



The world may not be enough to solve Australia's resourcing issue

Unless life is found on Mars next year, Australia may have to quickly rethink its strategy on finding the skills it needs in other resource producing countries to feed our growing project pipeline.

In joint research undertaken by The Resource Channel and communications and marketing specialists, Marketforce, most of the countries Australia typically sources skilled labour from are also experiencing, or expecting to experience, significant skills shortages.

Simply, Australia is not alone in its growth plans. Not only is seven of the world's LNG producing countries planning to double their production in the coming decade, but the mining industries of South Africa, Canada, the United States and South America also cite significant growth plans, demanding more than 250,000 new entrants to the industry globally in the next decade. In other cases, like China and India, growth plans relate more to their economies, but still look to absorb the total of their own home-grown engineering

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and technical skills. to engaging international candidates whilst they develop new skills locally.

Not only does the Australian resource sector plan to significantly expand in the next decade, but the 5,000 or so replacements required each year to account for retirements and exits from the industry means employers will need to consider alternative sourcing options.

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This means that the majority of the target countries identified as potential sourcing options – including South Africa, Canada, United Kingdom, and the United States in particular – become far less feasible given their own growth plans. In fact, according to The Resource Channel's research, there is not one country that offers a potential strong supply of skilled labour.

Given the current economic climate means that anticipated growth plans for some may not eventuate in the short-term, it may mean that Australian organisations will need to deploy a more tactical short-term approach

Essentially, it means far greater consideration needs to be placed on entry level opportunities for local labour – apprentices, graduates, trainees, and cross-skilling those from other sectors with transferable skills. Now is not the time to decrease opportunities in these areas – for any Australian resource sector employer.

While the United States produces 76,000 engineering graduates a year and is the world's leading exporter of engineering services, the number of graduates receiving bachelor's degrees in engineering from US universities has remained virtually constant over the past decade. The National Mining



Contrary to popular opinion, growth in South Africa's mining sector means the country, for so long a popular destination for Australian companies seeking skilled workers, may be unable to provide workers to plug the gap

