Report from the Tom Farrell Institute for the Environment’s Mine Rehab Conference 2017



# Executive Summary

The 7th Annual Best Practice Ecological Rehabilitation of Mined Lands Conference (2017) was held on 29, 30 & 31 March 2017 at Muswellbrook, NSW, organised by the Tom Farrell Institute for the Environment (TFI). The conference had 218 delegates (sell out!), and had 17 speakers, 11 poster presentations, 8 sponsors, 10 exhibitors, and a panel discussion. In addition to the main conference there were 3 workshops, 2 mine tours, a civic reception, and a cocktail dinner.

Similar to the broad variety of attendees, speakers included rehab professionals, industry, government, and education.

Results of an attendee survey indicated a very satisfaction with the conference, with approximately 80% of respondents noting the conference met or exceeded their expectations and over 89% saying they would re-attend.

# Conference background

The 7th Annual Best Practice Ecological Rehabilitation of Mined Lands Conference (2017) [See <http://www.tomfarrellinstitute.org/2017-mine-rehab-conference.html> ] was held on 29, 30 & 31 March 2017 at Muswellbrook, NSW, organised by the Tom Farrell Institute for the Environment (TFI). The TFI is a multidisciplinary organisation which is well placed as the University of Newcastle’s Environmental outreach arm, to engage with Australia’s leading professionals involved in the broader environmental fields.

This annual conference is a significant event on the Hunter Region calendar. It provides an important avenue for TFI to promote the use of best-practice approaches in the management of rehabilitation of mined lands.

The main conference sold out this year, with 218 attendees (See Figure 1 below), making it one of the largest mining rehabilitation conferences in Australia. The breakdown of attendance figures was approximately 45% Rehab Professionals, 20% Industry, 18% Government, and 16% Education, and 1% Community. (See Figure 2 *Delegates by their field of work*, below)

Due to the large number of excellent abstracts received, the conference was expanded to include an additional day this year. This year our event was held over 3 days. Across these three days, delegates had the opportunity to participate in various activities, including workshops, mine tours as well as the main conference.

The 2017 Conference attracted:

* those with a professional interest in Mined Land Rehabilitation
* regulatory officers involved in the mining sector, Policy development and implementation
* new researchers, recent PhD, Masters and Honours graduates
* individuals and organisations representing the mining community and associated supply chains
* researchers and research institutes; and broader community

A broad variety of speakers presented at the conference, with approximately 24% Rehab Professionals, 18% Industry, 24% Government, and 34% Education.

​The purpose of the Mine Rehab Conference was to bring Mine Rehabilitation Stakeholders together to share our current best practices, and to discuss what we do well & what we can improve & what we would like the future to be.

In addition to the main conference, the following events were held:

MINE TOURS (Wed. afternoon)

* Muswellbrook Coal *thence* BHPB- Mount Arthur
* Mount Thorley Warkworth *thence* Rix’s Creek

WORKSHOPS

* Landform evolution modelling for mine rehabilitation EAMS-SIBERIA (Wed 3-5pm),
* Pathways to relinquishment and opportunities to transition to productive alternate land uses (Fri 11am-2:30pm), and
* New practices to advance mine rehab in the Hunter Valley ( Fri 11am-2:30pm)

SOCIAL EVENTS

* Civic welcome (Wed. evening) The Upper Hunter Conservatorium of Music. Bridge Street, Muswellbrook
* Networking Dinner (Thurs. evening) Muswellbrook RSL Bridge Street, Muswellbrook

