

Media Release

University of Adelaide Joins Mining Education Partnership

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The University of Adelaide is the latest tertiary institution to join the groundbreaking national education joint venture, Mining Education Australia (MEA).

Formed in July 2006 with three of Australia's top universities, The University of New South Wales, Curtin University and The University of Queensland, MEA is a world first in undergraduate education. The joint venture provides a common curriculum for third and fourth year mining engineering students, and is now extended across four states in Australia.

The significance of this new partnership is that MEA now covers mining regions throughout mainland Australia, with campuses in Western Australia, New South Wales, Queensland and now South Australia.

New opportunities are being created for South Australian students which will help reduce the shortage of professionals in the minerals industry.

"A new pool of students from a state which hasn't had a mining engineering program for some time, will now be able to train as mining engineers," Professor Bruce Hebblewhite, Head of School of MEA said.

"Students benefit from this world first national undergraduate mining education by gaining access to comprehensive industry endorsed education which uses innovative delivery and learning methods.

"This is good news for the mining industry as they can expect the quality of graduates to rise as a result of the partnership.

MEA students have access to a much larger team of academics than any one university can offer." Prof. Hebblewhite said.

"Developing the collaborative university program is part of a nationally coordinated strategy for the minerals industry to overcome the global shortage of qualified professionals in the mining industry" Dr Kevin Tuckwell, the Executive Director of Minerals Tertiary Education Council (MTEC) said.

“The mining industry contributes enormously to the wealth of the nation, but to continue to do so we need more than 9,000 new professionals by 2020” Dr Tuckwell said.

In 2007, there were 113 mining engineering graduates across Australia, of whom 87% were from MEA Member Universities. In 2008 there are now 176 students enrolled in their 2nd year of mining programs at current MEA universities who would be expected to enter their 3rd year of MEA in 2009.

“Now that The University of Adelaide has joined MEA, a further 60 students in 2nd year in 2008 are likely to enter a 3rd year MEA program at Adelaide in 2009, taking the MEA 3rd year 2009 total to approximately 230.” Prof. Hebblewhite said.

Student enrolment numbers have been growing at MEA universities, and the figure of 230 MEA 3rd year students in 2009 is rapidly approaching the industry target of 250 graduate mining engineers per year.

For more information on the MEA visit www.mea.edu.au

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