

## Mining company assures compliance with lower cost & risk

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**Sean Finemore**  
Senior Hydrogeologist



MineCo\* is a global mining company that specialises in minerals used in building, manufacturing and primary industries. In Australasia, it has many mine sites and plants, some in very remote, hard to reach or fragile locations.

### A tough environment

One particular mine in Australia is in the tropical North, and is subject to high temperatures, heavy rain and, in monsoon season, the occasional extreme weather. The site itself is also sandy and fragile, yet there is also dense forest with trees over 30 meters high and a steep escarpment to negotiate, which all make getting around quite a challenge.

Until recently, it was a requirement for MineCo staff to go to site to take groundwater measurements. According to Senior Hydrogeologist, Sean Finemore\*: 'It was a pretty simple and quick measurement once there, it was just getting there and back that was the problem'.

### Unfriendly locals

For this MineCo site, groundwater measurements are taken to show that, as a result of the mining operation, neither depletion nor augmentation of levels is taking place.

MineCo is serious about workplace safety too and, although sending 2 people to the site at a time adhered to guidelines, Finemore was aware of the hazards and wanted a better solution: 'It wasn't just about terrain or cost, it was about safety. Our guys had come across plenty of snakes over the years, so we needed a better way to collect data without risking our people'.

*\*This client has asked for names to be changed for privacy reasons*



## 4 ways that didn't work

Finemore started to look for alternatives, including direct cabling, and various devices powered by battery or solar power and connected to 3G, 4G or satellite networks. The purpose was to collect and send groundwater data back to MineCo's data repository, and key requirements for the solution were robustness, reliability and continuous operation with low need for maintenance.

As Finemore says: 'Cabling was out of the question, and the devices weren't tough enough, or couldn't get 3G or 4G access because the scarp cut off the line of sight, or had batteries that needed changing all the time. This all meant site visits, the very thing we wanted to avoid. There was nothing available that could do the job'.

## An opportunity to seize

Finemore already knew Pacific Data Systems, both as a supplier and developer of smart monitoring devices, so the opportunity to create a new device that could handle automated data transfer in tough remote locations was a practical solution for both.

With input from MineCo, the R&D team from PDS developed the first SatVue, a compact, rugged device which collects and transmits data via the Inmarsat global satellite network

## Robust & reliable

SatVue has been in place at MineCo's site for over 6 months and, according to Finemore, hasn't missed a beat. Groundwater data has been regularly and continuously sent to the repository and, as a result, no one has been required to go to site to collect data.

While the savings are obvious based on just one device, according to Finemore the potential savings are far greater: 'If we used SatVue for all of our remote measurements on this site, the savings would be substantial. If we extended it to other sites across Australia to measure groundwater and other parameters like stream chemistry, the return would be impressive'.

## Contact us about SatVue

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