



Business for Social Responsibility

Minera El Desquite Report Esquel, Argentina

prepared by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>I. Methodology</i>	3
<i>II. Summary</i>	6
<i>III. Findings</i>	7
<i>IV. Conclusion</i>	18
Appendix I: Community Interview Questions	19
Appendix II: Written Resources Consulted	21
Appendix III: Partial list of Organizations Interviewed.....	20
Appendix IV: Socially Responsible Mining, Sustainable Development, and a Social License to Operate	23
Appendix IV: Socially Responsible Mining, Sustainable Development, and a Social License to Operate	24
Appendix V: Timeline of Events	27

I. METHODOLOGY

BACKGROUND ON BUSINESS FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Business for Social Responsibility (BSR) is a non-profit organization that helps member companies achieve success while respecting ethical values, people, communities and the environment. It was founded 11 years ago and is an international organization, with headquarters in San Francisco, California, USA and regional offices in Paris, France and Hong Kong, Republic of China. BSR seeks to create a just and sustainable world by working with companies to promote more responsible business practices, innovation and collaboration. It presently has over 450 companies from around the world as members, including Novartis, BP, Shell, Rio Tinto, Placer Dome, Newmont Mining Company, General Motors, Sony, and British Telecom.

BSR's staff has worked on issues related to responsible mining in many areas of the world. Some areas include:

- Design of a conflict resolution methodology and training to resolve differences between a mining company and armed artesanal miners blocking access to company's concession (Central America)
- Provision of training and advice on how to structure a community designed and managed sustainable development foundation that was to be funded by a mining company (northern Peru)
- Identification, with local and international stakeholders, of existing practices of international oil companies and recommendations on how to improve community relations programs, employment of local workers and environmental practices (Kazakhstan, Nigeria, Venezuela)
- Production of a guidebook for mining, oil and gas companies on how to constructively engage Indigenous peoples on such issues as land rights, cultural survival and sustainable development (global)
- Research on the best and worst case studies on conflicts between mining companies and local communities, and the production of a guide on how to gain a *social license to operate* (global)
- Provision of training and advice on how to carry out a participatory and transparent engagement process with local communities and governments on the responsible closure of a mining operation that would contribute to the long-term sustainability of local communities (Bolivia)

For more information on BSR, please see our website at www.bsr.org. For more specific information on this report or socially responsible mining projects that BSR has worked on, please feel free to contact either: Jim Rader at jrader@bsr.org, Christina Sabater at csabater@bsr.org, or Matt Jeschke at mjeschke@bsr.org

METHODOLOGY

BSR was contacted by Meridian Gold of Reno, Nevada, USA, the parent company of Minera El Desquite (MED) very soon after the March 23, 2003 referendum in Esquel, Argentina in which 81%

of the population voted against the mine. BSR agreed to work with Meridian Gold to help the company listen to and understand the concerns of the community that led to the results of the referendum.

Extensive background reading was done by BSR staff prior to arriving in Esquel. Based on that reading, a short questionnaire was prepared which included a list of topics that had been identified in the media and other sources as having some importance for the residents of Esquel. (This questionnaire is attached in Appendix I.) Additionally, a list of potential interviewees was derived from this reading material.

BSR was asked to identify the concerns of Esquel residents and others in regard to the proposed mining project of MED. Individual interviews began when three BSR staff traveled to Esquel, Argentina on April 5, 2003. Approximately 25 individual interviews were conducted during that first visit, and three focus group interviews were carried out with 50 people. Additional persons to interview in Esquel, Chubut province, Buenos Aires, and internationally were also identified with this first group of people, and through additional research. Three subsequent trips to Argentina were carried out to continue the interview process. Further reports and studies were identified for follow up by BSR staff. (A complete list of materials reviewed is in Appendix II.)

In total, over 100 people were interviewed either individually or in small groups. The interviews were carried out with persons from all walks of life, including elected public officials, journalists, homemakers, businessmen, the Board of the 'October 16' Cooperative, teachers, the Intendente of Esquel, government bureaucrats, Concejales, union leaders, Minera El Desquite employees, academics, doctors, nurses, architects, and representatives of activist organizations. A list of some of the organizations interviewed is attached in Appendix III, although it should be noted that some people who were interviewed asked not to be identified. Five people refused to be interviewed; four of them from Esquel and one from an activist organization in Buenos Aires.

Given the very sensitive nature of the situation in Esquel, BSR recommended carrying out this work under conditions of full transparency. This was acceptable to Meridian Gold. Consequently, BSR began its first visit to Esquel by issuing a press release explaining the purpose of the work. BSR also explained its role in Esquel in various media interviews. Generally, this approach was well-received by people interviewed in Esquel; indeed, they strongly encouraged BSR to continue to be as transparent as possible about the entire process.

It was therefore decided by BSR and Meridian Gold that all persons interviewed would be the first ones to receive the final BSR report. Public and private meetings would then be organized in Esquel, Chubut province, Buenos Aires and elsewhere to disseminate the results of the study as widely as possible. As much as possible, presentations are to be in-person, although budget limitations will have an impact on how feasible that is. BSR is prepared to make themselves available for phone conversations with either individuals or groups to clarify any points in the final report. BSR will pay any phone costs associated with these calls. Finally, Meridian Gold has agreed to place the final report – in English and in Spanish - on its MED website, at <http://www.meridiangold.com/esquel.cfm>.

One other point is worth mentioning. In the interviews carried out, BSR was consistently asked what was being done by mining companies in other areas of the world on such matters as environmental controls, investment in the community, controlling negative social impacts, and so on. It was suggested that including some brief examples of 'international best practice' in these areas

would be very informative for the readers of the report. BSR has endeavored to do this and has also indicated selected websites where additional information about these practices can be found, including some websites that are more critical of mining. Essentially, BSR used its experience on issues related to mining and communities to evaluate the reasons for the conflict between the community of Esquel and Minera El Desquite. For more information on the changes in the mining industry at a worldwide level that BSR used in this analysis as a benchmark, please see Appendix IV.

Finally, it should be noted that BSR does not assert that this report is comprehensive or that it follows rigorous social science methodology. This report is intended more as a “snapshot” of a complex and difficult conflict and of the forces and reasons that resulted in the vote of March 23, 2003. Therefore, any conclusions reached should be treated as preliminary. Furthermore, BSR believes that there are very capable academic researchers in Esquel who have the capacity to carry out a more in-depth research effort, which would give more substance to the conclusions reached here. BSR would be very pleased to collaborate in any such effort.

