



# Aboriginal Participation in Mining

## STATISTICAL PROFILE

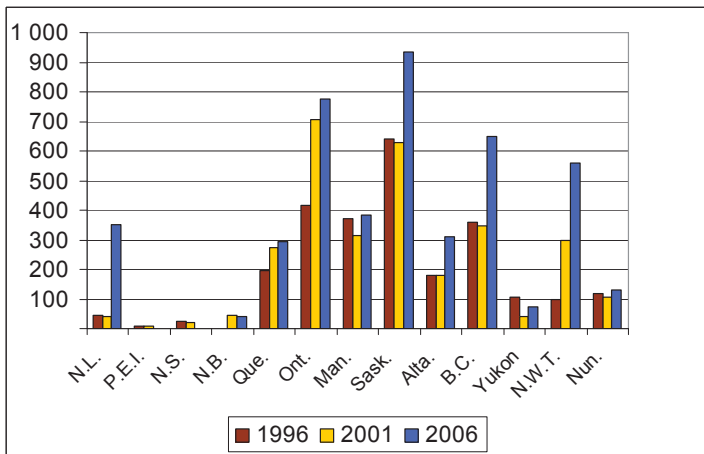
*The Minerals and Metals Sector of Natural Resources Canada promotes the participation of Aboriginal communities in minerals and metals activities across Canada.*

## Aboriginal employment in mining grew to 7.5% in 2006.

### Aboriginal Employment in Mining: An Upward Trend

According to the 2006 Canadian Census, Aboriginal<sup>1</sup> employment accounted for 7.5% of the total mining labour force compared with 5.1% in 2001. Of the 4515 Aboriginal people in the labour force in the Canadian mining sector (excluding oil and gas), the highest mining population density was reported in Saskatchewan (20.7%), followed by Ontario (17.2%), British Columbia (14.4%), and the Northwest Territories (12.4%). Newfoundland and Labrador showed an impressive 775.0% increase in its Aboriginal mining work force from 2001 to 2006, mainly attributable to the development of the Voisey's Bay mine.

**Figure 1. Aboriginal People in the Mining Work Force, 1996, 2001, and 2006<sup>2</sup>**



Source: Statistics Canada, Census 1996, 2001, and 2006.

<sup>1</sup> Aboriginal people as defined by the Statistics Canada term "Aboriginal identity."

<sup>2</sup> Source: Statistics Canada's Census data, 1996, 2001, and 2006. The 2001 and 2006 data use North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) 2002 code 212 (Mining – except oil and gas) whereas the 1996 data are based on the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) codes. The following concordance of NAICS code 212 to the SIC codes is applied: SIC codes D061 (Metal Mines), D062 (Non-Metal Mines), D063 (Coal Mines), and D08 (Quarry and Sand Pit). Industry groupings differ from those used in the 2005 Aboriginal Participation in Mining Information Bulletin entitled "Statistical Profile."

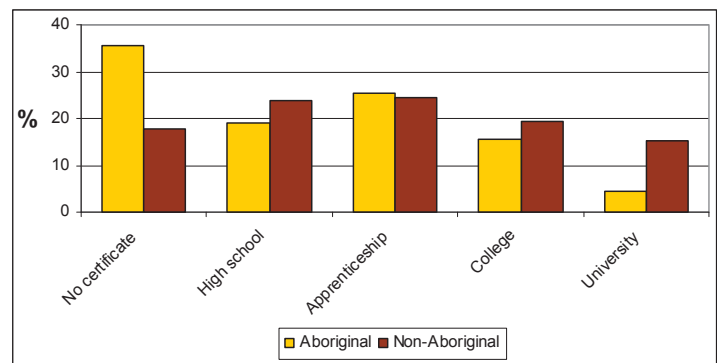
### Unemployment Rate

The unemployment rate<sup>3</sup> of Aboriginal people in mining in 2006 was 10.7%, down from 12.3% in 2001. Despite improvement, the unemployment rate of Aboriginal people in mining remained more than twice as high as the non-Aboriginal rate of 4.6%.

### Education

The educational level of Aboriginal people in mining remained below that of non-Aboriginal people. Data from the 2006 Census showed that 45.3% of Aboriginal people employed in mining and aged 25 to 64 had post-secondary qualifications, compared to 59.1% of non-Aboriginal people. Only 4.3% had a university certificate, diploma or degree, compared to 15.3% for their non-Aboriginal counterparts.

**Figure 2. Share of Work Force in Mining by Level of Education, 2006**



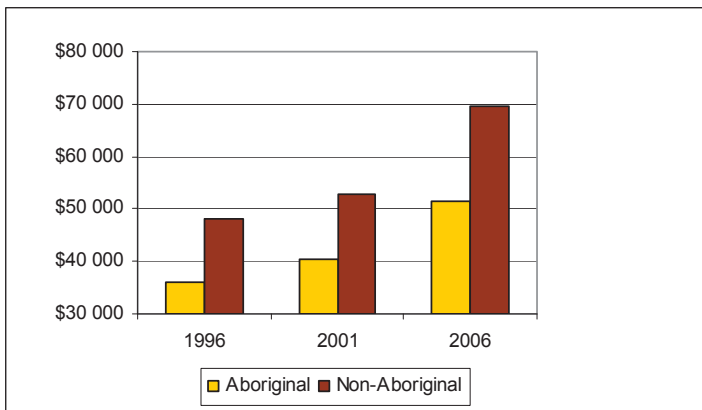
Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2006.

