FEDERAL CONSENT FOR $110 MILLION OPEN PIT MINE

The Federal Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Senator Ian Campbell, has given his consent to McArthur River Mining (MRM) for the $110 million open pit development.

MRM General Manager Brian Hearne said this is the third and final decision required for the development after previously receiving a favourable recommendation from the Northern Territory (NT) Minister for Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts, Marion Scrymgour, and the approval of NT Mines and Energy Minister, Chris Natt.

“Senator Campbell’s consent was the final step in the environmental assessment process and we thank him for this decision,” Mr Hearne said.

The Northern Territory Minister for Mines and Energy, Chris Natt, approved the open pit development on 13 October 2006 after being satisfied that six conditions had been met.

The conditions were in relation to the $55.5 million security bond, a vegetation management plan, river diversion demonstration, contaminant management, a mine-funded independent environmental monitoring program and a Heads of Agreement for a $32 million Community Benefits Package.

The conditions requested by Senator Campbell will be met through the work of the independent environmental monitoring program to be implemented in conjunction with the NT Government.

MINISTER TOURS MRM

The Minister for Mines and Energy, Chris Natt enjoyed a tour of the MRM site on Tuesday 6 September hosted by Brian Hearne.

On the site tour, Chris Natt was accompanied by Kym Hill, Colin Hallenstein, John Carroll, Richard Sellers and Dave Malone.

After lunch with MRM Department Managers, the group visited the open pit and surface facilities, followed by an aerial tour. The group met many people working onsite, taking time to stop for a photo with trainees George Blitner and Timson Lansen, Kyle Madson and plumbing apprentice Sean Mason.
DIALYSIS UNIT PROGRESSING

A building has been made available for the dialysis unit however it has been difficult finding an available builder to finish the work.

Once the construction work is complete people need to learn how to operate and use the facility. The community relations team has been working with NT Renal Services and other stakeholders to organise a meeting in Borroloola to discuss how the dialysis unit will work.

The dialysis unit has specific requirements that need to be met for it to operate efficiently. Water needs to be of a high quality, secure and at a specific pressure. To meet these needs special water filters, sinks and temperature control systems, storage tank and pressure pumps will be installed and ready for the builder to complete the final touches.

Once the unit is up and running, the disruption that treatment has previously had on affected families will be greatly reduced.

SWIMMING POOL UPDATE

As part of our Corporate Social Involvement program, MRM has committed $600,000 towards the construction of a swimming pool in Borroloola. Other sources of funding have come from the Federal and NT Government and a significant grant won by the local soccer club.

The pool will be located in the school grounds with the ablution component designed to service both the pool and the soccer club requirements.

The swimming pool design complete, the next step is for the steering committee to finalise the budget and then put the project out to tender.

We are unlikely to see the pool’s construction commence anytime this year due to the impact of the wet season and shortage of trades people. The hope is it will be completed by June next year.

ENVIRONMENT UPDATE

By Jane Yelland – Health Safety and Environment Superintendent

The last two months have been extremely busy for the Environmental Section.

During this time we have appointed a new Environment Officer, Trish Kenny. Trish is responsible for our Environmental Monitoring Program, Waste Management and Weed Management.

Trish is working closely with our friendly Enviro – Allan Doddrell (Bundy) ensuring our monitoring is carried out as per government requirements. So far Bundy is surviving with two females in the office!!

Jonathon Cowie is the new Environment Officer for JMS Engineering (JMS) who has been supporting the work of the Environmental Section. Jonathon joined the team to assist with environmental issues connected with JMS operations.

Our district Weeds Officer, Garry Hillen made a site visit to assess MRM’s weed management plan for 2007. Next year, our efforts will focus on controlling the spread of Noogoora Burr away from the river, the rehabilitation area and topsoil stockpiles.

The program will also aim to remove Devils Claw from areas near the old McArthur River Station Homestead and also Bellyache Bush and Parkinsonia. This work will be done toward the end of the wet season in 2007.

Mark Burns (Global Solutions) and Marj King (Top End Seeds) conducted a site visit in September. The visit was to refine our revegetation program for the proposed Open Pit Project.