II. SUMMARY

Following the research and interviews described in the preceding “Methodology” section, BSR staff reached these **preliminary** conclusions:

- There was a striking lack of consistent and comprehensive engagement by MED with the Esquel community to hear concerns and address them **before** they became major issues. There were many people who originally were neutral regarding the possibility of a mine, but changed their minds due to the company’s lack of engagement with the community.
- This lack of engagement was illustrated, above all, by an overall lack of information sharing and an open and transparent communication by MED with the community. The result was that there never was any substantive dialogue achieved about the potential impacts, positive or negative, of the mine.
- The community raised environmental concerns related to the project’s impact on water quality and quantity, use of cyanide. These concerns were not addressed adequately by the company.
- There was no clear, consistent, and comprehensive information to Esquel community residents regarding the potential positive and negative impacts of the mine. Other than the offer of some 300 direct jobs and approximately 1,200 indirect jobs, there was no clear benefit articulated by the company to the community of Esquel from the mine. Combined with the environmental and social concerns around the mine that went unanswered, this made for a very powerful combination to vote in opposition to the mine.
- Pressure to finish preliminary work and begin mine construction by January, 2003 created a climate of fear, suspicion and, eventually, rejection of the project by the majority of the people of Esquel.
- An attitude of disregard for Esquel community concerns was in evidence in the actions and attitudes of some key MED personnel. Unfortunately, this attitude of disregard was then imputed by the community to all MED personnel.
- At the time, the political context of Argentina created additional difficulties for the project. The company was closely identified with political authorities. Given the prevailing distrust of political representatives, any support expressed by politicians for the project actually worked to increase the suspicion of some Esquel residents.
- Minera El Desquite management was generally unaware of recent changes within the mining industry at a global level as regards a company’s relations with surrounding communities. These management practices generally support greater information sharing with affected communities, community participation in some decisions of the project, and joint environmental monitoring of the project, among other things. This circumstance and MED’s behaviors exacerbated feelings of suspicion and confusion within the community.

Detail about these points is provided in the Findings section of this report.

III. FINDINGS

The following preliminary findings identify some of the most significant actions of MED during the period from June, 2002 to March, 2003. They are based on web research and comments made to BSR staff members by community members and others as indications that the company did not understand the major concerns of the community and, even when it did, was unable to address them adequately. As emphasized earlier, these are preliminary findings, which need to be further validated with the Esquel community. It might also be useful for the reader of this report to see the Timeline of Events developed for this study, which is found in Appendix V.

The result of the vote of March 23, 2003 was due, in large measure, to a failure of the company to engage effectively with the community of Esquel in terms of identifying what the priority concerns and issues were for the community and communicating that information in ways that the company could have a meaningful dialogue with the community. The major concerns that were mentioned by the vast majority of people interviewed were: how cyanide was to be transported, handled and destroyed; the potential for contamination of the Esquel's water supply by mine activity; the lack of adequate economic benefits for the town; and the potential for negative social impacts. However, it is perhaps best to start with the issues of information sharing and communication, as these were mentioned by every single person interviewed as contributing significantly to the negative reaction to the proposed project.

A. Inability to share information adequately. The lack of freely shared, comprehensive information about the project provided by the company to the town contributed significantly to the feelings of frustration of Esquel residents. This was especially important in a community with little experience in large-scale mining. Many people who were originally undecided about the project (the so-called “Ni’s”) ended up believing that the company was actively trying to hide information because it really did have something to hide. In a voting process that offered only a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ choice, this lack of information sharing was a decisive factor for people to vote ‘no’. Some examples included:

- 1. Lack of access to important information.** The company was reluctant to share information about the proposed mine, even if this information was already public. For example, the difficulty of obtaining the Environmental Impact Study (EIS) was cited by a number of stakeholders as an important factor that helped create distrust of the company.

One interviewee stated that when he heard about the proposed project, his first response was to try to find out as much information as possible about the mine. He began by researching the project on the Internet. He found information about mining projects throughout Argentina, but could find no publicly available information about the project in Esquel. His e-mails to the provincial Department of Mining were repeatedly ignored. When he asked the company for a copy of the Environmental Impact Study (EIS), he was told it was too expensive to copy and he would have to go to the provincial capital of Rawson, (which is hours by car from Esquel). He asked to receive a copy on CD, to be able to review the study on his computer at home, and was told that this was not possible. This made him indignant. “Public information is public information!” he said, in frustration. He had researched mining on his own and had some questions about cyanide and about acid rock drainage. He wanted to hear more about how the company planned to address these issues. He never got answers. In the end, he voted ‘no’.

Although the company is not required under Argentinean law to provide this information to all stakeholders who request it, providing it in a timely manner and in a way that facilitated its understanding (e.g. in a compact computer disc, in written form, in a PowerPoint presentation, etc) would have contributed greatly to a lessening of the frustration that was felt by many residents.

2. **Information provided was inadequate or missing.** The presentations that were given often did not mention the economic or other benefits of the project, although this was important to many community residents. Some people commented that the presentations felt less like an opportunity for discussion and more like an attempt at public relations spin.
3. **Some information provided was not credible or understandable.** Some company documents claimed that the mine is approximately 33 kilometers from the town of Esquel. The mine site is actually 5-6 kilometers in a direct line from the city center. One interviewee told us that the company “lost trust with claims like that.”

International Best Practice: Transparency of Information. It is increasingly common for mining companies to sit down with local stakeholders to agree together what information is required to fully explain the potential impacts of a mine. The information shared would certainly include an Environmental Impact Study but might also include other background studies on other issues. It might also mean a more extensive education process around mining which would be especially important in a region with little or no history of mining. Sensitive commercial information is usually handled through a confidentiality agreement between the company and the local stakeholders.