<http://www.tomfarrellinstitute.org/2017-mine-rehab-conference.html>

**Table 1 Front covers of the Conference's Brochure/Handbooks over the years**

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# *Table 2*

# Photographic report

**Wed 29th March 2017**:

* Mine tours in the afternoon.
* Civic reception in the evening

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| O:\centres\TFI\TFI_1\FORUMS\2017 Forums\Mine Rehab 2017\Images from the Conf\corinne unger\20170329_113025.jpg  People awaiting mine tours outside Muswellbrook RSL 29.3.17 | O:\centres\TFI\TFI_1\FORUMS\2017 Forums\Mine Rehab 2017\Images from the Conf\Mine Tour_ Warkworth Ascha\P1010029.JPG  Tour onsite Mt Thorley Warkworth |
| O:\centres\TFI\TFI_1\FORUMS\2017 Forums\Mine Rehab 2017\Images from the Conf\Mine Tour_ Warkworth Ascha\P1010041.JPG  Inspecting revegetation at Mt Thorley Warkworth | O:\centres\TFI\TFI_1\FORUMS\2017 Forums\Mine Rehab 2017\Images from the Conf\Mine Tour_ Warkworth Ascha\P1010048.JPG  MTW with tour bus and escort vehicle |
| O:\centres\TFI\TFI_1\FORUMS\2017 Forums\Mine Rehab 2017\Images from the Conf\Mine Tour_ Warkworth Ascha\P1010068.JPG Taller revegetation at MTW | O:\centres\TFI\TFI_1\FORUMS\2017 Forums\Mine Rehab 2017\Images from the Conf\29_3-17 Muswellbrook Coal Julie Thomas\P1020396.JPG  Inspecting the big artificial bowl at Muswellbrook Coal, a landscape feature deliberately created by the land forming process. |
| O:\centres\TFI\TFI_1\FORUMS\2017 Forums\Mine Rehab 2017\Images from the Conf\29_3-17 Muswellbrook Coal Julie Thomas\IMG_7667.JPG  Inspecting the big artificial bowl at Muswellbrook Coal | O:\centres\TFI\TFI_1\FORUMS\2017 Forums\Mine Rehab 2017\Images from the Conf\29_3-17 Muswellbrook Coal Julie Thomas\P1020378 Family portrait.JPG  Family portrait in front of rehab Muswellbrook coal |

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| O:\centres\TFI\TFI_1\FORUMS\2017 Forums\Mine Rehab 2017\Images from the Conf\Belinda_mobile\20170329_183611 sware.jpg  Soiree  Civic welcome Wednesday 29.3.17 | O:\centres\TFI\TFI_1\FORUMS\2017 Forums\Mine Rehab 2017\Images from the Conf\Nigel photos\20170329_193702 Martin Rush Belinda Tim.jpg  Tom Farrell Institute Tim Roberts (right) and Belinda McNab (centre) network with Muswellbrook Mayor Martin Rush (left) |

