

A healthy future for regional Australia is a healthy future for us all

Over the next four decades, BHP Billiton's Olympic Dam project in South Australia will grow to more than 4km long, 3.5km wide and 1km deep – the world's biggest mine. It will produce about 750,000 tonnes of copper and 19,000 tonnes of uranium oxide a year. When mining stops, the pit is expected to fill with groundwater, creating a vast outback lake up to 350 metres deep, with considerable potential as a tourist attraction.



The financial benefits that will accrue to South Australia and indeed to the whole country from this huge enterprise are colossal and symbolic of the vital role that regional Australia can play in our future as a nation. But this will take political vision and leadership of a magnitude that we are not seeing from Canberra right now.

Australia's economy generates about \$1.23 trillion of GDP – nominally the world's 13th largest, of which mining and agribusiness currently contribute about 10% and tourism adds a further 2.6%. Each of these sectors needs government backing in some way in order to prosper – in simple terms, tourism and agribusiness need improved human services such as health, education and communications, and mining needs a skilled, productive workforce and wise hands on the machinery of taxation in order to remain competitive.

Even with economic rumblings in China, our largest customer, the mining boom is set to continue for the foreseeable future – the huge investments being made in the industry at present are ample evidence of that. However, in many areas, factors such as shrinking populations, the drift of young people to the cities and the aging of farmers (of Australia's 140,000+ farmers, about half are aged 50 years or more, with about 30,000 aged 65+) all accelerate the decline and exacerbate the difficulty of recruiting.

Plato Group works closely with many organisations with a significant regional presence and has achieved considerable success in the identification and recruitment of hard-to-find specialists in many disciplines. No matter how remote the location, we can provide valuable strategic advice and a prompt, cost-effective, professional service to assist you with your next regional appointment. With the benefit of our years of knowledge and experience, gained from recruiting employees to work in unique environments, we are the ideal recruitment partner.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard A Weston". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Richard Weston
Principal