B. Failure of communications. Interviewees, both for and against the project, were remarkably consistent in their points of view about the communication efforts of the company: they repeatedly said that they disliked the way in which the company communicated with the community about the project and that this was a major reason in the outcome of the vote of March 23rd. Some examples of this were:

1. **Lack of adequate engagement in public hearings or meeting.** The Dirección de Minería of the Province of Chubut organized a number of public meetings to discuss the project. The meetings were generally well-attended, but many people who attended them stated that they received almost no information about the project from the company. Furthermore, they said that the company's participation in these meetings was inadequate. Such meetings could have been an effective way for the company to understand community issues and answer concerns. Eventually, the provincial Department of Mining cancelled the talks because it feared being seen as a spokesperson for the company and was concerned about compromising its impartiality. Additionally, the official public hearing which the company had agreed to under the Environmental Law of Chubut Province was repeatedly postponed, and never did take place. As a result, most townspeople got their information about the project either from the "Autoconvocados por el No," the main opposition group to the project, other advocacy groups, or the web, and not from the company.
2. **Presentations.** When public presentations were given by the company or its representatives, they were very technical in nature and not accessible to persons unfamiliar with the science and technology being discussed. There seemed to have been remarkably little identification of how communication in a town like Esquel is best facilitated, whether that was through public meetings with outside speakers, audio visual presentations, small group discussions, etc.
3. **Staff were not trained for community relations.** The company repeatedly placed technical people in communications positions. While these people were well trained to address technical issues related to the project, they were unable to develop a meaningful communication with the community. As the owner of one media outlet told BSR, "I should be telling the company not to get rid of some of those people (company staff at the El Desquite office). With all of the conflict they generate, every time they open their mouths, I generate a lot more business." In some cases, the public spokespersons for the company were unable to answer questions on the project put to them in public forums or on live media.

International Best Practice: Communication appropriate to the community affected. The form in which information about a proposed mine project is shared with a community is almost as important as what information is made available. This means that it is not sufficient to simply provide an EIS; it might also be necessary to explain the science and reasoning behind the conclusions reached in a language and format that is easily accessible to the people in the community. For example, it is increasingly common for a mining company to sit down with representative groups in the community to ask not only what information needs to be shared but also in what form. This might include such things as audiovisual presentations, the building of scale models of the proposed project, small group meetings, presentations by outside specialists and so on.

C. Unresolved environmental questions. The inability to share information with the community of Esquel and then to communicate that information effectively precluded the possibility of having any meaningful dialogue about the very serious concerns that Esquel residents had about certain aspects of the project. No where was that clearer than in relation to a number of environmental issues

- 1. Inadequate information about cyanide.** Without question, cyanide was the number one issue mentioned by residents as their greatest environmental concern with regards to the proposed mine. One incident stands out in particular in regards to this issue: a talk about cyanide given by a representative from DuPont Chemical Ltd. in mid-2002.

This meeting was repeatedly cited by people interviewed as a significant factor in raising concerns among Esquel residents about the use of cyanide in the mining process, although it was intended to do just the opposite. In response to serious questions by Esquel residents about the dangers of using cyanide, it was reported that the DuPont representative did not give substantive answers. He is reported to have stated that cyanide was no more dangerous than some common domestic items, such as household cleaners. When some chemists and other professors from the University asked for more details, they did not feel that their questions received adequate responses, leaving them with the strong impression that the representative was patronizing, and not taking their concerns seriously. It was soon after this meeting that some of the people present began to gather their own information about cyanide use in mining, and organized their own public and school presentations about its dangers. MED never did provide adequate information about how it intended to transport, use and destroy the cyanide used in their proposed gold mine.

Another inflammatory incident was the laboratory in Trevelin. The community did not receive an adequate explanation when this laboratory was established and about how cyanide was going to be used in it. This created the impression with local residents that the company had something to hide about the dangers of cyanide, leading to a general lack of trust in the company about its statements and its intentions.

International Best Practice: Cyanide transportation, containment and destruction. Cyanide is a commonly used chemical in mining operations. With adequate handling, it can be used safely. For transportation, the preferred method is to have the cyanide in a dry form so the likelihood of any serious accident is minimized.

In the processing stage, MED had proposed using cyanide in a self-contained, closed process that would not expose any chemical to air or water during the process. Following this, the cyanide would be destroyed using the INCO process. When proper procedures are followed, this is considered to be a safe method. The INCO process has been used in over 100 mining projects to date. For more information on these processes, see <http://www.cyantists.com/>.

Serious cyanide spills can occur, usually when it is transported in a liquid form or when the cyanide leaks from the tailings pond where the gold is being treated. One example of a recent serious spill was in Romania at the operation of Esmeralda Exploration, when cyanide spilled over its containment pad. A website on this spill is www.mineralresourcesforum.org/incidents/BaiaMare.

2. **Use of hazardous chemicals.** The company never did adequately explain how hazardous chemicals, including cyanide, were going to be transported, used and disposed of. This would include cyanide, of course. Again, this lack raised concerns in the community that were never answered by the company.

International Best Practice: Community engagement on hazardous chemicals. The most responsible companies engage in a process of education about chemicals being used in their mining operations in order to explain safeguard measures and emergency response. The United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP) has developed a program called the *Awareness and Preparedness for Emergencies on a Local Level (APELL)* program which directly involves local communities in an extensive communication, information sharing, and training program to ensure that there is a good understanding of what is being done in regards to the safe use of hazardous chemicals, including how any emergencies would be addressed. For more information on APELL, see www.uneptie.org/pc/apell.

At Antamina, a large zinc and copper mine in southern Peru, the company has aggressively engaged local communities in a consultative and engagement APELL process about the kinds of hazardous chemicals being used in the mine operation, and the safeguard mechanisms for their transportation, use, and disposal. For information see www.uneptie.org/pc/apell/events/pdf/files/Antamina.pdf

3. **Water Quality and Availability.** The potential for the mine to influence water quality supplied to the town of Esquel was a priority concern for residents. The company believed that it had adequately addressed this issue in its EIA. However, it was clear from comments made in interviews with BSR that this was not the perception of residents. They repeatedly stated that the potential of water contamination was present. Some mentioned the “arroyo amarillo” that was found just before the plebiscite as an example of the kind of water contamination that could take place from a mining operation, although others thought that this was just a public relations ploy to try and influence the voting.

As serious a matter for the company as its inability to answer residents’ concerns about water quality was its inability to engage constructively with the Cooperativa 16 de Octubre (Cooperativa). This is the organization that provides water to the town of Esquel and it is a respected and credible organization when talking on issues related to water quality and use. Any attempt by MED to engage on the issue of water quality would have required a very serious engagement with the Cooperativa. In our interview with Board Members of the Cooperativa, they indicated that this serious engagement never happened. Eventually, the Cooperativa came out against the mine, stating that the potential for contamination by the mine of Lago Willimanco was a strong possibility.