Now the project has been approved, a trial rehabilitation area will be established in the Barney Creek Diversion, to test the direct seeding of local grass, tree and shrub species in addition to the planting of seedlings.

Most of the seed required for this project has already been collected from the local area. Further collection will occur during and after the wet season in 2006/07.

During September Charles Darwin University conducted a sediment survey from the McArthur River mouth to Borroloola to assess the presence of heavy metals in the sediment downstream of the mine. A summary of the results will be available in the next edition of MemoRanduM.

This program compliments the existing monitoring program completed twice each year in Barney Creek, Surprise Creek and the McArthur River.

The Annual Marine Monitoring Program conducted in October included the collection of sediment, seawater and oysters from around the Bing Bong area.

This program was in addition to the monthly sediment and water sampling in the Swing Basin and the channel area at Bing Bong.

Other activity that occupied the department was the preparation for the Xstrata HSEC Audit in late October 2006 where four auditors assessed the HSEC performance of MRM.

A MESSAGE FROM THE GM

We are relieved to have finally passed the last hurdle in the Government approval process so we can now focus on the future of MRM.

The approvals are tremendous news for all our staff, suppliers and customers who have been waiting for a resolution on this development for more than three years. We appreciate their support and patience during this time.

We recognise that the approval of our project carries with it a responsibility for MRM to manage its operations in a way that brings value to the NT economy, while also protecting the environment and delivering benefits to the local community.

A key condition of our approval was a $32 million community benefits package that will fund the implementation of numerous support initiatives to assist in developing the region’s long-term sustainability.

Work has already begun on a number of these initiatives and is covered in this edition of the newsletter, including the swimming pool, dialysis unit and night patrol projects.

We are working to increase the level of Indigenous employment to 20 percent of the mine workforce, and will also continue to support the establishment of local business opportunities to supply the mine.

Brian Hearne
General Manager
CAREERS DISPLAYS

Bill Baird and Lenny Hilzinger from MRM have been on the road promoting careers with MRM and in the mining industry to students.

On 23 August, MRM held a display at the Northern Territory Government’s Department of Employment, Education and Training Careers Expo, which was open to the general public. Lenny also met students at the Charles Darwin University Graduate Careers Expo on 29 August.

The displays provided information about graduate development programs and advice on a range of careers in mining including trades, engineering, administration, safety, environment, accounting and human resources.

PRODUCTION STATISTICS

For October 2006, MRM is on target to mill 158,500 tonnes at a slightly higher than budgeted 11.2 percent Zn head grade.

Concentrate production for the month will be under 26,000 tonnes.

16 October marked the end of 11 years of underground mining at MRM, with the final truck of underground ore hauled to the surface.

A total of 13.5 million tonnes of ore at an average grade of 14.4 percent Zn and 5.8 percent Pb was extracted from the MRM underground between 1995 and 2006.

Open pit mining in Stage B of the Test Pit is now down to 9984RL (48 metres below the original surface) in fresh ore and is scheduled to go down to a final level of 9962RL.

After getting the green light from the NT and Federal government, work is now underway to move the northern flood protection bund of the test pit to the edge of Barney Creek, enabling mining access to the most northerly third mining stage, Stage C.

Diamond drilling is also currently testing the grade of the ore zone in this area.

CRG MEETINGS: 17 AUGUST AND 27 SEPTEMBER

The McArthur River Mining Community Reference Group (MRM CRG) met on Thursday 17 August and Wednesday 27 September to discuss the current issues and developments with the mine.

Bing Bong
Since the cyclones in 2000 and 2001 sand and sediment has settled in the channel, making it difficult for the Aburri to operate on some tides. The current dredge is too small to undertake the work currently required, consequently a larger dredge has been sent from Darwin.

The work to re-establish the channel should take three months.

Borroloola Council has been working on extending the boat ramp at Mule creek and the culverts and car park work is almost complete.

MRM CRG members attended an inspection of the loading facility, dredging works and local boat ramp after the meeting.

Dialysis machine and swimming pool
Members discussed the current status of the dialysis machine and swimming pool. Details of the projects are covered on page two.

Robinson River
The ablution block has been delivered and facilities will be connected shortly. There is work planned to develop the sports ground with irrigation equipment supplied by MRM for next season.

