

FROM CRADDLE TO GRAVE: A MINERAL POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR A HEALTHY MINING INDUSTRY

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In today's global mineral economic climate, Governments must compete for international investment in exploration and resources development by enhancing of prospectivity with high-quality geoscience information and by managing industry through clear and equitable regulatory and fiscal regimes, which must be stable and predictable. As trust in government is built on consistent behaviour and a policy of no surprises, any legislative amendments must be preceded by significant consultation with industry. Access to land for exploration, security of tenure, and a right to mine any discovery are fundamental prerequisites. Long-term, trouble-free mining is only possible if the interests of and impact on a variety of alternative land-users and the indigenous population, have been sensitively dealt with and on adequately provided for in a fair and equitable manner before operations commence. Maximisation of financial value to shareholders does not necessarily lead to socio-economically optimal exploitation of resources. Thus market forces must be complemented by enforceable systems for management of occupational health and safety and of the environment, which should appeal on the company's duty of care, and commitment to achieve responsible corporate citizen status. This spirit of cooperation and can do will prosper if Government changes its role from that of policeman to that of an auditor and facilitator of responsible plans and practices by industry, by keeping open and very effective channels for liaison, communication, and continuous reciprocal education about each others' needs.