Water supply was not identified by many people as a major issue in the decision of residents to vote ‘no’, although in our interview with MED personnel, they indicated that they were quite prepared to sit down and discuss ways to invest in the upgrading of the town’s water supply system. This was never communicated to either the Board of the Cooperative or the broader community.

International Best Practice: Joint Environmental Monitoring. Increasingly, communities want to define how they will be involved in monitoring environmental and other impacts of a mining operation, including water quality and use. Companies are responding positively to this need.

One example of this is in Canada at the Porcupine mine of Placer Dome in Northern Ontario, Canada where the community has formed the “Porcupine Watchful Eye Committee”. (Comité del Ojo Vigilante de Porcupine) This Committee undertakes both joint and independent monitoring of the environmental and other impacts of the mine operation to ensure that proper procedures are being followed and to negotiate how differences will be resolved. For information on the terms of reference of this Committee, see www.placerdome.com/corporations/dome/pwe_terms.pdf

4. **Acid Rock Drainage (ARD). Drenaje Ácido de Roca (DAR)** This issue was only mentioned by people who had done a fair bit of research on the various issues surrounding mining, but they identified it as potentially the most serious one facing the company.

International Best Practice: Containment or Treatment. The generation of acid is a natural process that occurs when sulfides in the rock are exposed to oxygen and air. The combination forms sulphuric acid that can leach out certain heavy metals (e.g. cadmium, arsenic) that can contaminate local water sources. MED proposed using a system of solid containment to prevent leakage of acids and leaching of heavy metals into the surrounding water system.

A good, non-academic presentation of acid rock drainage is on the website of the Environmental Mining Council of British Columbia, Canada at: www.emcbc.miningwatch.org.

5. **Closure.** A number of concerns were raised about the possible long-term environmental impacts of the mine after it was closed down. As well, a number of interviewees were very concerned about the lingering affect of any negative social impacts. The community residents interviewed by BSR felt that the company failed to adequately respond to these concerns. Community concerns around a potential legacy of environmental damage after mine closure went unanswered until very late in the voting process. When the company made an offer to put up a performance guaranty for any post-closure costs, the offer was not communicated sufficiently. It was also widely misunderstood.

International Best Practice: Closure and Sustainability. Every mine will eventually close. It is therefore fundamental for a community and company to plan from the first day of a mine’s operation as to how this closure should be carried out. The most common practice is to establish a joint Community-Company Committee to identify all important issues related to mine closure, and then develop a process to address each one.

One interesting case study is at the Sullivan Mine of TeckCominco located in Kimberley, B.C. Canada. This mine was closing after about 90 years of operation, and the community and company worked for almost 10 years to ensure that the community was left stronger and more sustainable than when the project started. This was primarily achieved by strengthening the capacity of the town

to serve as a destination point for both national and international tourists. Information on this closure process can be found on the TeckCominco website at www.teckcominco.com.

Another closure process presently taking place is at the Inti Raymi gold mine in Oruro, Bolivia. The company has worked to involve local residents in its environmental and social plans regarding the mine closure and a Sustainability Committee of local residents and the company has been formed to oversee the final disposition of the mine assets for the benefit of the community. Ideas to be discussed include the creation of an industrial park, an Indigenous university, and ecotourism facilities.

D. Concern about economic benefits for Esquel. There was no clear identification of how Esquel would benefit from the proposed mine. Opponents of the mine had identified a long list of reasons to vote against the project, including questions about cyanide, water contamination and others. Beyond the 300 full-time jobs that would go to Esquel residents, there was not a clear case put forward by the company as to how the community would benefit economically from the mine. However, even here the requirements of a high school education eliminated a large number of people from the potential employee pool, reducing the attraction of even this aspect. Overall, there were no long-term community development programs identified or discussed that would have left a net economic benefit to Esquel.

International Best Practice: Community Involvement in Social Programs and Impacts.

Increasingly, local communities are integrally involved in the design of programs that could potentially impact them. For example, at the Raglan nickel and copper mine in northern Quebec operated by the Falconbridge company, local Indigenous communities negotiated very comprehensive agreements about who was to be hired locally, training for new hires, dispute resolution mechanisms, the language to be used in the workplace, housing for outside workers and the local community, the stimulation of local businesses, cross-cultural training, ore shipment schedules, community development programs, and so on. This agreement has helped to ensure that the community is able to benefit as much as possible from the presence of the mine. The company website has some information on the Agreement at www.falconbridge.com.

For an analysis of the Agreement, see the Natural Resources Canada website of the government of Canada <http://www.nrcan.gc.ca/mms/sociprac/falconbridge>. For a more critical examination of the Agreement, see the Canadian Arctic Resources Council website at www.carc.org/pubs. For a copy of the Agreement in Spanish, see www.codev.org.

E. Lack of Trust in Political and Governmental Authorities. This point was mentioned by a fairly large number of people interviewed as a strong contributing (though not decisive) factor working against the mine project. Argentina at the time was still in the midst of a political crisis that had engendered a great deal of skepticism about any project associated with previous governments. The MED project certainly fell into that category. Exacerbating this fact was some criticism about the Argentinean Mining Law in general and the favorable treatment it established for foreign corporations in particular. However this last point was mentioned by only a few people and was not considered decisive in the vote of March 23rd.

F. Company attitude Other concerns with MED had to do not only with the lack of information, but also with the manner in which the townspeople felt treated by company employees. Some examples of the most significant findings in this area are summarized below.

1. **Defensive and dismissive attitude.** Many participants reported that they felt MED was dismissive of their concerns. This was perhaps the most commonly reported perception, and was one of the single biggest factors in galvanizing opposition to the mine. One interviewee mentioned that the company acted as if the opposition was simply a small group of extremists, when, as the referendum made clear, the opposition had steadily grown until it represented the majority of town residents.

The examples of company attitude brought up by interviewees were occasionally dramatic. One interviewee mentioned that, in response to questions about environmental impact of the proposed mine, a company spokesperson commented on the town's practice of burning its garbage in a heap. This person essentially said that the town did not know how to take care of itself, so it shouldn't worry about the company's environmental practices.