<sup>3</sup> The unemployment rate, as defined by Statistics Canada, refers to the number of unemployed people expressed as a percentage of the labour force in that group.

## Income

In 2006, Aboriginal people working in the mining sector had an average employment income of more than twice that of the average for total Aboriginal people. However, the gap between the average annual income of Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people in mining widened in 2006 as Aboriginal people earned approximately \$18 000 less than their non-Aboriginal counterparts, compared with a gap of approximately \$12 200 in 2001.

**Figure 3. Average Employment Income in the Mining Sector, 1996, 2001, and 2006**

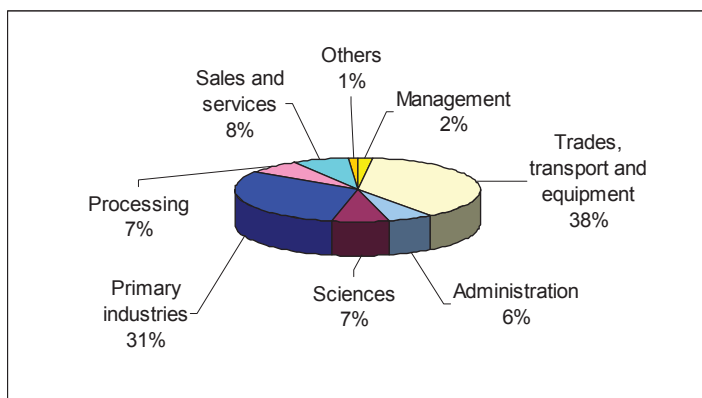


Source: Statistics Canada, Census 1996, 2001, and 2006.

## Occupations of Aboriginal People in Mining

In 2006, Aboriginal people in mining continued to be predominantly employed in the trades, transport, and equipment operators sector (38.0%) and in the occupations unique to the primary industry (31.0%). The proportion of Aboriginal people in management remained relatively unchanged from 2001 at 2.0%.

**Figure 4. Proportion of Aboriginal Work Force in Mining by Occupation, 2006**

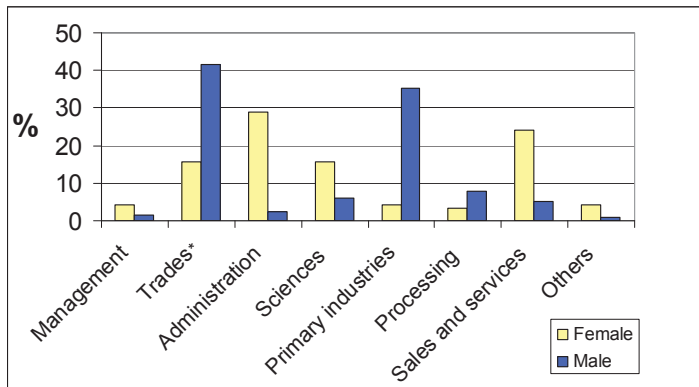


Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2006.

## Aboriginal Women in Mining

Women accounted for only 14.0% of all Aboriginal employees in the mining sector in 2006, showing a slight increase from 11.5% in 2001. Aboriginal women in mining were more likely than Aboriginal men to have post-secondary qualifications, but earned average incomes of approximately \$15 500 less than men. Aboriginal women working in the mining industry are mostly employed in business, finance and administration (28.5%), sales and services (23.6%), and natural and applied sciences (15.5%). Only 0.6% are in management.

**Figure 5. Occupations of Aboriginal Work Force by Gender, 2006**



Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2006.

\* Trades, transport, and equipment.

## Challenges and Opportunities

An aging and retiring work force is one of the challenges facing the mining industry. Despite the current economic downturn, the mining industry's need for skilled workers is still estimated to remain strong.<sup>4</sup> Meanwhile, many Aboriginal communities are located in close proximity to major exploration and mining projects across Canada, representing a window of opportunity for both Aboriginal people and the industry. However, obstacles such as lower educational levels still hinder the full participation of Aboriginal people in the skilled labour force in mining.

Advances have been made in engaging Aboriginal people and communities in the mining industry in many parts of the country. Agreements between mining companies and Aboriginal communities, such as those at the Diavik, Ekati and Snap Lake diamond projects, provide literacy, on-the-job training, leadership programs, and employment opportunities. However, cooperative and sustained efforts will be necessary to develop longer-term sustainable skills and employment opportunities for Aboriginal people and to maintain a skilled labour force in the mining industry.

<sup>4</sup> Mining Industry Human Resources Council, Virtual MinMentor Program, [www.acareerinmining.ca/minementor/](http://www.acareerinmining.ca/minementor/).

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For more information on Aboriginal communities and mining, please visit [www.nrcan-rncan.gc.ca/mms-smm](http://www.nrcan-rncan.gc.ca/mms-smm) or send an e-mail to [questions@nrcan-rncan.gc.ca](mailto:questions@nrcan-rncan.gc.ca)