



MEDIA STATEMENT

REHABILITATION OF NEW CHANNELS

Borroloola, 28 January 2010

Xstrata Zinc Chief Operating Officer, Mr Brian Hearne said significant action has been taken since 2007 to rehabilitate the new channels of the McArthur River and Barney Creek but that delays to the major replanting program planned for the 2008/2009 wet season had impacted on the results achieved.

“Activities conducted under our rehabilitation program are regularly reported through our annual MRM Sustainability Reports, regular community newsletters and information sessions,” Mr Hearne said.

“Rehabilitation is a priority for two reasons: the early establishment of the ecosystem in both the waterways and surrounding areas and to ensure the stability of the new channels to prevent erosion.

“Unfortunately, our program was significantly delayed by the results of court action led by the Northern Land Council.

“We lost one whole growing season when all rehabilitation was suspended over the 2008/2009 wet season until the Commonwealth Government approvals process was completed.

“Since then we have progressed with a program of planting and direct seeding in line with the environmental planning for the open pit development. This is continuing over the current wet season.

“Our aim is to recreate the natural environment by using plants that are native to each area and environment type but establishing these environments will take time.”

Rehabilitation works commenced in 2007/2008 wet season when over 23,000 seedlings were planted and direct seeding began over an area of 41.4 hectares around the Barney Creek channel. Monitoring of this area has found a good success rate amongst the new vegetation.

In March 2008, 20 hectares of batters along the McArthur River channel were direct-seeded with tree, shrub and grass species. Two different vegetation mixes were used for the two levels of batters, to match vegetation survey results which showed different specific species inhabiting different levels on the bank's gradient.

Prior to the 2008/09 wet season, 59 hectares of gully and offset areas were also direct seeded with approximately 15 species of grass.



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A total of 31,130 seedlings from eight species were delivered to site in 2008 from two nurseries in Darwin and a further 11,500 seedlings from four species propagated by on-site environmental personnel and local trainees. Seedling tubestock is currently being stored in the MRM nursery.

Revegetation of the McArthur River re-channel is scheduled during the 2009/2010 wet season using both tubestock and direct seeding. Native tree and shrub seed has been collected from the local area and is currently in air-conditioned storage. Tubestock were grown from seed collected from the local area and species selection was based upon vegetation surveys of McArthur River.

Several hundred seedlings have already been planted along Barney Creek this year as per consultant recommendations.

Ends

For images of rehabilitation of the Barney Creek and McArthur River channels

http://www.mcarthurrivermine.com.au/mediacentre_imagelibrary.cfm

For more information

www.mcarthurrivermine.com.au

www.xstrata.com

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