2. **MED staff distant from the community.** Townspeople and employees said that MED staff did not make an effort to connect with the community. The majority of the management staff was not from the Esquel area and was often perceived as too busy to establish links to the community. Townspeople stated that more people from Esquel should have been part of the project team.

The signs of this estrangement of the company from the community were evident. People painted graffiti on the walls, with names of particular employees, telling them to "go home." The repercussions of this tension were widespread. Company people became unwelcome in some stores and restaurants, and, eventually, protests were directed against individual staff members. In some cases, protests were even directed against the young children of employees, in a school setting.

3. **Image problem.** Another example of a problem that MED had was its image, and certain actions by the company and its employees exacerbated this problem. For example, Meridian rented the biggest building in the center of the town for its offices. The office windows were tinted so that people could not see inside, which was perceived as unfriendly. The door had a special lock on it, which could be opened only by employees with magnetized key cards, and this was unique in Esquel. Company employees brought new, large vehicles into town, and this conveyed an image of ostentation. Staff rented six or seven of the biggest and best houses in the town, driving up prices in the rental market.

Another example cited was when the company hired a public relations firm from Buenos Aires whose work was seen as too glossy and slick for the Esquel community. One pamphlet was even sent to the names of a number of deceased people and some members of the town were upset at seeing promotional material sent to their deceased friends relatives. Perhaps more importantly, the photo of the town on the cover of the pamphlet was reversed (printed backwards). This made it appear to residents as if the company knew very little about the town of Esquel. Although not decisive in the final vote, these kinds of actions upset some people and led them to be less willing to accept the mine.

4. **Dismissed prior studies.** Esquel is a community with a well-educated population and a high degree of culture and cohesiveness. Various studies were conducted in advance of the project to investigate the potential impact of the project. Rather than using the studies as an opportunity to engage in constructive debate with these groups, the studies were ignored by the company.

For example, la Unidad de Asistencia en Temas Ambientales (UATA) at the Universidad Nacional de la Patagonia San Juan Bosco (Sede Esquel) carried out a very serious study on the proposed project. Entitled *“Identificación y Análisis de las Expectativas de los Posibles Impactos Sociales, Económicos y Culturales del Proyecto Oro de Esquel”*, the UATA group interviewed hundreds of local residents in order to gather their opinions about a future mining project. A careful reading of this report and its conclusions indicate that it had laid out some of the essential social, economic, cultural and environmental concerns on which the company needed to engage with the community of Esquel if a constructive dialogue was to occur. The six main conclusions of the study are worth repeating:

- 1) Maximize local employment
- 2) Ensure that a mining project fits in with Esquel’s own vision for local development
- 3) Plan ahead to address potential effects on the community (such as prostitution, alcoholism, clash of different cultures, etc.)
- 4) Educate the town about mining and be transparent in providing information
- 5) Minimize environmental impacts and demonstrate how that would be done
- 6) Address urban growth concerns

Unfortunately for all parties concerned, the study was not used at all by the company, setting the stage for the conflict which eventually developed. (BSR highly recommends that any party interested in the Esquel situation read this study to gain a very thorough understanding of the different factors of concern to the community regarding any future mining project.)

Another study that raised concerns was authored by the Consejo de Familia (the Family Council) This Council is an organization formed of representatives from various governmental branches, citizens’ associations, and NGOs, and has professional sociologists, teachers and so on among its members. It works on a variety of issues related to children and families in Esquel, and gives advice to the Esquel government in these areas. Once again, the company appeared to have completely neglected an opportunity to engage a very serious and credible local actor about their legitimate concerns over the potential social impacts of the project.

Finally, the town of Esquel had worked very hard to consult with all relevant groups and residents in the town in order to build a consensus about a community development vision for the future. Called the *“Plan participativo de desarrollo local Social, Económica y Ambientalmente Sustentable*, or SEAS, this plan essentially lays out how the residents of Esquel would like to see their community develop. In it, mining is mentioned as a potential contributor to the future well-being and development of the town. Rather than identifying and using this SEAS plan as an opportunity to engage with the community about how its project would fall into line with Esquel’s overall sustainable development vision, MED ignored the town’s work.

5. **Dialogue came too late.** After the townspeople were able to schedule a referendum, interviewees told us that there was a change in attitude on the part of the company, marked

by a greater willingness to talk. However, this was a reaction to events, rather than a proactive attempt at communication, and the community rejected it as too little, too late. By this point, tensions had risen to such a state that a calm exchange of ideas through a dialogue was not possible. Thousands of people were turning out to protest the mine, and international NGOs were supporting the opposition, raising the stakes. It was difficult to begin a conversation in that environment.

- 6. Failure to win the trust of the community.** The inability to address the problems cited above led to an overall lack of trust of the company on the community's part. There is a widespread perception that the community was supportive at the beginning of the project. It seems more likely that, in reality, in the beginning of the project, many people had yet to make up their mind about it, and there was a widespread openness to dialogue. That attitude should not be confused with support. Dialogue can slowly win people's support. However, by not creating the conditions for such a dialogue, even those who had been receptive to discussing the potential positive impacts of the project ended by turning against it.

International Best Practice: Mining as a Partnership. Increasingly, mining companies are seeing the development of a mine as a partnership with local communities. Consequently, there is a much stronger commitment and effort to involve local communities in project planning, construction, operation and closure with a view to ensuring that the mine contributes to the overall sustainability of the community involved. In most cases, this involves the creation of a formal mechanism such as a Community-Company Consultative Committee where issues related to environmental, economic, social and cultural impacts and concerns are addressed. The need to identify how differences will be resolved before they become destructive conflicts is also an essential part of any partnership between a mining company and a community.

It is worth noting that foremost in any kind of a partnership is the need for a mining company to integrate into the prevailing culture of the community in which it will operate. Failure to do this can lead to conflict and, eventually, the loss of a company's social license to operate. In a large mine in Peru, a large mining company received many complaints about the conduct of its employees. It commissioned a study by a local group to identify the kinds of behaviors that offended residents and then contracted with the same group to design a training program for over 1,500 company personnel - from security guards to engineers to secretaries to executives - to change offending behaviors. Although the process will take years, a significant improvement in the relationship with the local city has already been observed.