King Ash Bay Roads
MRM contracted Syd Rusca, a local Traditional Owner and Founder of CDE, to repair the road to King Ash Bay.

Feedback from the community indicates the road is now in the best condition it has ever been.

Government Representative
Indigenous Business Australia (IBA) will be working on a project with the NT Tourist Commission focussing on the Borroloola area and MRM’s role as an economic driver for the region.

Barramundi hatchery
A Barramundi hatchery is being considered for King Ash Bay. There have been visits to Karumba and Darwin to look at other hatcheries.

Public Environmental Report (PER) and Mine Management Plan (MMP)
Members discussed the announcement by the Minister for Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts and the MMP (which is now approved). MRM have also committed to a community benefits package.

Night Patrol
Members discussed the development of a night patrol service. Details of the project are covered on page six.

Other business
Annie Isaac was upset that Traditional Owners from Borroloola did not welcome Minister Natt when he visited Borroloola recently.

JOBS AT MRM

Since the Government approval of the open pit development, job opportunities have been advertised in the Northern Territory News.

Contractors at MRM are seeking applications jobs at the mine and local Borroloola residents are encouraged to apply for positions including Mobile Plant Operators.

Please contact Amy Fellingham on 08 8975 8253 for more details.
FIVE MINUTES WITH: JUSTIN LAWS

What is the best part about living in the Northern Territory?
The warm sunny weather and that we have only two seasons, the small population, no peak hour traffic, many sporting opportunities, camping, people’s attitude, and Litchfield.

What do you most enjoy about the NT lifestyle?
The casual pace of life, laid back attitude of people and you can BBQ all year round!

How long have you been at MRM?
Six years

What is your favourite holiday destination?
United States

What is your role at MRM?
As Rescue and Safety Coordinator, a major part of my role on site is to recruit, train and coordinate the Emergency Response Team.

The Team has had a large transformation over the last 12 months with the closure of the underground mine which has seen a 90 percent change in personnel in the volunteer Rescue team.

TRADITIONAL OWNERS INSPECT NEW WAREHOUSE SITE

Respected Gurdanji custodial elders and Traditional Owners Billy Coolibah and Bruce Joy visited MRM recently to inspect the proposed area for a new warehouse.

These Traditional Owners are responsible for maintaining the culture of the Aboriginal language group on whose country MRM is situated. It is standard practice to consult custodial elders before infrastructure work is conducted in order to ensure no sacred sites are affected.

Yukuwala is an identified sacred site which is already fenced off and signs are posted on the south side of the road leading up to the mine. It is registered with and protected by the Aboriginal Area Protection Authority.

A new warehouse necessary for the additional equipment required for the open pit development is planned to be built near the processing plant. This location was selected because of ease of access to the road and vicinity to the operation.

During the visit, the Traditional Owners were shown the warehouse operations will be well clear of Yukuwala and there would be no impact.

Site visits like these are an important part of maintaining working relationships between the mine and Traditional Owners and ensuring the culture and traditions are protected.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM

The latest news for the Emergency Response Team is the movement of members in and out of the team. The last month has seen the departure of Terry Smith, Alan Farris, Dan Armstrong and Santosh Applasamy.

We are happy to have new recruits Daniel Cook and Rebecca Lloyd from JMS, who joined in October.

We encourage more new team members to join as we have many vacancies still available.

The team has concluded its fuel reduction burn offs for the year. Additional training planned for the next couple of months will include:

- Acquiring heavy rigid truck licences for the rescue truck and water truck
- First aid training, with some members attaining their certificate for the first time and others gaining occupational first aid
- Vehicle extrication techniques and hydraulic cutting equipment for road accident rescue scenarios
- Breathing apparatus skills testing
- Team fitness tests.
MRM was proud to be a major sponsor of the 2006 NT Training Awards ceremony held at Skycity Casino, Darwin on Saturday 16 September. The inaugural awards night was hosted by the Minister for Employment, Education and Training the Hon Paul Henderson, MLA.

The event recognises apprentices, trainees, teachers/trainers, employers and organisations who have demonstrated outstanding achievement in the vocational education and training (VET) sector.