**Thu 30th**: Full day of presentations with posters and panel session, followed by a dinner.

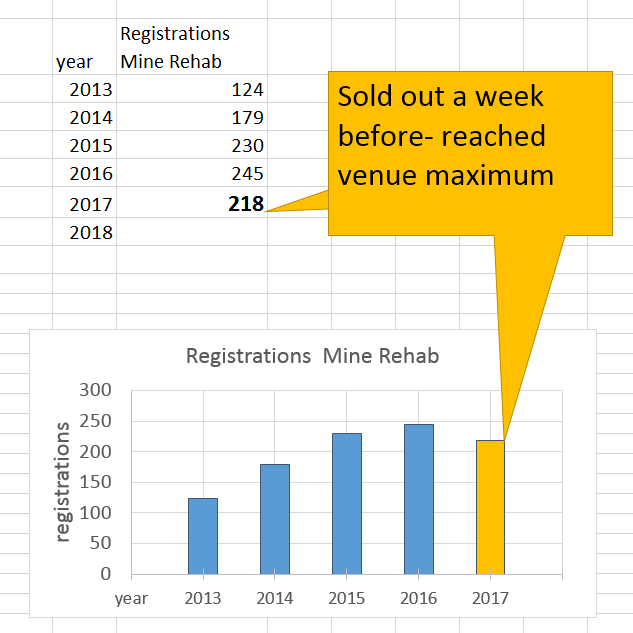
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| O:\centres\TFI\TFI_1\FORUMS\2017 Forums\Mine Rehab 2017\Images from the Conf\Belinda's Lightroom Retouch\_MG_5939 Tim Roberts.jpg Professor Tim Roberts opening the Conference Thursday 30.3.17 | Thursday 30.3.17 conference delegates attend to Shannon Mulholland O:\centres\TFI\TFI_1\FORUMS\2017 Forums\Mine Rehab 2017\Images from the Conf\crowd scenes\20170330_124134 3 busy room Thur 30_4-17.jpg |
| O:\centres\TFI\TFI_1\FORUMS\2017 Forums\Mine Rehab 2017\Images from the Conf\Speakers\11 panel\002 Panel r to l Richard Bush, David Blackmore, Stephan Barry, Andrew Keith, Martin Rush.jpg | Panel Session:  “Pathways to relinquishment and Opportunities to transition to productive alternate land uses”  L to R  Chair Peter Elliott  Richard Bush, David Blackmore, Stephen Barry, Andrew Keith, Martin Rush |
| O:\centres\TFI\TFI_1\FORUMS\2017 Forums\Mine Rehab 2017\Images from the Conf\Speakers\11 panel\20170330_133723 1 panel nice shot ) (2).jpg | O:\centres\TFI\TFI_1\FORUMS\2017 Forums\Mine Rehab 2017\Images from the Conf\crowd scenes\20170330_142600 panel and crowd (2).jpg |
| O:\centres\TFI\TFI_1\FORUMS\2017 Forums\Mine Rehab 2017\Images from the Conf\Nigel photos\20170330_194324 Alan Broadfoot.jpg  Alan Broadfoot addresses the Dinner Audience | O:\centres\TFI\TFI_1\FORUMS\2017 Forums\Mine Rehab 2017\Images from the Conf\Nigel photos\20170330_202521.jpg  Some dinner participants chatting |

**Fri 31st**: Presentations till 11am then there were two (2) concurrent workshops that ran until 3pm.  The workshops included: *New practices to advance mine rehab in the Hunter Valley, and Pathways to relinquishment* and *Opportunities to transition to productive alternate land uses.*

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| O:\centres\TFI\TFI_1\FORUMS\2017 Forums\Mine Rehab 2017\Images from the Conf\crowd scenes\20170331_104905 Friday crowd 1.jpg  Crowd on Friday 31.3.17 | O:\centres\TFI\TFI_1\FORUMS\2017 Forums\Mine Rehab 2017\Images from the Conf\Nigel photos\20170331_112033.jpg  Workshop 31.3.17  “Pathways to relinquishment and Opportunities to transition to productive alternate land uses” |
| O:\centres\TFI\TFI_1\FORUMS\2017 Forums\Mine Rehab 2017\Images from the Conf\Nigel photos\20170331_143601.jpg | Participant feedback to group  Workshop: “Pathways to relinquishment and Opportunities to transition to productive alternate land uses”  Report embedded here:  <<DOUBLE Click << box to open embedded Relinquishment workshop report |