IV. CONCLUSION

As mentioned above, the Minera El Desquite project was characterized by its lack of overall engagement with the Esquel community. This lack of engagement was a powerful factor in influencing community members not to support the mine, and, indeed, to lend their energy to the movement opposing the mine. Many Esquel citizens decided not to support this project because of the inability to have a meaningful dialogue about the potential risks of the project, as well as the possible benefits that could be realized for the town. Many of these people coalesced to form the “Vecinos Autoconvocados por el No.”

Specific areas of concern regarding cyanide use, water contamination, acid rock drainage, availability of water, inadequate economic benefits, potential negative social impacts and other social and environmental impacts were never adequately addressed publicly by the company to the satisfaction of community residents. These key points were of the highest importance to the citizens of Esquel, and needed to be discussed in an open and transparent manner. The company did not provide timely and useful information, and in fact sometimes made it difficult to obtain information, as in the example of the Environmental Impact Study.

Without important information, and a feeling that they were being fully engaged, Esquel citizens did not feel fully informed about the project. An alternative approach would have been to publicly provide information about the potential impacts and benefits, and to create a process to fully understand community concerns before the project was underway, as well as a willingness on the part of the company to change aspects of the project to address these concerns. In short, a real partnership was needed and, for good or for ill, the company never attempted this partnership.

In the 21st century, mining projects must address how they will contribute to the long-term sustainable development of the communities impacted by their operation. And in the definition and in the decisions around that long-term sustainable development vision, local communities must be integrally involved as an essential partner from the outset, and throughout the life of the mine. A failure to do so can result in a loss of a *social license to operate*, resulting in the difference between a project going forward and a project being halted, as was seen in the case of Esquel.

Appendix I: Community Interview Questions

1. Introduction. Who is BSR?

Business for Social Responsibility (BSR) is a non-profit association based in San Francisco, California, United States. It also has offices in Paris and Hong Kong. It has approximately 600 member companies from around the world and it works with them on issues of corporate social responsibility. Some of its members include: British Telecom, General Motors, NovoNordisk, BP, Sony. It also has a number of mining companies as members, including: Rio Tinto, Placer Dome, Antamina, Newmont Mining, Phelps Dodge and Inco Ltd. Its staff has worked on issues related to responsible mining in many areas of the world.

2. Why are we doing this study?

- Meridian Gold has contracted us to help them get a better understanding of what led up to the referendum of March 23rd, and they have invited us to stay in Esquel for five days. Meridian is hoping to understand the concerns of Esquel residents. Its goal at this time is simply to hear peoples' concerns and understand them.
- The company has told us that it has the following principles as part of this process:
 - To pause the project, and listen and understand
 - To respond promptly to requests for information
 - To be consistent in its interactions with Esquel residents
 - To be more transparent about its actions

3. What is your opinion about what happened?

4. What were the most important issues for you regarding Meridian's proposed mine? On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being an issue of highest concern, how would you rate them?

5. Can you give me an example of what you mean when you say that there is a problem with (X issue)?

6. Who else should we speak to in Esquel?

7. Where do you get information about Meridian?

8. Would you like a summary of the interviews that we are carrying out?

What were the most important issues, in your point of view, with regards to the project?

	Issue	Level				
		1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	Use of cyanide	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	Competition for water supply/water use	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	Problems with Argentinean mining law	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lack of communication by the company	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lack of social programs offered by the company	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	Fear of Esquel becoming a “mining camp”	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	Water contamination	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	Too few benefits for Esquel	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lack of information regarding the project	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lack of an environmental remediation bond	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	Worry about negative social impacts – prostitution, alcoholism, etc.	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lack of confidence in the authorities to protect the environment	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	Arrogance of the company, especially the management	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	Presence of foreigners on the management team	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	Risk of spills while transporting dangerous chemicals	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	Compensation for the use of Esquel’s infrastructure	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	Concerns about the eventual closure of the mine	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	Aesthetics of an open pit	1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	Exploitation of resources by a foreign company	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix II: Written Resources Consulted

Análisis de Riesgo Proyecto Esquel, Minera El Desquite, 7 de febrero de 2003-07-24

Código de Minería de la República Argentina, Texto ordenado por el Decreto 456/97.

Régimen de Inversiones Mineras, actualizado al 9 de mayo de 2003, Gobierno de Argentina.

Diez Razones para Invertir en Minería Argentina, Subsecretaría de Minería, Gobierno de Argentina, sin fecha.

Ley General 031/03, Legislatura de Chubut, abril de 2003

Ley General 040/03, Legislatura de Chubut, abril de 2003

Vector Engineering Inc. - Minera El Desquite S.A., 2002. Informe de Impacto Ambiental Proyecto Esquel. 3 Tomos. Chubut.

“Proyecto Oro de Esquel: Identificación y Análisis de las Expectativas de los Posibles Impactos Sociales, Económicos, Políticos y Culturales del Proyecto Oro de Esquel”, Unidad de Análisis de Temas Ambientales (UATA), Universidad Nacional de la Patagonia San Juan Bosco – Sede Esquel, junio 2002

Observaciones a la Presentación del Estudio del Impacto Ambiental (EsIA) para el “Proyecto Esquel” de Minera El Desquite S.A., Dirección General de Protección Ambiental, Gobierno de Chubut, 2003

Análisis de la Ampliación de Información Ambiental, Presentada por la Empresa Minera El Desquite S.A. para el Trámite de Evaluación de Impacto Ambiental (EIA) del Proyecto Minera “Proyecto Esquel”, Dirección General de Minas y Geología, Comisión Interdisciplinaria, Diciembre 2002

Extracto de las 65 páginas enviadas por la Unidad de Análisis de Temas Ambientales (UATA) formada por profesionales de la Universidad Nacional de la Patagonia San Juan Bosco Sede Esquel a quienes se le encomendó por parte de la Municipalidad de Esquel el análisis del Estudio de Impacto Ambiental presentado por Minera El Desquite S.A. para el emprendimiento sobre el cordón Esquel, Diciembre, 2002

Fundamentaciones Geológicas a la Oposición Efectuada por la Cooperativa “16 de Octubre” al Otorgamiento de Permiso para la Utilización de Aguas Públicas Solicitado por “Minera El Desquite S.A.”

