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## **Chile: On Projected Output At Escondida Copper Mine**

*by Barbara Khol*

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Output at the Escondida copper mine could be doubled if demand is high enough, according to Jim Curry, Broken Hill Proprietary Co. Ltd. Utah minerals chief executive. Planned output at the mine, located in Chile's Atacama Desert, is 320,000 tons per year. Curry spoke to a seminar in Melbourne, and was interviewed by the Australian Financial Review. Mine construction is eight months ahead of schedule, and the first shipments will start in January. The mine, Chile's largest foreign investment project and potentially the world's third largest copper operation, is to open in December. The Australian BHP owns 57.5% of the Escondida mine. The deposits were discovered in 1981, and came into BHP's possession in 1984 when it bought the US-based Utah International Inc. Located 160 km. southeast of Antofagasta, the mine's reserves total 662 million tons averaging 2.1% copper plus minor quantities of gold, silver and molybdenum, according to BHP. Curry said, "Chile has made a peaceful and smooth transition to a democratic government during the past few months, and no major changes in the direction of the general economic and business environment are foreshadowed...The project has potential to grow further through added concentrate production and other value-added projects, provided the copper industry and Chilean conditions continue to encourage investment." Brian Loton, BHP's deputy chairperson, said Escondida will produce about 4% of global copper supplies. (Basic data from AFP, 07/02/90, 07/03/90; Knight Ridder Financial, 07/03/90)

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