

# Migrants needed to meet demand

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HUGE numbers of overseas and interstate workers must move to South Australia or the state may miss the expected mining boom, an Adelaide economist has warned.

University of South Australia Professor Richard Blandy yesterday told a major mining conference in Whyalla the mining industry will “grind to a halt” without a huge increase in the number of skilled workers, most of whom will need to migrate.

He said SA will require about 370,000 more skilled workers by 2027 to meet the demands of the growing economy.

“It is impossible to believe

that we can meet the skills needs without massive migration,” he said.

“And it has to happen on a large scale or this (the mining boom) is not going to happen.

“Given the population is ageing, we are looking at the domestic sources actually turning down.”

Professor Blandy said he expects many skilled workers to migrate from Asia and Eastern Europe to SA, lured by high wages and an affluent lifestyle.

He said the massive increase in population will lead to major challenges for the Government to fund public infrastructure projects.

Employment Minister Paul

Caica, who also spoke at the conference, said migration will play an important role in filling skills shortages but the Government expects many unemployed or under-employed South Australians to gain employment as a result of the mining boom.

He said many migrants who will be working in SA are likely to be overseas students who study in Adelaide and choose to remain in the state.

“A lot of our future skilled workforce I believe is going to come from the fact we already have students here from overseas that are being educated and trained in SA,” Mr Caica said.

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- PROFESSOR RICHARD BLANDY

