

Mining 'more important' than farming

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NSW Primary Industries Minister Ian Macdonald has supported Premier Nathan Rees's assertion that mining is more important to the state than farming.

On Thursday NSW Premier Nathan Rees told reporters mining was economically more important than farming, after farmers demonstrated outside Parliament House to stress their concerns that agricultural land was being "sacrificed" to mining.

"Ultimately mines generate many, many more jobs than agricultural production," Mr Rees said.

Mr Macdonald told reporters on Friday he believed about 100,000 people were employed in farming across NSW, but that many of those jobs were part-time and seasonal.

He said the work created \$5.6 billion in terms of exports.

In the mining sector, he said, around 75,000 people were directly or indirectly employed, "with an export output last year of \$12.4 billion).

"You have to remember the mining communities really contribute significantly to those localities where there is significant mining," he said.

"For instance the Charles Sturt University Research Institute has shown in local government areas where there is significant mining activity, the per capita increase or above average of income is \$7000 for every individual in that area, so that's a significant boost to a regional area that is fortunate enough to have a significant mining activity."