



Northern Land Council

MEDIA RELEASE

McArthur River diversion is still a big scar

25 January 2010

Northern Land Council (NLC) Chief Executive, Mr Kim Hill has today raised concerns that the diverted McArthur River, near Borroloola in the remote Gulf region of the Northern Territory, looks like a big scar without any apparent evidence of revegetation along the diversion.

Mr Hill has called on the mine's owner, Xstrata, to publicly announce when it will start revegetating the diverted river course given that this issue was high in the public comments that Xstrata made when seeking approval for the diversion.

"Xstrata claimed that revegetation would be given priority, but it appears nothing has happened," Mr Hill said.

"The diversion must have been completed sometime during last year. I flew over the McArthur River Mine last week and saw a bald river which runs the length of the diversion.

"While the NLC acknowledges that it may be too early to see any major recovery at this point in time, we expected to see some form of vegetation on the ground along the river banks but this doesn't appear to be the case.

"Normal practice, let alone best practice would be start revegetation no later than the end of the Dry Season when the diversion was constructed using the seed stock which MRM said it started collecting in 2006 – to stabilise the riverbanks as soon as possible to minimise soil loss once the river starts flowing.

McArthur River Mine is owned by Xstrata.

Ends.