2025 ICMM Mining Leadership Forum

London, 13-15th October 2025

Report for CRIRSCO members and others.

Figure 1 Edmund Sides and Garth Kirkham with Ed's mascot Lugh and the ICMM's flamingo at the 2025 ICMM Mining Leadership Forum in London (15-Oct-2025)

Garth Kirkham (Chairperson) and Edmund Sides (Deputy Chair) represented CRIRSCO at ICMM's fourth Mining Leadership Forum in London. It was explained to attendees that the idea for this event came from a desire not to create just another mining conference but to have a forum where representatives from a variety of different stakeholders in mining could gather for proper discussion of topical issues and hear different perspectives on some of the challenges facing the mining industry.

The meeting was composed mostly of panel discussions, interspersed with some 'imagined fire'-side chats – no fires were in evidence – and a limited number of keynote presentations. The forum was held under Chatham House rules, so the comments noted below cannot be attributed to any particular speakers.

A list of the topics covered in the panel discussions, and some interesting points that were made, is given below:

1. **What is truth? Why does it matter?**
   Perspectives on the idea of truth in today's world and how we should think about it.
   - Rarely a simple yes/no.
   - Sources of truth should be seen as trusted authorities.
   - Truth is largely a perception based on an individual's lived experience.
   - We need to try to go from complicated to complex(?).

2. **Are ICMM members still committed to sustainability?**
   A view from the CEOs / Chairs of ICMM companies on sustainability in the current geopolitical environment and if / how they individually and collectively remain committed to it.

- The importance of understanding what is important in a local context. For instance, water in northern Chile and similar areas.
- The ICMM membership process is quite rigorous, and all the members share the same values, including a commitment to a sustainable future for mining activities.
- The need for 'genuine listening' was stressed – try to understand other people's perspective.

3. **Can we open 300 new mines while meeting global climate and nature goals?**
   Joining the dots between the demand for critical minerals and the risks of carbon-overshoot and ecosystem decline.
   - There were mixed responses on this, perhaps because no explanation was given about how the figure of 300 mines was arrived at.
   - There was no mention of aspects such as the scope of the term 'mine' in terms of location, scale of operation, material type(s), etc.
   - Interestingly, there no reference to the need for assessment and reporting of resources and reserves.
   - The need to identify critical 'no-go' areas for mining was highlighted.
   - The need to find common ground in balancing the demand for short term profits versus long term vision.

4. **Are mines becoming safer?**
   Taking stock of how close we are to the goal of zero harm, the key challenges, and what mining can learn from other sectors.
   - It was acknowledged that although a lot of progress has been made in improving mine safety in recent decades, there had been some serious incidents recently resulting in multiple fatalities.
   - The need to have rigorous investigations of such events and to share the lessons learned with other members to help prevent similar incidents occurring elsewhere in the future.
   - The need to remember that each fatality represents an individual, their family, friends and colleagues, not just another statistic.
   - The need to embed a safety in the working culture was stressed; this helps to make it part of normal behaviour.
   - Workers need to be given the power to express their opinions to avoid being put in hazardous situations.
   - Aim for "psychological safety and a culture of care".
   - The tension between halting or slowing a process to address safety concerns against the pressure to meet targets needs to be properly managed.

5. **Is net zero 2050 still the right goal?**
   Understanding the reasons for the criticism of net zero goals at both a company and country level in a world of rapidly increasing GHG emissions and climate stress.
   - This is more complex that just yes or no.
   - Danger that this is an aspiration which can be used as an excuse.
   - Changing the trajectory is most important.
   - We shouldn't focus on economics only to make the case, but we also need to consider things in a more holistic manner.

- Need to translate the overall objective into small changes that can be understood at operational level

6. **Is there truly a talent crisis in mining?**
   Understanding the nature and extent of the apparent (dis)interest in mining careers around the world, particularly from younger generations.
   - Opinions varied depending on where the speaker came from.
   - There is a good talent pipeline in Chile and Peru where mining plays an important part in the economy.
   - Elsewhere there is a need to better inform young people about what modern mining is; and how modern society relies on products extracted by mining; and the types of job opportunities that exist in mining.
   - There is a continued perception problem in many countries.

