Value seeking: Is the definition of productivity too narrow to protect and grow value?

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Often the business case for investment in activities delivering to sustainability goals is stated in terms of value. Value can be created, destroyed and/or protected as a result of decisions to make the investments (or not). In recent times, with lower commodity prices, language has shifted from statements of value in a broad context towards a focus on "shareholder value" from a productivity stance. In this seminar I will look at the definition of productivity and question whether the definition as stated, and the consequential focus of mining company decisions and actions, is commensurate with where value to shareholders is derived. I will use a hierarchical framework of sustainable development and operating sustainably, previously presented, and treat this hierarchy as a “value seeking tree”. The metaphor being invoked is that of the fabled “money tree”.

Professor Chris Moran is the Director of the Sustainable Minerals Institute (SMI) at The University of Queensland (UQ) in Australia. Previously, he was the Founding Director of SMI's Centre for Water in the Minerals Industry, which conducts research towards achieving sustainable water management in the sector. Professor Moran has published widely in the scientific literature and broader media. He serves on various government panels and committees, as well as UQ boards. He was a Director of the International Mining for Development Centre (IM4DC), and has had formal advising roles for state and federal governments on nutrient management, groundwater, coal seam gas and underground coal gasification.