

## **MEDIA STATEMENT**

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### **UPDATE ON COVID-19 POSITION IN THE MINING INDUSTRY**

**Johannesburg, 15 May 2020:** The Minerals Council South Africa is saddened to have to report the first death of an industry employee as a result of Covid-19. The 34-year old male employee who worked at an operation in Mpumalanga Province fell ill during the lock-down period, and his case was managed by the NICD\*. He had no contacts at work in the period immediately prior to his illness as his operation was closed at the time. We extend our condolences to his family and colleagues.

Minerals Council members report all Covid-19 related information on a daily basis on an online database which supports and informs the industry's management of the disease. To date, around 165,000 employees have been screened, with 877 tests having been undertaken. Screening and testing is undertaken in line with NICD protocols.

A total of 23 positive cases have been identified; one employee is deceased and 10 employees have recovered. When a positive case is identified by companies, intensive screening is undertaken with contacts quarantined where necessary until test results have been received.

Dr Thuthula Balfour, Head of Health at the Minerals Council, said: "The industry's approach remains focussed on detection of individuals who are ill or at risk, and preventing the spread of the illness. Extensive screening is undertaken of all employees as they return to work after lock-down and on a daily basis while at work. Comprehensive hygiene measures, including sanitising, the use of PPEs, social distancing and de-densification protocols are in place at all operations, accompanied by intensive education and communication initiatives. We recognise fully that employees and our mines are part of our broader communities, and that we all need to exercise care and vigilance 24 hours a day, and not just at work.

"While the initial cases reported in the industry were largely at corporate offices or professionals that had travelled internationally and locally for work or studies, there has been an increasing trend of regional transmission. Many of these have been cases of individuals contracting the illness at home under lock-down with no operational contact prior to or during



their illness. Around 40% of the positive cases are women. Our understanding is that none of the 21 cases are as a result of on-mine transmission.

“An important component of the precautions being undertaken by the companies is extensive screening for and exclusion of employees whose immune systems may be compromised as a result of underlying illnesses such as hypertension, cancer, diabetes and AIDS.”

\*The Minerals Council publishes a daily dashboard of information relating to Covid-19 cases including the province and commodity where affected employees work. The Minerals Council will not disclose specific information about companies.

**Media queries:**

Charmane Russell: +27 82 372 5816 or [crussell@mineralscouncil.org.za](mailto:crussell@mineralscouncil.org.za) or [charmane@rasc.co.za](mailto:charmane@rasc.co.za)

Alan Fine: + 27 83 250 0757 or [alan@rasc.co.za](mailto:alan@rasc.co.za)