7. **Does DEI need a fundamental rethink?**
   Taking stock of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) landscape in mining and more broadly, and the reasons for the backlash in some quarters.
   - This was the most contentious discussion with a clear difference of opinion between the panellists.
   - Some argued that the initiatives don't work; there is no real link between diversity and profit; and that such policies force people to see themselves as different from others.
   - Having a good working relationship is the most important thing. We need respectful and inclusive workplaces.
   - It was also noted that DEI has become politicised. When it is a political choice then a change in government is likely to lead to a reversal of policies.
   - From another perspective it was argued that there has been and still is discrimination and unconscious bias, and corrective action is still necessary in many sectors.
   - There is a need for fairness and an understanding of difference.
   - More emphasis should be put on reducing biases which creep in from a very early age.
   - Also a suggestion to teach young people from all backgrounds debating skills so that they can argue a case from their perspective.
   - "Are we discriminating, or just not providing the right opportunities for individuals?"

8. **Do countries get a "fair" deal from mining?**
   Understanding how the concept of "fair" plays out in different contexts and why it remains so hard to answer.
   - "A good deal is when everyone feels equally uncomfortable!"
   - Local communities don't always share sufficiently in the benefits.
   - Things may look okay at a high level, but this is not necessarily the case on a local level.

9. **Will the Consolidated Mining Standard truly drive change at scale?**
   Taking stock of the Consolidation of Mining Standards Initiative (CSMI) effort and why some have concerns about it.
   - In an increasingly polarised world this initiative is going against the trend.
   - This is tackling the issue of some companies having to use multiple overlapping standards, others using none, and others being confused about which to use.
   - There is a need to simplify things and make them clearer.

- A key element in the process is transparency, both in managing mining responsibly and in the process of developing the new standard.
- A second draft has just been released following changes made to address the comments received in the first round of consultation. (The Chapter on indigenous peoples has been changed significantly in response to the comments received). Those who are interested in being involved in the final public consultation on the CSMI can download the relevant documents from:
    - https://miningstandardinitiative.org/final-public-consultation/
- It was noted that all standards need national adaption to adjust to country specific conditions and priorities.
- Someone who is closely involved noted that they were surprised by the interest and passion across all the groups who were involved.
- Those involved share a common goal of getting better practices in the mining industry.
- Challenging discussions are important – there is a need to understand the perspectives of others.
- "Embed good practices in everyday work"

10. **Is it possible to stop illegal mining?**
    Understanding the complex factors underlying illegal mining, its impacts, and potential interventions.
    - There was not a very positive message from this discussion.
    - The panellists stressed the fact that illegal mining occurs on a much larger scale than people realise and is more to do with the involvement of organised crime rather than artisanal and small-scale miners making a living.
    - The problem is worst in countries with a large informal sector where the state is not involved.
    - Illegal mining is linked to other forms of criminality such as extortion, forced labour, money laundering, etc.
    - There is growing awareness that criminality can occur at all stages in the value chain from exploration through to refining
    - Need to focus on things such as reestablishing deterrence; following the money; providing an alternative marketing structure for small scale mines; and raising the profile of the issue to G7/G20 level.
    - Formal mines can act as a catalyst by developing and implementing tools such as certification and tracking schemes; but they should not replace governments.

Some general points taken from the other conversations and presentations include the following:

- Seven-generation thinking of indigenous communities.
- Two-eyed seeing; plus learning from the past and thinking of the future (combine short term and long-term visions).
- "Truth is not pushed out – just seen differently".
- We are in a world of contested perspectives, all of which can be valid.

Of particular interest from a CRIRSCO perspective were the following general comments on standards and regulations:

- The need for regulation as well as voluntary standards in order to have a level-playing field was stressed.
- Voluntary standards help to create a culture of acceptance for a particular way of working.
- The need to simplify things and make them clearer in order to facilitate wider adoption.
- A standard is only as good as its implementation.

One final comment was that:

- We need to find “the right questions and work together to address them”.

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Edmund Sides and Garth Kirkham

18th October 2025