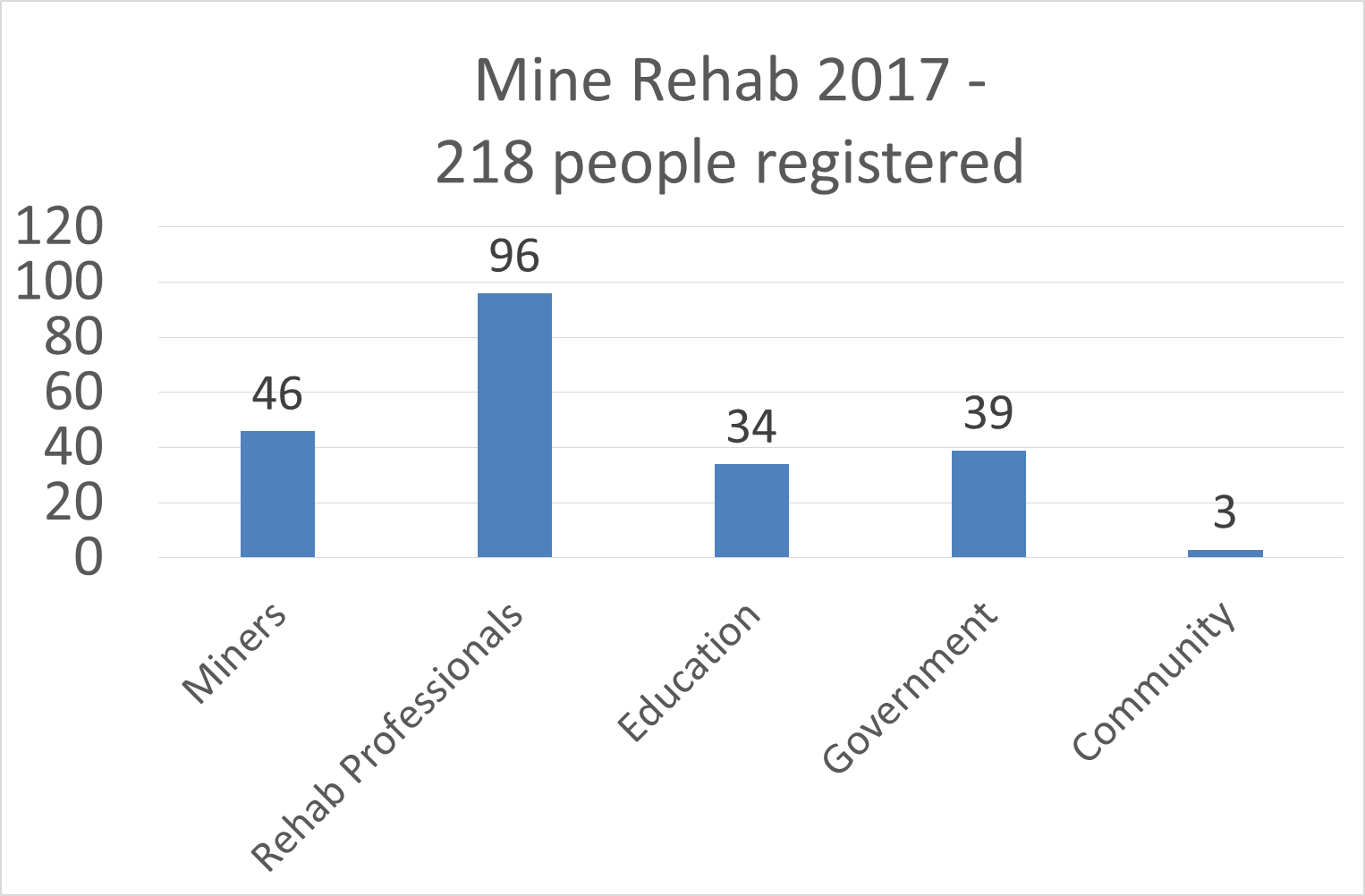
# Registration

218 registrations were accepted. This is below 2016 (at 245 attendees).

