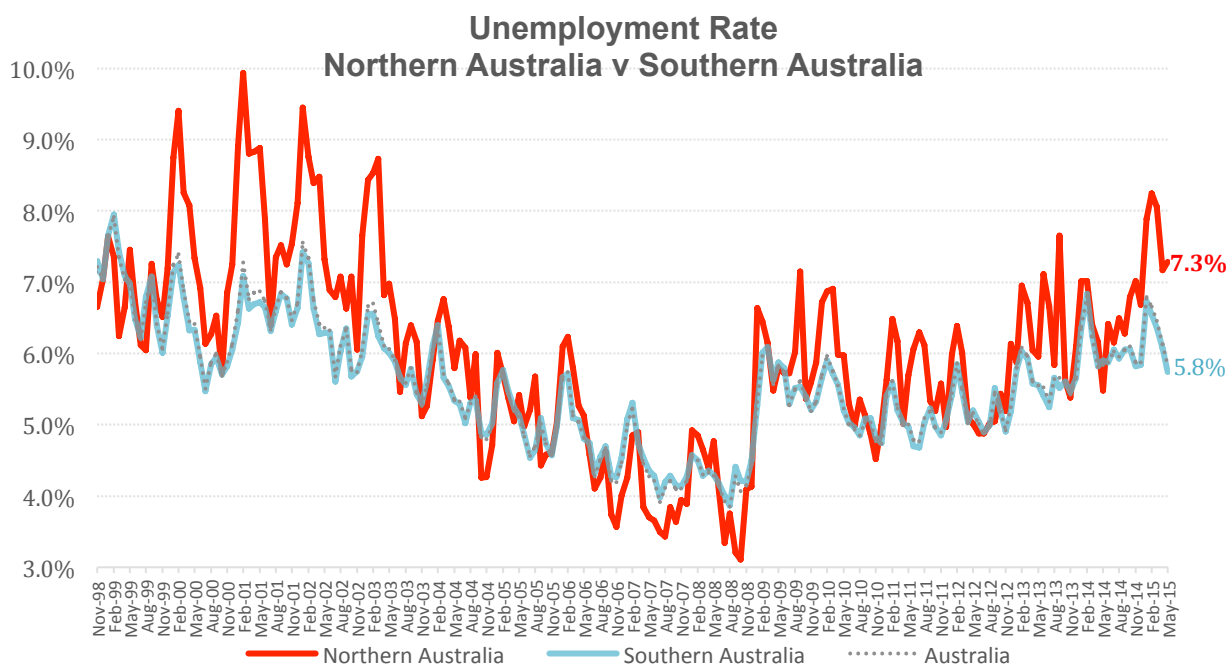


UNEMPLOYMENT IN NORTH HIGHEST IN 12 YEARS AS WHITE PAPER LAUNCHED

The unemployment rate in Northern Australia now sits at 7.3 per centⁱ, in non-seasonally adjusted terms, a level not seen since August 2003 (see graph below). The rate is 1.5 per cent higher than the comparable rate in the South.ⁱⁱ



Regional Australia Institute (RAI) analysis of the ABS quarterly industry employment statistics indicates the waning of net employment in the resources sector across Northern Australia, with the exception of Darwin where resources-related development activity continues and unemployment remains very low.

This underpins how important rapid progress in implementing the Federal Government's *White Paper on Developing Northern Australia* is to the North.

Declining employment in the resources sector will need to be offset by job creation in other industries, with accommodation and food services the main bright spot right now.

"The timing and approach of the *White Paper* is certainly good, but we need to move quickly in implementation to help facilitate transition in the northern economy." said Deputy CEO of the RAI, Jack Archer.

The next phase of development in the North will be driven by a diverse range of smaller developments, particularly in tourism and agriculture.

