



Lead in Mount Isa Briefing Paper

16 April 2008

At Xstrata Mount Isa Mines, the safety of our employees and the community is our highest priority. For the last two decades we have been continually improving our environmental performance so we can continue to operate in an environmentally sustainable way.

Committed to the highest standards of environmental practice

Xstrata Mount Isa Mines has to meet the same requirements for lead emissions as any other mine in Queensland.

Xstrata has been working with the Queensland Environmental Protection Agency on new legislation for the last year to ensure a rapid transition to more streamlined environmental regulation of our operations. The change will be brought about through the introduction of the *Environmental Protection and Other Amendments Bill (2008)* which maps out the process for environmental regulation of Mount Isa Mines to be transitioned from the *Mount Isa Mines Limited Agreement Act 1985* to the *Environmental Protection Act 1994*.

Xstrata Mount Isa Mines already adopts a proactive approach to improving its environmental performance and has made significant environmental improvements over the last few decades. In particular, since Xstrata acquired MIM Holdings Limited in June 2003 we have spent hundreds of millions of dollars in environmental performance improvements at our Mount Isa operations.

To manage emissions and our environmental impact, Xstrata Mount Isa Mines has implemented:

- **Monitoring programs:** For over a decade, Xstrata Mount Isa Mines has had a comprehensive sulphur dioxide and dust monitoring network that measures emissions levels in the community via our Air Quality Control Centre (AQC). The network incorporates 15 monitoring stations throughout Mount Isa. We also operate a 24-hour community complaints system to ensure that residents receive prompt responses to any concerns regarding our operations.
- **Acid plant:** In 2000, Mount Isa Mines, in conjunction with WMC (now Incitec Pivot Ltd), commissioned the acid plant to capture sulphur dioxide emissions from the copper smelter. Operation of the acid plant has reduced total emissions by approximately 80%.
- **Whole of Emissions Study:** In late 2006, Xstrata Mount Isa Mines commissioned world-renowned toxicologist, Associate Professor Barry Noller from the University of Queensland's Centre for Mined Land Rehabilitation to conduct a whole of emissions study into land, air and water at Mount Isa. Associate Professor Noller and his team have assessed the performance of historical rehabilitation areas close to the operations. A community briefing paper showing the performance of previous remediation works completed adjacent to the operations in the 1990s was released to the public in November 2007.

Over the next three years, the study will assess whether there are any other non-natural forms of lead in the community. It will also examine potential pathways for lead to enter the community from our operations via land, air and water and any potential risk to human and ecological health these may pose.

- **The National Pollutant Inventory:** As a sign of Xstrata's ongoing progress in reducing emissions, last year we reported fewer emissions to the National Pollutant Inventory (NPI) than in the previous twelve month period. Details of our performance can be accessed from www.npi.gov.au

Emissions reported to the NPI are estimations of emissions generated on-site and do not relate to exposure (off-site) in the community.

- **Smelter Emissions Project:** In June 2007, Xstrata established the Smelter Emissions Project team to assess opportunities to improve the capture and treatment of sulphur dioxide emissions at our copper and lead smelters. The Smelter Emissions Project builds on capture and treatment improvements, which have been implemented over the past three years. These include:

Copper Smelter

- Completing upgrades to four converters to reduce the likelihood of emissions coming from the smelting process
- Purchasing a stack monitor for real-time measurement of sulphur dioxide emissions
- Undertaking a specialist review of the copper smelting process to better understand flow volumes and sulphur dioxide concentrations in various parts of the process.

Lead Smelter

- Installing a new water cooling system in the furnace to improve process control
- Ensuring a continuous supply of good-quality coke to maximise furnace performance and reduce emissions
- Forming a dedicated Hygiene Department and establishing a new role in the management team to improve plant hygiene
- Sharing technology with industry partners to identify opportunities to improve performance
- Purchasing concentrate with lower levels of sulphur to decrease sulphur dioxide emissions.

Xstrata Mount Isa Mines is likely to spend at least another \$100 million on its Smelter Emissions Project.

Ensuring a safe workplace is paramount

The safety of our workers is paramount to Xstrata. All employees in the copper smelter are required to provide a urine sample at periodic intervals to determine exposure to arsenic and all workers on the mine lease are required to have regular blood tests for lead.

Xstrata has established a lead-in-blood removal limit below the National Standard of 50 micrograms per decilitre. In 2007, there were no instances of people exceeding the national medical removal limit.

Working with government representatives and the community

High levels of lead and other minerals occur naturally in Mount Isa. It is for this reason that the mine and town were built at this location. Minimising the risk of living in a highly mineralised area is part of the way of life in Mount Isa. All residents, therefore, have a responsibility to ensure they manage their exposure to this naturally-occurring mineral in their homes, gardens, workplaces and environment.

In this regard, Xstrata has for many years worked with government stakeholders to educate members of the Mount Isa community on the issues of living in a highly-mineralised location. In particular, last year Xstrata met regularly with the Queensland Government and Mount Isa City Council to actively support Queensland Health's *Get Bled for Lead* screening campaign which encouraged Mount Isa people to have their children's blood tested for lead.

Xstrata worked with Queensland Health to encourage Mount Isa residents to have their children tested. The *Get Bled for Lead* screening program reached its target of testing 400 Mount Isa children between the ages of one and four.

Continuing the great work of the *Get Bled for Lead* campaign, Xstrata was pleased to become a founding member of the *Living with Lead Alliance*. The Alliance's aim is to formalise the activities of Xstrata and other key stakeholders in raising the awareness of living with lead. The Alliance seeks to provide Mount Isa residents with information to assist them to minimise the risks of living in a highly-mineralised environment where high levels of lead occur naturally.

Xstrata Mount Isa Mines also offers a free, independent and confidential blood lead monitoring program for all Mount Isa residents through the Queensland Medical Laboratory (QML).