

PROGRAM: 105.7 8DDD FM LATE MORNINGS

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RE: MCARTHUR RIVER MINE

09T134

Last Friday was a busy day for the McArthur River Mine, not only did the Federal Environment Minister Peter Garrett give the go ahead for the mine to restart open-cut operations to the miners around the top end, an independent report was also released on the environmental performance of the mine to date. So how's it going the McArthur River Mine? Philip Mulvey is the Managing Director of Environmental Earth Scientists, they were hired to monitor Xstrata the operators of the McArthur River Mine, he's been good enough to talk to us this morning.

REPTR Philip Mulvey good morning to you.

MULVEY Good morning Leon.

REPTR The report looks at operations specifically between October 2006 to 2007 September, and the question has to be asked why'd it take so long for the report to be released?

MULVEY Look that's an excellent question, and this being the first year of doing this we were engaged in the start of 2008 to review the previous year and it was a matter of getting a lot of the ... (inaudible) ... information going through it. And then at the time we're supposed to report to the Borroloola community first, and there was a bit of sorry business which also resulted in some delays. And that meant that instead of giving the report to the community in sort of October/November and then the minister releasing it to the public in the November/December period, we were a couple of months late.

REPTR Okay so it's not gonna take you a year to collate and hand down the findings every time that you're reporting on the McArthur River Mine from here on in?

MULVEY No it won't, but it still will take, we aim to report each year somewhere around September to October for the previous year. The mine first has to collate all their monitoring data, submit it as a report to the government or a series of reports, the government then signs off on it, and that is an iterative process and then it is submitted for our review in loosely speaking somewhere around May. But whilst this is going on and getting all the data, we also inspect the site, inspect the government to be monitoring, inspect the MRM personnel doing monitoring...

REPTR ...Sure you can do all the inspection in the world, but what you're saying is if there is a major problem the broader community's not going to know about it for more than a year after it happens according to the process that the government has put in place and that you're responsible for?

MULVEY No, no, not at all, there is actually a direct provision for any urgent issues to be brought up immediately. And there's several ways that urgent issues can be brought up. There's not only through out monitoring, but there's also through the community reporting to us issues that are considered of importance, and if the mine reports or the government reports an issue, we also then respond very quickly.

REPTR Borroloola locals have claimed there's been a high level of dead fish in the area. Do you believe that that's linked to the mine?

MULVEY No I don't, because it certainly is a high level of dead fish at the first flush of the wet season that occurred this wet season, it occurred, occurring both up gradient and in catchments away from the mine and in other areas. But we will certainly be completing our investigation into that and report that in the next period.

REPTR They found that the main problems or you found that the main problems were that MRM hadn't addressed dust problems at their waste water dam nor had they put mosquito controls in, has that been remedied.

MULVEY Oh I can't comment on whether that's been remedied as yet. But dust control issues in the process of being remedied in the tailings dam, and we flew over and did some aerial inspections just in the last few days and certainly that's well underway and at this stage we're hoping to be able to report that there's been excellent progress there. We're still waiting to hear back on the lava mosquito monitoring program and breeding site rectification programs.

REPTR Okay and at the end of this year coming we will have an

understanding of how MRM have gone as the open-cut processes continue. You've assessed it and we'll have an understanding of how it's gone for what, 07/08?

MULVEY That's correct, that will take through basically to the end of 08, yes.

REPTR Good to talk to you this morning.

MULVEY Thanks very much Leon.

ENDS.