Consideraciones Geológicas a la Información Aclaratoria Entregada por Meridian Gold el 28/11/02 Referida a los Niveles Piezométricos de la Tabla 3.5.2.3 del Informe de Impacto Ambiental, Fernando Máximo Díaz

Informe Pericial, realizado por el Lic. Leonardo Ferro y la Lic. María Cecilia Ubaldón del SEGEMAR, con Dra. Rosa Chiquichano, Dr. Gustavo Macayo, Sta. Silvana Noemí Villivar, la Sra. Ana De Moro y Sr. Esteban Schiavino. Leonardo F. Ferro, 26 de diciembre de 2002.

“Informe sobre Monitoreo de Calidad del Agua en la Cuenca del Arroyo Willimanco”, Lino A. Pizzolon, Esquel, 23 de Mayo de 2003

“Resultados de los Análisis de Muestras de Agua y Sedimentos”, Minera El Desquite, Esquel, 3 de junio de 2003

“Predictions and Promises of a Flawed Environmental Impact Assessment”, Dr. Robert Moran, Greenpeace Argentina/Mineral Policy Center, marzo 2003.

“Esquel Vs. Esquel”, Prensa GeoMinera, 7 de marzo de 2003.

“El Proyecto Esquel y la Comunidad”, Panorama Minero, Edición No. 279, enero de 2003.

“Una Comunidad Informada: Proyecto Esquel” Minera El Desquite, sin fecha.

“Esquel, una Ciudad de Oro”, Minera El Desquite, sin fecha.

Informe de Impacto Socioeconómico Proyecto Minero “Oro de Esquel”, Rita Jordan, enero de 2003.

Appendix III: Partial list of Organizations Interviewed

Cámara de Comercio
Canal 4
Consejo Deliberante
Cooperativa 16 de octubre
CTA
Dirección de Minas y Geología, Provincia de Chubut
Dirección de Minería
Dirección de Protección Ambiental Provincia de Chubut
Ministerio de Salud
El Oeste
Great Basin Mine Watch
Intendencia
MED
Ministry of Production, Province of Chubut
Moran and Associates
SENASA
UNP
UOCRA

Appendix IV: Socially Responsible Mining, Sustainable Development, and a Social License to Operate

Local communities from Indonesia to Canada, Namibia to Peru, the Philippines to Bolivia - in effect, from all over the world - are increasingly asking questions about mining projects. Communities are demanding that mining projects address social, economic, and environmental concerns, as well as contribute to the long-term sustainability of the communities impacted by the operation. It is widely understood today that it is insufficient for companies to be concerned only for their own financial success. It is also not always sufficient to simply meet required legal regulations in the country in which the proposed mine exists. Increasingly, it is expected that mining companies must demonstrate that they are socially responsible by meeting prevailing **international best practices** in the exploitation and closing of a mine.

Meeting these social expectations is sometimes referred to as gaining a *social license to operate*. Gaining a social license to operate simply means gaining support for the project from concerned groups (also referred to as stakeholders), over and above meeting legal requirements for operations.

Increasingly, mining projects are being evaluated on how they contribute to the long-term sustainable development of the communities or regions in which they operate. Although the economic activity of mining is not sustainable in any one place - eventually, all mines will close - it is possible to structure the contribution of mining to local communities so that the long-term viability, or *sustainability*, of those communities is enhanced. Nowhere has this shift in perception about the role of mining been more notable than the recently-concluded global consultation process undertaken by the mining industry called *Mining, Minerals and Sustainable Development* (MMSD).

The MMSD process involved a nearly two-year, global consultation of the mining industry and national governments, local communities, Indigenous peoples, environmental groups, social justice groups, and international organizations such as the United Nations and the World Bank. It was carried out in five continents: Europe; Asia; Africa; Australia; South America; and North America. The results of regional consultations and the overall final report can be found on the website (www.iied.org/mmsd). While the final report is interesting and useful, some of the regional reports are also excellent, particularly those from Africa and North America. Most of these reports are available in Spanish.

The major finding of this MMSD process was that success for a mining company in the global marketplace is defined across the three categories of social, environmental and financial performance. Failure to address any one of these areas will result in a failure to gain a social license to operate.

The most salient features of this need to gain a social license to operate include the following points:

A company fully informs the community about its operations. A company needs to be open and honest about its project, and provide relevant and accurate information about the project, its methods, and the possible positive and negative impacts. In the case of potential negative impacts, the company should provide the necessary information to the community about how those impacts will be prevented or mitigated. This information about the project should be freely offered to the community – not just available upon request. (This process of providing full information is referred to as “transparency.”)

A company communicates the necessary information in ways appropriate to the needs of the local community. Communication of the necessary information might include such actions as translating documents, summarizing technical information, distributing written reports (including background documents as necessary), preparing audiovisual demonstrations, building scale models of the proposed mine, and so on. It may also mean finding appropriate vehicles to provide the necessary information, including conducting individual presentations to various community groups, forming a joint Community-Company Committee to study various aspects of the project, arranging for site visits to other, similar mine sites, and holding public meetings. The goal of these information and communications processes is for the community to have an opportunity to engage in a real dialogue with the company about the potential aspects of the project, including the opportunity to ask any questions they might have about it.

A community is given the opportunity to participate in decisions that affect it. Increasingly, mining companies are working together with communities to identify shared goals and values about projects and to build trust by including the community in key aspects of decision-making around the project. Sometimes this might encompass the structuring of local hiring, the promotion of local businesses, joint environmental monitoring, and agreement on closure processes. In this process, companies work with existing local structures and institutions, such as municipal governments, social organizations in the health and education fields, business groups, and environmental organizations. In some cases, it is necessary to create a new community structure that will be the main vehicle for defining community interests and engaging with the company. It is increasingly common for companies to provide some financing for such an entity. The final outcome of this decision-making process is arrived at through a negotiation between the company and the community.

The project is conducted with sustainable development in mind. The concept of sustainable development extends to the three areas mentioned above of environmental, economic and social impacts.

Environmental: Mining projects change the existing landscape. Responsible companies recognize that attention to environmental impacts is absolutely essential if they are to continue to have a social license to operate. They therefore strive to minimize negative environmental impacts on the area and to restore or remediate any areas that are affected by the operation. As well as providing information about the potential environmental impacts of a proposed mine, companies increasingly support the creation of a joint Community-Company Environmental Monitoring Committee charged with the responsibility of carrying out joint monitoring of environmental impacts during the operation of the mine. This Committee also ensures that the proposed long-term mitigation and remediation plans of the company are implemented, including in the closure stage of the mine. Any community concerns about how to address potential negative impacts on sensitive ecological areas are decided in this Committee. Again, it is increasingly common for companies to provide the necessary technical information and training to allow this Committee to operate effectively, as well as the necessary financial resources. The composition, scope and functioning of this Committee is the result of a negotiation between the community and the company.

