

World Parks Congress: setting the agenda for protected areas and biodiversity management

From 12 to 19 November, ICMM joined 3,000 people from over 160 countries gathered in Sydney at the [IUCN World Parks Congress](#). Every ten years, this international forum brings worldwide conservation experts together to share knowledge, reflect on progress and set the agenda for protected areas conservation for the coming decade.

Anthony Hodge, President of ICMM, took part in the World Leaders' dialogue, on a panel that explored the tension between increasing global consumption patterns and their impact on protected areas. "The world is facing a crisis of biodiversity and cultural loss," he said. "But the biodiversity lens must be on all human activity. And in taking action, we need inclusive processes, collaborative decision-making and sound science to deliver benefits for all."

At the last World Parks Congress in 2003, ICMM member companies announced the [commitment](#) not to mine in World Heritage Sites. Shell did the same. Since then, other extractive companies have not followed suit. The critical missing ingredient is for governments to embed the World Heritage policy and guidelines into national legislation therefore ensuring a level playing field for all. Until that is done, World Heritage sites and the leadership no-go commitment made in 2003 will continue to have limited conservation value.

Another challenge addressed at the congress was the increasing concern around the impacts of the extractives industry on biodiversity. Anthony Hodge and Ross Hamilton, ICMM's Environment and Climate Change Director, both called for pragmatic approaches to managing such impacts in two ICMM-hosted panels that took place on 17 November.

Representatives from Conservation International, the Wildlife Conservation Society, BHP Billiton and Total discussed the application of the 'mitigation hierarchy' - the framework which underpins the way biodiversity and ecosystem services are incorporated into the project life cycle.

ICMM also collaborated with IUCN for a second panel featuring representatives from Newmont, Rio Tinto, IUCN and The Biodiversity Consultancy, to discuss the results of a recent review of [ICMM members' biodiversity performance since 2003](#). The independent report identified significant improvements in the sophistication and application of biodiversity management systems and recommended areas for future collaborative action between NGOs and industry to demonstrate positive biodiversity outcomes at a site-level.

"We are delighted to have been able to contribute to these discussions and are committed to supporting the industry's continued improvements in biodiversity performance," said Ross Hamilton, who moderated the panel.

A recording of the World Leaders' Dialogue panel - [A Balancing Act](#) - can be viewed on YouTube.

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