



In defence of a responsible mining industry



In the aftermath of COP27, and with insurer Aon reporting 29 weather-related disasters, each causing more than \$1.0 billion in damage, between January and September this year, it is becoming clearer that humanity has to do something. And every credible attempt to define that ‘something’ has included a need for more metals – copper for generating and transmitting electricity, lithium for batteries, steel for the structure of wind turbines, silicon for solar cells, even potentially uranium for nuclear power.

But at the same time, mining has become connected in people’s minds with dirty energy – mining equals coal. That’s leading to a dangerous narrative. In the UK, students at Exeter University, home of the Camborne School of Mines, have been bombarded by posters from the ‘Fossil Free Careers Campaign’, which also campaigns against the mining industry. They have called for a ban on promotion of mining careers on Exeter campus and have already succeeded at Birkbeck University of London.

While this might seem irrelevant in the UK with its small remaining mining industry, Australia is also struggling to attract young people from an environmentally conscious generation into mining. It is only a matter of time before the anti-mining mindset makes its way to South Africa.

Without ignoring our challenges, it is up to us to promote the industry unapologetically for what it is: the only way we’re going to source sufficient metals to meet our energy needs from renewable resources, and a vital contributor to the vision of a sustainable way of life. Let’s get out and talk at school careers days, local clubs and societies. and get the word out.

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