

G YOUR CAREER

Contact: careers@press.co.nz

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The great Australian mining myth

Kiwis tempted across the ditch by lucrative mining jobs take heed, says Christchurch-born man MARK (HAP) CAMERON.

No doubt you have seen the news on Australian mines crying out for workers to know with the current minerals boom or have heard the stories about Joe Bloggs who drives mine dump trucks or cleans toilets for \$100,000 a year.

Well, don't sell the house and pack up the kids just yet.

I am a 26-year-old Kiwi who made the move to Western Australia at the start of the year to work at a manganese mine in the Pilbara region, three-and-a-half hours north of Perth by plane. Let me share my experience of trying to enter mining in Australia.

In many industries, employers want experience, even more so with the mining industry. Mine employers want to know you can handle the lifestyle, demanding working conditions and strict health and safety controls.

In mining, you are not only applying for a job, you are applying for a lifestyle. If you are not living in a small mining town, you will be on a fly in/fly out roster.

Common rosters are two weeks on, one week off, or three weeks on, one week off. Recently, there has been a move towards shorter duration rosters, such as nine days of work and five days off, in an effort to entice and retain staff.

You must be able to convince a potential employer that you can cope with the lifestyle that means you are away for two-thirds of the year, a lifestyle that takes away simple things like being with your family and loved ones or having a weekly commitment to a sports team or club.

Can you handle the monotonous living and working conditions of the mining industry? When you are at the mine, you are there to work. On a two-week roster, you will usually work one week of day shifts and one week of night shifts. You work 12-hour shifts from 6am or 6pm. Then you have 12 hours off to eat and sleep. The cycle continues for 14 days straight.

It can sometimes feel like groundhog day. There is no getting away from it, you cannot go to your favourite cafe for a coffee (or pub for a beer), get your partner to cook your favourite meal or relax in an armchair watching the news or a rugby match.

You eat in a communal mess, choose from a buffet of four meals and afterwards sit back on your single bed to watch TV. The Western Australian climate makes for a tough work environment. The weather is hot and humid, and the flies are abundant.

I work one hour from the town of Marble Bar, Australia's hottest recorded town, with 121 consecutive days over 37.8deg. On extreme days, temperatures pass 50deg.

Health and safety is an integral part of the mining industry. All potential employees have to pass pre-employment medical tests and a police clearance, as an isolated mining camp is no place for trouble. On-site, employees are subjected to random drug and alcohol tests.

At my mine, all employees at the daily safety meeting are breath-tested and have to "blow zeros" before starting work. There is little tolerance for alcohol



Happy to be here: Mark Cameron (Hap to his friends) went to extreme lengths to get into mining in Australia.



abuse — three strikes you're out.

Employees take part in rigorous safety programs that mean risk assessment forms are filled out before undertaking any potentially hazardous tasks. A common joke is you cannot even go to the toilet without completing an induction course and getting certified.

If you have existing mining experience, it shows potential employers that you can handle the lifestyle, monotonous living and working conditions, harsh work environment and strict health and safety regime. This is why mining recruitment companies will accept only applicants with mining experience.

So, yes, the mines are shouting out for workers but they are not going to risk tens of thousands of dollars to train, accommodate and transport you to the Outback to run the risk of you tossing in

the job because "it's not what I expected".

I spent two months sending my CV to internet job sites and email addresses, applying for drillers' offside and field assistant roles. I felt confident because I had recent experience working on oil and gas drilling rigs in isolated parts of Canada with extreme cold temperatures (minus 40deg). However, it was only when a friend of a friend handed in my CV for a field assistant position that I got my current job.

Getting into the industry without a contact is like trying to enter an All Blacks game without a ticket. You need to know when jobs are available, who to send your CV to and who will vouch for you. Many companies offer incentives to employees to attract their qualified friends and associates, with finder's fees of up to \$NZ4900.

A common way in is through unskilled

positions such as cleaner, storeman, dishwasher or dining room attendant.

Gaining mine site experience through service companies shows that you can handle the work and the life.

You make contacts and can see the in-house job boards.

However, do not be fooled by the stories of Joe Bloggs getting paid bucket-loads as a cleaner.

The average starting salary for a cleaner or storeman on a roster of two weeks on, one week off, is \$NZ67,000 a year.

For qualified and experienced people, mining brings big salaries.

Job sites such as www.seek.com.au and www.careerone.com.au have many jobs offering an annual salary over \$NZ148,000. However, entry-level jobs such as truck driver or pit technician pay around \$NZ35 an hour or \$NZ103,000 a year.

HAP'S TRAVELS

Follow Hap's adventures at www.hapworkingtheworld.com

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Senior Project Delivery Opportunities

As the owner and operator of the National Grid, Transpower plays a key role in New Zealand's economy. The country relies on Transpower to provide it with a reliable network infrastructure to ensure electricity supply to all New Zealanders. Transpower does this by transmitting electricity, maintaining the National Grid, planning and building necessary upgrades to the grid, and operating the wholesale electricity market.