The awards comprised 11 categories of student and organisational achievement, with the majority of winners going on to represent the Northern Territory at the Australian Training Awards in November.

The VET in Schools, Student of the Year award, also sponsored by MRM, was won by Brooke Rainbird who is currently completing her studies at the Centralian Senior Secondary College.

BMW pays great attention to automobile body protection. Before the first four layers of paint can be applied, the BMW must be pre-treated to make its surface clinically clean. To do this, car bodies are dipped into one of 11 paint baths before finally being covered with a layer of zinc phosphate.

Silver Bear Munitions offers “Zinc Washed” hand gun and rifle ammunition. This high quality ammo features distinctive highly polished zinc plating on the cartridge case; hence the “Silver” Bear name. The zinc washed cases insure reliable feeding and extraction.

Adding a zinc bar to commercial metal crab pots extends the life of the pot to four or five years.

Almost every marine vessel now has some sort of zinc plate to prevent corrosion. The zinc plates acts as a sacrificial metal so that it is attacked first and not other metals used on boats. Boat owners use zinc plate to prevent their props (brass or bronze) and drive shafts or seals from corroding.

The first recorded use of zinc plate to prevent corrosion was by Sir Humphrey Davey who had zinc plates installed on the copper-sheathed hulls of British naval vessels in 1824.
MRM STAFF NEWS

Congratulations
Well done to Craig Bates for his promotion to Technical Services Supervisor.

Welcome
MRM extends a friendly welcome to Patricia Kenny who has been appointed to the role of Environmental Officer.

Farewell
MRM farewells Travis Follett, John Hill, Michelle Samson and Darren O’Connor and would like to thank them for their efforts.

YOUNG TERRITORIANS ACKNOWLEDGED

The Northern Territory Young Achiever Awards were launched in Darwin by the Hon Ted Egan on Wednesday 6 September.

The awards acknowledge, encourage and promote the positive achievements of young Territorians aged between 14 and 26 years of age.

The eight categories are:
- Community Service
- Arts
- Sport
- Environment
- Career Achievement
- Science and Engineering
- Regional and Rural Initiative
- Excellence in Youth Leadership.

This year MRM sponsored the Regional and Rural Initiative award.

Each category winner will be presented with a trophy and a $1,000 On-line Saver Account from TIO. The overall winner, The Channel 9 Young Achiever of the Year, receives an additional $1,000 On-line Saver Account from TIO and a handcrafted glass trophy.

Award dates:
- Close of Nominations – Thursday 30 November 2006
- Judging commences – Thursday 15 February 2007
- Awards Presentation – Saturday 14 April 2007

Please contact Bill Baird on 08 8975 8179 for more information.

NIGHT PATROL

Bill Baird and Noel Everon attended a meeting at the Mabunji Aboriginal Resource Centre to address alcohol and substance abuse issues in the community and the development of a new Night Patrol service for Borroloola.

The meeting was attended by representatives from the Attorney General’s Department, Mabunji Resource Centre, NT Police, Mission Australia, the Borroloola Community Government Council, MAWA, DEET, Northern Land Council and McArthur River Mining along with concerned community members and Traditional Owners.

The Northern Land Council tabled a paper outlining membership of a newly established Alcohol Management Group. This group was endorsed as the primary group to address alcohol and substance abuse problems in the community.

The development of a Borroloola Night Patrol service was also given high priority at the meeting.

It was generally agreed by the meeting attendees that:
- NT Police would oversee day to day management of the Night Patrol and the Attorney General’s Dept will provide operational funding through Mabunji
- Mission Australia will develop a business plan with MAWA / DEET assisting with training and career development and MRM providing a vehicle for the service if managed by the NT Police.

The meeting concluded with the newly established Alcohol Management Group agreeing to set up a steering committee that will undertake researching a future Night Patrol program.

JACKPOT WINNERS

Congratulations to the following winners of $50 for the social club jackpot.

September
Stewart Gardiner and Clayton Cairns

October
Dan Smith and Andrew Ayers
PROFILE: SAM “SPARKY” FULLER

Sam Fuller is a second year electrical apprentice working for Metallurgy Maintenance.

