Mining and transnational labour migration: intersections of policy, industry practice, and ‘everyday’ lives

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Transnational labour migration is a core component of contemporary mineral extraction in Australia. This presentation argues for an inclusive understanding of this practice through attention to state regulation, industry practices and migrant experiences in destination communities. It offers analysis of 2012 raw survey data of collected by the Department of Immigration and Border Protection, policy and integrity reviews, and a substantive body of semi-structured interviews. The latter spans spouses of transnational labour migrants who have moved to Boddington in rural Western Australia in order to work at the nearby gold mine, paid and volunteer community migrant support workers with responsibility for this Shire, and long-term local residents in the receiving community. Highlighting the community and gendered dimensions of the use of Temporary Work (Skilled) subclass 457 visas the presentation contributes to debates around ‘sustainable’ mining.

Robyn Mayes is a Vice Chancellor’s Research Fellow in the Queensland University of Technology Business School. Her research focusses on the social and geo-political dimensions of mining in Australia with particular interests in the areas of divestment, corporate social responsibility, mining employment (including mine closure and mobile labour), and gender and the resource sector. She is a co-editor of Resource Curse or Cure? On the Sustainability of Development in Western Australia (Springer 2014) and has published widely in a range of academic journals including Organization, Journal of Industrial Relations, and Environment and Planning A.