**Northern Australia
Total Employment (000s) - Mining
May Quarters 2000-2015**

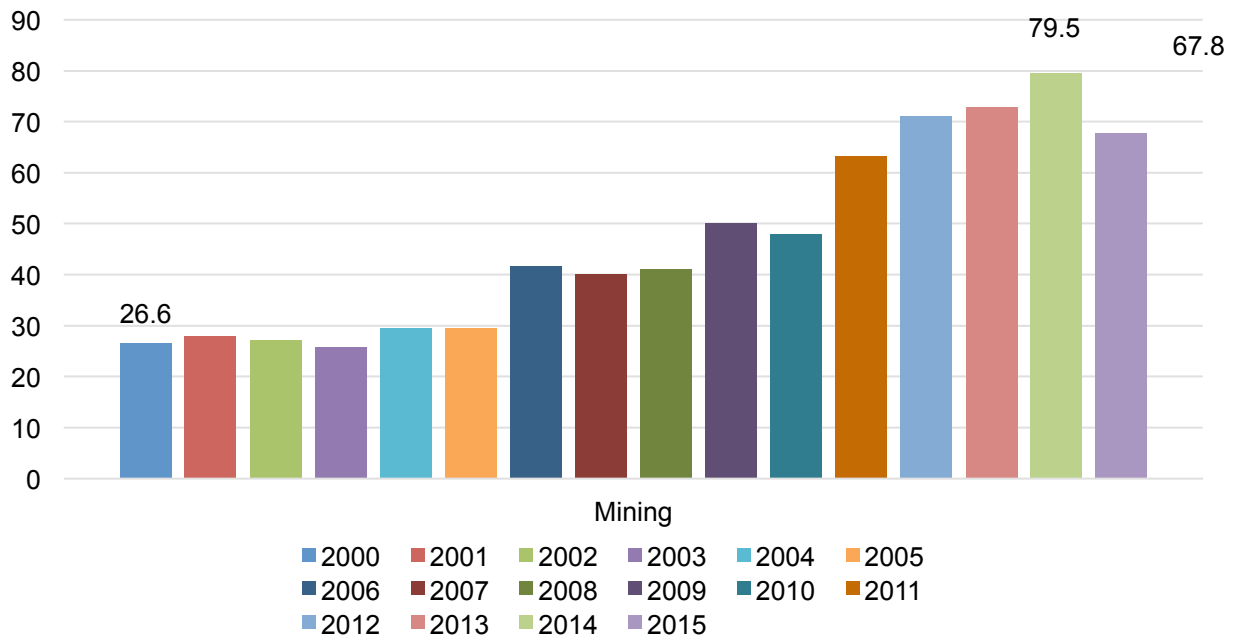


Figure 1: Total employment in the mining industry in Northern Australia

While the scale of these developments may not compare to the mining investment, they are potentially strong contributors to the local jobs needed in the North.

Many of these developments remain constrained by issues such as access to land and water which the Government will target through the White Paper initiatives.

“It is the combination of small but smart initiatives working together to change the investment environment which will drive future growth” said Mr Archer.

More certainty for Indigenous people, leaseholders and investors in relation to land use is one of the White Paper’s crucial reforms, as is accelerating native title claims and establishing tradable water rights.

Addressing knowledge gaps about agriculture in the harsh northern environments and overcoming infrastructure and supply chain challenges will also be particularly important.

“Our discussions with leaders in the North suggest there is a good mix of investment opportunities on the table right now. We have the policy right, so it is important we get on with implementation” said Mr Archer.



Source: RAI calculations using *ABS Labour Force, Australia, Detailed - Electronic Delivery, 6291.0.55.001, May 2015*

About the Regional Australia Institute

The Regional Australia Institute (RAI) is an independent policy think tank and research organisation. It's the vital link between research, policy and implementation.

The RAI advocates for change to build a stronger economy and better quality of life in regional Australia – for the benefit of all Australians.

For more information on the RAI go to www.regionalaustralia.org.au

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ⁱⁱⁱ Regional unemployment has been calculated by the Regional Australia Institute using Australian Bureau of Statistics labour force data for Greater Capital Cities and Rest of State.

ⁱⁱ Note: these figures are calculated using the best available approximation of Statistical Areas Level 4 to Northern Australia. These areas are geographically large and do not closely align to disparate labour markets in Northern Australia.