

Mine Closure Hub – resources for communities

What is mine closure? transcript

Kit Wilson

My name is Kit Wilson. I work for a mining company in New Zealand. To me, closing a mine means leaving the site and surrounding environment in a safe, stable and sustainable condition. It means leaving a host community that's resilient not reliant by providing appropriate social and economic tools and fostering cultural partnerships throughout the mine's life. Effective mine closure means working out how you'll shut the gates before you think about opening them. But if you don't know how you're going to close, then you're not ready to open.

Ignacio Cruz

Mine closure is about how the ecosystem of a mining project could continue to generating value after the life of the mine is completed. I mean environmental, social and human values. It is mainly about people, nature, flora and fauna, and resources that should be developed during the mining operation to get to the end with the best capabilities of the ecosystem to continue generating value and developing itself.

Steve de Kruijff

Mine closure used to mean that the ore body was exhausted. Now, it's something we plan for before the mine is even approved. A multitude of people, interested groups and governments have a say in the final state of the post-mine landform, water, ongoing employment, businesses and other legacies.

Emmanuel Richmond

In many cases for developing countries, mine closure means the beginning of suffering for local communities because many mining companies invest hundreds of billions in government area rehabilitation but the social and community aspects of the mine closure are often not taken into account by the mining companies and after the mine close, the community really start to suffer because they are not able to move to another means of revenue.

Jean Robins

Mine closure means to me the loss of jobs, families leaving the area to seek other opportunities, the closure of small businesses and schools, loss of funding for community groups and sporting clubs, the degrading of infrastructure that may have initially been commissioned by the mine but is left behind when they close and local council cannot afford to maintain.

Florence Drummond

What do mine closures mean to me? So, I'd like to raise four points to this question. Firstly, a holistic understanding to the value chain. So, what I mean by that is access to education previously around what the value chain was, wasn't really available or practical at any one point. So, this brings about a fantastic opportunity to learn more but also to understand where we can participate there as well in terms of Indigenous participation. It becomes an organic driver towards shared value which is something that is fantastic. Secondly, it creates opportunities for greater communications between landowners and operations. What I look forward to the most there is around the dynamics of that relationship. So that will be a really beautiful mechanism or catalyst for empowering a local community, so look forward to that. Thirdly, it speaks to global shifts as well towards a greener industry. Often, we feel that we're not part of that conversation, so as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, participating in industry and now in the part where it's mine closure, the mine closure space, we can definitely feel that we can contribute there greatly as well. And lastly, it's a catalyst for a better future, so not only between all stakeholders, not only just for business, but also for general race relations within the country. So, these are the four points that I really look forward to and understand of what mine closure can bring to the community and also industry. Thank you.

Rosemary Okla

Mine closure is the process by which active mining activities ceases or reduces due to depletion of ore and it can be permanent or temporary.

Daniela Rivas

For me, a closure plan should be treated as an integrated and multi-disciplinary plan due to its magnitude and complexity. It must be worked out well in advance and include stakeholders from all levels: the State, the company and the community, so that everyone can provide their different views and ideas. In short, it is the mechanism that mitigates all the impact made by the industry and that takes care that the mining impacts don't affect the environment or the quality of life of communities.