

PREFACE

Higher expectations for better environmental protection, attempts to further reduce human health risks, competition for land and the increasing value of the natural environment as recreational space have all led to marked improvements in regulatory requirements and mining practices in a number of countries. Furthermore, many mining companies have introduced management policies, practices and technologies that greatly reduce the environmental impact caused by mining activities at the different stages of a project, from exploration, through operation and until after closure.

Chile is one of the world's most important mining centres with a recognised tradition and leadership in mining. However, few know that Chilean mining is also one of the most challenging. Due to Chile's peculiar geographical position (very long and narrow territory with varied climate zones) mines operate in diverse geographical conditions ranging from high altitudes, up to 5000 m above sea level, to underground workings beneath the ocean floor. Mines are also exposed to extreme weather conditions, from the driest deserts in the north, to intense rain and snowfalls in the south, and frequent natural hazards such as earthquakes, avalanches and floods. One of the more important Chilean gold mines, El Indio, has undertaken closure and several other mines will be closing in the near future. Thus, a crucial question arises: how to possibly close mines in these locations and conditions in a socially, environmentally and economically acceptable way. The authors of more than 160 abstracts responded to the call for papers to attempt to answer these and other questions.

Mine Closure 2007, the second seminar in a series initiated in 2006 in Perth, Australia, seeks to provide an international forum where natural resource professionals can analyse and discuss the best practices in mine closure developed until today, as well as share ideas for future solutions.

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And to you, the readers and participants, whose interest and enthusiasm make this event so versatile, and the experience so rewarding and enriching.

Mine Closure 2007 Organising Committee