Economic: A mining project is designed to meet both operational considerations for mine management as well as to maximize community well-being both during and after the life of the mine. In socially responsible mining terms, communities and companies are examining how a *net benefit* can be left in the area. Creating jobs is one part of this, through such policies and practices as preferential local hiring requirements. Local sourcing of supplies and services is another practice that

demonstrates economic net benefits to communities. However, these are transitory benefits and could, in fact, increase the dependency of the community on the operation of the mine. Therefore, while jobs and suppliers are important, communities and companies are increasingly looking beyond these transactions to find net benefit to communities. For example, it is increasingly common to try to identify how a company's presence might contribute to an improved local infrastructure in water or roads.

Another area of focus is the enhancement of existing or alternative economic activities. The goal is to enhance the potential economic well-being for future generations in the town or region. Any final outcome in this economic area is decided through a negotiation between the local communities and the mining company. Most importantly, whatever is finally decided must be in line with the communities' vision of their own long-term development needs. If a community has not created such a long-term development vision or plan, they should do so prior to the commencement of mining activities. Otherwise they may not be able to take maximum advantage of the opportunity presented by the mine's operation.

Social: Much is made of the positive social impacts of mining operations, such as an increase in population, an increase in the local tax base, greater commercial and business diversity, and so on. However, mining companies are also now recognizing the need to take steps to address potential negative social impacts before they occur. Such impacts might include an increase in housing prices, the influx of outside workers, and an increase in social problems such as alcoholism and prostitution, to name a few. At the same time, communities and companies are resolving these issues by such methods as: supplemental housing programs; hiring local workers or only outside workers who bring their families; strict enforcement of compartment policies regarding drinking and other behaviors; and adding to the existing infrastructure in the health and education areas. Special attention is paid to groups most at risk; local social service organizations are usually the preferred delivery mechanism for such programs. Finally, a great deal of planning must be put into the closure period, including possible relocation programs for workers who are not desirous of staying in the community after the mine closes. The aim of all of these efforts is to ensure, as much as possible, a maximization of the positive social impacts in the communities and a minimization of the potential negative impacts.

In assessing the circumstances of Esquel and the events leading up to the vote of March 23, BSR used the above criteria to measure the company's degree of engagement in areas vital to the interests of the community.

Appendix V: Timeline of Events

Below is an approximate timeline of selected events involving Minera El Desquite. The timeline is not meant to be exhaustive, and the dates have not all been verified for accuracy.

1997	Start of exploration at Joya del Sur
March 1999	First ‘sounding’ at Galadriel
1999/2001	Esquel resident group develops a global development strategy (Esquel SEAS)
2001	Project area incorporated as part of Esquel
April 2002	Presentation from Brancote to permitting authorities about the mine.
May 2002	Members of the community and authorities presented project and requests for social works to Brancote and Meridian. These groups did not receive a response from either entity.
2/July/02	A laboratory was established in Trevelin. After concerns that the laboratory has been kept secret, permitting authorities express lack of confidence in the company and its actions. Creates distrust of company on part of Esquel residents
8/July/02	First Meridian press conference. The company speaks of its desire to “be a good neighbor.”
15/July/02	Teachers go to schools in the area and give talks about the dangers of cyanide – the beginning of a ‘no’ group. Meridian doesn’t respond.
30/July/02	DuPont talk on cyanide
July/Aug 02	Permitting authorities request that Meridian have an official spokesperson for the project
20/Sep/02	Assembly of “Vecinos Autoconvocados” - not yet explicitly opposed to the project
30/Sep/02	The “Movimiento Ciudadano” (Citizens’ Movement) presents its first questions about the project, regarding cyanide
17/Sep/02	Mayor from Huallanca, Peru gives a talk about the benefits of mining.
18/Oct/02	Presentation of Environmental Impact Study (EIS)
21/Oct/02	EIS made available to public
25/Oct/02	Trip to El Peñón organized by company for journalists

30/Oct/02	Trevelin lab closed. The town counsel bans the lab from re-opening.
4/Nov/02	Town counselors postpone public hearing (for the first time)
7/Nov/02	The first meeting at which the Autoconvocados become the Autoconvocados por el no – against the mine.
7/Nov/02	UOCRA comes out in favor of the project
13/Nov/02	Town walls get “No to the mine” graffiti
13/Nov/02	Plan for a referendum presented to municipal authorities
22/Nov/02	Madryn: passes no cyanide resolution
25/Nov/02	First march against the project
27/Nov/02	“No to the mine” movement gets national TV coverage
4/Dec/02	March against the mine
Dec 2002	March in favor of the mine
6/Dec/02	Meeting between Meridian and the Chamber of Commerce
9/Dec/02	Press conference by Gonzalo Tanoira as a spokesperson for Meridian.
17/Dec/02	UATA submits observations about the EIS.
27/Dec/02	“Nueva Comunicación” is contracted for PR work
4/Jan/03	March against the mine
2/Feb/03	Protest in “Cumbres Blancas”
4/Feb/03	March against the mine
6/Feb/03	Town Council agrees to ask the mayor for a referendum
13/Feb/03	Mayor Williams vetoes an ordinance that would ban cyanide
14/Feb/03	The church proposes a dialogue between business and society
15/Feb/03	Peruvian anthropologist, Rodrigo Rubio, criticizes mining.
21/Feb/03	Public hearing postponed indefinitely
25/Feb/03	Esquel anniversary. Marches for and against the mine.

27/Feb/03	Robert Moran gives talk in Esquel
End of Feb.	Mayor decides to authorize referendum
4/Mar/03	March against the mine
15/Mar/03	Autoconvocados For the Mine forms.
17/Mar/03	Máximo Diaz of Coop 16 gives a talk about the mine
19/Mar/03	Video of the yellow creek appears on TV
20/Mar/03	March against the mine
21/Mar/03	Exploration suspended.
23/Mar/03	Referendum – Yes: 18%; No: 81%
26/Mar/03	A second yellow creek is discovered
29/Mar/03	Date when public hearing was supposed to happen (but had been previously postponed)
4/April/03	March against the mine (and for jobs and homeless rights)