



# MUM & DAD VERSUS FIFO

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Parents are discouraging their teenage children from pursuing careers in the resources sector because they mistakenly believe there are “no jobs” in the industry — potentially helping to create a crippling future skills shortage.

WA Chamber of Minerals and Energy chief executive Paul Everingham said about 15,000 additional workers would be required in the resources sector between 2020 and 2025, compared with

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## Parents warn kids off FIFO

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the 40,000 needed in the last mining boom between 2005 and 2012. He said collaborative research with CSIRO showed young people wrongly believed the resources sector was not technologically focused, or clean and green, and many believed they would have to travel to regional areas to work.

But parents were the main driver behind a startling decline in enrolments for mining courses nationwide.

“The single biggest factor — if you just park those sociological issues to one side — is that parents aren’t encouraging their children, and kids listen to one key demographic when they’re choosing a university or post-school career, and that’s their parents,” Mr Everingham said.

“Parents in the past six or seven years have said there’s no jobs in mining.

“Their perception is — and if you read the paper over the past

four or five years — it has been a cost-out environment.

“FMG, Rio, BHP — every miner has been shedding staff and their parents read that in the newspaper and then reinforce it with their children.”

The dearth of new talent entering the industry is expected to exacerbate a looming skills shortage in the mining sector as three big iron ore projects in the Pilbara hit peak workforce.

Speaking at the annual Global Iron Ore & Steel Forecast conference at Crown Perth yesterday, Mr Everingham said that nationally people starting a trade had fallen by 10,000 in the past four years.

Curtin University’s WA school of mines had only two applications for metallurgical engineering this year compared with 80 places. Enrolments for its mining engineering course fell 70 per cent from 325 in 2014 to just 99 last year.

The finding comes as figures reveal that not a single extra West Australian is in a job compared with nine months ago.

Figures from the Bureau of Statistics released yesterday showed there were 1,337,700 West Australians employed in May last year, and that figure declined by 500 in February, in trend terms.