

THURSDAY 15 OCTOBER 2009



Media release:

Progress continues at Century pipeline

Progress continues to be made on the fault repair and spill clean up at the pipeline connecting MMG's Century mine to its Karumba port facility following a breach of the pipeline on Monday 5 October.

A complete clean up plan is being developed with the Department of Environment and Resource Management, whose representatives have visited the spill area. This plan will include removal and transportation of contaminated soil to the mine site, backfilling excavated areas with clean material, revegetation and weed management of the area. It will also establish a plan for ongoing environmental impact monitoring of the area.

Cultural monitors have also been engaged at the spill site to ensure there is no disturbance to areas of heritage significance.

"We have and will continue to consult with the pastoralists whose property on which this occurred as well as the local councils and elected representatives, regulators, Native Title groups and other community members on the event," said MMG Century General Manager John Lamb.

"We are disappointed this has happened and understand it is unacceptable to the community but are now focused on the clean up and repair."

Significant contaminated soil has now been excavated around the failure area and transported to the mine. This has allowed the repair team better access to the fault area where the affected section of pipeline has been cut out and removed.

A new section of pipe has been welded into place and the pipeline has been pressure tested with water. We expect to start sending small volumes of zinc slurry through the pipeline later today. MMG has consulted with the Department of Environment and Resource Management on restarting the pipeline.

"We have a dedicated team of industry experts out there working on the repairs and thank them for their continued efforts," said MMG Century General Manager John Lamb.

"We are still uncertain as to the exact cause of the damage and will be sending the removed section to technical experts for further metallurgical testing."

As an additional precaution, a bypass will be installed in the coming weeks. The bypass will allow the section around the fault area to be taken off line and further testing in the region of the fault to be undertaken.

The Century pipeline is approximately 304 kilometres long and approximately 300mm in diameter and connects the mine and processing operations at Lawn Hill to the port facility at Karumba.

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