A dedicated team of tradespersons are facilitating Sam’s theory and practical learning while Sam also attends Charles Darwin University for block release studies.

Sam has been a consistent high achiever in the theoretical and practical components of his trade learning, recently scoring 100% in a theory exam relating to one of the most important aspects of Electrical Safety.

Sam’s achievements are an indication of his personal ability and reflect the quality of job supervision and training coordinated by the Electrical Supervisor, Eddie Thomas and his team.

Congratulations to Sam and all of the Metallurgy Team who continue to provide valuable experience and training to our future tradespersons.

PTM HOMES NT BMX TITLES

By Jason Eecen

The NT BMX Titles were run on 6 and 7 October. Over 150 riders from all the major NT centres, aged from 4 to 44, mixed it up in the biggest race event of the year at Satellite City.

With the number of entries up this year, there were some very competitive classes.

There were nearly 20 riders in each of the eight and nine year classes, so making the final was a great achievement.

The crowd went off during the final and when the dust settled, Chris Johns was the winner with Mathew Juster second and Darren Hicks third.

In the Open Cruiser class Chris Johns won this final by mere centimeters from Steven Juster then Ashley Johns.

Thank you to MRM for lending their support with sponsorship and helping make this race meeting a great success.

The season has peaked, but racing on Friday nights at the Jingili track (near the airport) and Satellite City (Marlow Lagoon) continues until late November. After a short break, racing will start again in April or as soon as the rain stops.

Information about the NT BMX Clubs can be found on the community website www.actbmx.com.au.

FROM COW LAGOON TO THE MCG

The excitement of an AFL Grand Final reaches all corners of Australia, but at Cow Lagoon the excitement was far greater than usual, especially for Patrick Raggett.

Patrick won a major prize in the NAB AFL Auskick National Competition to not only attend the grand final in Melbourne, but to play the Auskick grid game on centre stage at half time during the big match.

If that was not enough, those selected under the program are provided with accommodation, meals and the opportunity to participate in the grand parade extravaganza through the centre of Melbourne.

The competition and AFLAuskick program is about introducing primary school kids to AFL, generating the players and stars of the future.

What a fantastic opportunity for young Patrick. And who knows, this may not be the last time we see this Cow Lagoon youngster kicking hide on the paddock at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

It was a pleasure for MRM to be able to assist Patrick and his guardian to fly to Darwin and take advantage of an opportunity that most people could only dream of.

Go Patrick! Go!
SUNSET CRUISE
On 30 September and 7 October, social club members enjoyed a sunset cruise on Darwin harbour.

CANBERRA EXCURSION
A group of excited children from local pastoral stations flew to Canberra for an 11 day excursion to visit the sights and learn about the Australian Government.

The Katherine School of the Air students from years six and seven met with fellow class mates in Darwin to complete the journey to our nation’s capital.

The support by MRM enabled four students and two adult supervisors to fly to and from Darwin for their connecting flights. Overnight accommodation was also provided.

The trip included many “firsts” for the students: first time on a plane, first time out of the Northern Territory and first time away without other family members.

CANBERRA HIGHLIGHTS
By Jessika Bradley
The Australian Institute of Sport was great, it had a room with games for kids like basketball, cricket and many more.

The skeletons and fossils at the National Dinosaur Museum were interesting and the Telstra Tower was really cool. We had such a great view of Canberra, everyone liked it up there.

The Canberra Space Dome and Observatory was wicked, we got to look at all the craters in the moon and planets.

At Lazar Zone 3 we had to try and shoot people with our lazers, but skiing and ice skating were my favourite activities, even though I fell over quite a lot.

The National Zoo was awesome, I loved the tigers and the red pandas and Questacon was fantastic, I loved the six metre free fall.

From far left: Susan Crute, Kate Lumsden, Kaldina Harny, Kayla Struber, Arnold Crocker, Skye MacFarlane, Samantha Roth, Billy Harny, Dean Holzwart, Corry Raymond, Amy Harding, Justin McGrath, Steele Harrower, Jessika Bradley, Mikayla Bouma, Louise Rush, Kate Cronin, Kellie Jack, Sinead Wolski and Alexia Thomson