Transpower is entering a new phase of significant development for the National Grid with a number of major projects, which are at implementation or advanced planning stages.

Exciting career opportunities exist for project management professionals in the following senior level and project support roles:

PROGRAMME MANAGER HVDC: 2 POSITIONS (REF:1276)

Purpose:

- Multi project management/leadership
- Concept to closure, commercial focus
- High level, cross functional, project team development
- Management of stakeholder relations
- Management of a team of Project Managers and Subject Matter Experts

Requirements:

- Proven experience in multiple, high value, capital project delivery
- Ability to support, advise and mentor project staff
- Experience in working to established project management methodologies and frameworks
- HVDC and/or Substation technical specialisations
- Electrical engineering experience and project/management qualifications

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT OFFICE MANAGER: (REF:1274)

Purpose:

- Programme and Project Manager support
- Support timely and co-ordinated delivery of capital projects and programmes of work
- Adherence to a prescribed 'Best Practice' project management methodology
- Establish and maintain project management standards and systems
- Monitor and accurately report on progress against capital works programme
- Manage a team of Project Schedulers and Planners

Requirements:

- Experience in managing a PMO in an engineering/technical environment
- Knowledge and experience in programme management and project support methodologies and practices
- Ability to coach, mentor and support project staff
- Strong relationship development and skills management
- Strategic problem solving/solution delivery ability
- Engineering or management qualification
- Project/management qualification

COMMERCIAL MANAGER: TWO POSITIONS (REF:1272)

Purpose:

- Develop procurement and market strategies to ensure the effective delivery of the HVDC/NIGU projects
- Develop, deploy and maintain contracting and financial mechanisms to manage the commercial risks associated with major infrastructure projects
- Manage a team of project professionals

Requirements:

- Ability to develop and administer outsourcing arrangements
- High value contractor selection/management experience
- Financial risk management knowledge and experience
- Proven contract negotiation skills
- Understanding of complex engineering design, construction and maintenance environments
- Highly effective communication and relationship skills, including advocacy and influencing ability
- Engineering, business or operations research qualification

ASSET PERFORMANCE PLANNING MANAGER: (REF:1273)

Purpose:

- Asset performance champion, leadership, vision
- Development of Transpower's asset performance strategy
- Planning to deliver enhanced asset performance, management and operation of the Grid
- Operational and strategic focus
- Manage a variable matrix team and influence a number of business units

Requirements:

- Senior level maintenance/operations management experience
- Ability to translate requirements of Stakeholders into substantial operational requirements
- Proven ability to develop asset performance and management plans
- Strong relationship development skills
- Electrical engineering experience and qualifications
- Business or post graduate qualification

ASSET WORKS PLANNING MANAGER: (REF:1278)

Purpose:

- Project portfolio management, planning and prioritising
- Project authorisation, process establishment and compliance
- Development and utilisation of an up-to-date, optimised asset works plan of all work planned on Grid Assets
- Planning to deliver credible, deliverable, enhancement of grid capacity, reliability and performance
- Manage a team of planners

Requirements:

- Experience in managing a project portfolio office
- Proven ability to understand and develop technical project plans across a business
- Strong stakeholder relationship management skills
- Highly developed communication skills
- Engineering experience and qualifications
- Project/management qualification

PROJECT CO-ORDINATOR: TWO POSITIONS (REF:1279)

Purpose:

- Delivery focus
- Project management support – large projects
- Project management – small projects

Requirements:

- Experience in power project delivery
- Knowledge of HV electrical equipment and plant
- Understanding of the complexities of a transmission system operations utility
- Effective communication and relationship management skills, including advocacy and influencing ability
- Relevant engineering qualification
- Project/management qualification

These Wellington-based roles aim to attract interest from high level performers with proven expertise in large infrastructure project delivery. Remuneration includes a competitive base salary, comprehensive benefits package, and performance incentive bonus.

Transpower has a strong commitment to encouraging individual professional development through providing challenging work and specific job related training. The breadth of ongoing opportunities within Transpower will ensure that your career does not stagnate!

For further details on these positions and Transpower, or to apply, please visit www.transpowercareers.co.nz

You may also contact Alan Head or Lynell Bell at EQI Global on +64 3 377 7793 or lynell.bell@eqiglobal.com for further information.

Closing date for applications is Friday, 6 June 2008.

PROJECT ADMINISTRATOR: TWO POSITIONS (REF:1281)

Purpose:

- Administration support to Project Managers
- Develop and utilise project administration systems
- Assist in the co-ordination and integration of project tasks
- Measure and analyse project performance

Requirements:

- Experience in project administration
- Practical computer skills including strength in Excel spreadsheeting
- Excellent organisational, planning, and co-ordination skills
- Strong interpersonal skills
- Ability to meet deadlines and commitments



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TRANSPOWER



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