Figure 1 Past conference delegate registrations 

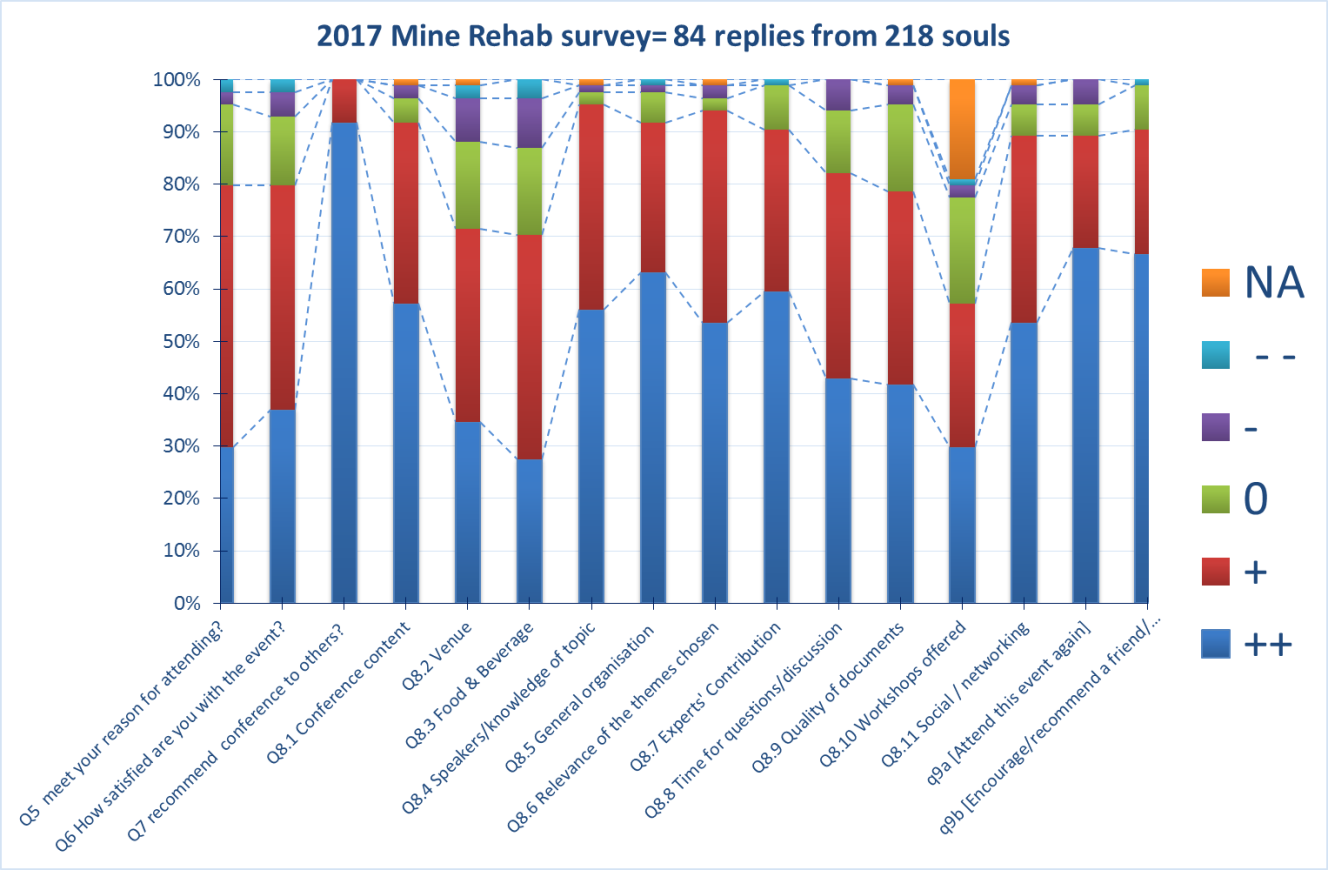
However, we were completely constrained by the venue configuration and we ceased accepting new registrants just over a week before the conference. {~ Monday 20th March 2017}. With the selling rate at about 30 to 40 seat per week we could perhaps extrapolate 218 +~ 30 =~ 250 +

Figure 2 Delegates by their field of work



# Survey

Satisfaction ratings for the overall conference rated very high, with approximately 80 percent of respondents being satisfied with the event which they noted met or exceeded their expectations for attending, and over 89 percent indicating they would attend again and recommend the conference to others. See Figure 3 *Summary of Survey results MR 2017* below.

Figure 3 Summary of Survey results MR 2017