3 February, 13:30-17:15 at the Westin Hotel Ballroom East). This will include panel sessions focused on skills development and local content, including finding practical ways to implement the Africa Mining Vision.

For interview requests please contact Ms Natalie Mendelsohn, the Australian High Commission's Public Affairs Officer, on [REDACTED].