

ERA production gets a lift in latest quarter

The miner used ore from existing stockpiles to boost its output – churning out more than 450 tonnes of uranium oxide for the September quarter, **ASHLEY MANICAROS** reports.

ENERGY Resources of Australia (ERA) increased production of uranium oxide by 17 per cent in the September 2015 quarter.

The increase was in ERA's quarterly operational review released to the ASX yesterday.

ERA produced more than 450 tonnes of uranium oxide in the September quarter compared to the June 2015 quarter.

As with the prior quarter, all ore milled was taken from existing stockpiles. Drummed uranium oxide production was helped by higher mill head grade, recovery and ore milled compared to the previous quarter in 2015.

Production levels in the June quarter were hit by the annual mill shutdown for maintenance.

The spot price for uranium yesterday was \$38.13US a pound. In its half-year results from January 1 to June 30, ERA reported its average realised price was \$49.14US per pound. This is due to its long-term contracts.

ERA is one of the nation's largest uranium producers and Australia's longest continually operating uranium mine.

Uranium has been mined at Ranger mine, located about eight kilometres from the township of Jabiru, about 260km east

of Darwin, for three decades. The Ranger mine is one of only three mines in the world to produce in excess of 110,000 tonnes of uranium oxide.

The quarterly operational review also reported the progressive rehabilitation activities on the Ranger Project Area continued, with the commissioning of the dredge under way.

The stainless steel dredge will transfer tailings from the Tailings Storage Facility to final disposition in Pit 3.

Dredging operations are scheduled to commence in the December 2015 quarter.

During NT Resources Week, ERA said it had spent about \$400 million on rehabilitation in the past three years.

Total evaluation expenditure for the September 2015 quarter was \$1 million, compared to \$3 million in the June 2015 quarter, on studies for the closing stages of the Prefeasibility Study of the Ranger 3 Deeps project.

There was no exploration expenditure for the September 2015 quarter, in line with the June 2015 quarter.

The Ranger 3 Deeps Exploration Decline remains under care and maintenance.

ATO SPREADS THE WORD

THE Australian Taxation Office will throw open its doors to the Darwin business community as part of its commitment to build trust and confidence within the community.

Assistant Commissioner Adrian Preston-Loh said the evening will be part of a series of Community Conversations held around the country.

Mr Loh said the tax office will speak with the business community about its drive to streamline services.

"These changes are designed to make business interactions with the tax office simpler, more efficient and less costly," Mr Preston-Loh said.

"We have already changed how we do some things based on what business and tax professionals told us.

"The Community Conversations provide another opportunity for the ATO leadership to talk directly with business owners to find out what else they think the ATO needs to improve."

Tax officials will also be available to give frank advice to businesses on how they can make their dealings with the tax office easier, Mr Preston-Loh said.

The evening will consist of a short presentation, followed by small group sessions.

"We want to listen to businesses and hear their ideas on how the ATO can improve," Mr Preston-Loh said.

Places are limited, and registration is required.

Home information is available at lets-talk.ato.gov.au/CommunityConversations

Sitzler's \$40m bridge win a boost for local industry

ASHLEY MANICAROS

TERRITORY construction company Sitzler has won a \$40 million contract to build two new 120m bridges at the Roper and Wilton rivers.

The Roper Highway project is a jointly funded project with the Australian Government contributing \$32 million and the Northern Territory Government contributing \$8 million.

The work will include road upgrades targeted at improving flood immunity.

Senator for Northern Territory Nigel Scullion said the project will improve access to local communities, Ngukurr and Numbulwar, by reducing

future closure times at the crossings.

"The existing Roper River and Wilton River crossings are bed-level crossings and during the wet season they are prone to flooding, making the highway impassable for a significant portion of the year," Senator Scullion said.

Northern Territory Minister for Transport Peter Chandler said in addition to building high-level bridges over the two crossings, 7.3 kilometres of approach roads will be reconstructed, including a realigned section of the Roper Highway.

"On-site activities will start this month, with major works to commence in April 2016 fol-



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SITZLER MANAGING DIRECTOR **STEVE MARGETIC**

lowing the wet season," Mr Chandler said.

"Sitzler will manage delivery of the project and are focused on increasing indigenous employment through release of small works packages aimed at

indigenous business enterprises and local contractors."

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development Warren Truss said the funding was part of the Regional Roads

Productivity Package under the Infrastructure Investment Program.

"In total, the Australian Government is investing \$90 million under the Northern Territory Regional Roads Productivity Package, which includes upgrading six regional roads to improve flood immunity, safety and reliability for communities," he said.

This is the second big contract win for Sitzler in as many months, with it recently winning a \$15 million tender to upgrade the children's ward at Royal Darwin Hospital.

Sitzler managing director Steve Margetic said his company had been, like all of the

Territory's major construction companies, aggressively pursuing opportunities.

"This is a managing contractor project which is particularly important for us given the extensive defence opportunities arising over the next five years. We will continue to aggressively pursue key projects over the coming months," he said.

"I think it is important a Territory company has won it. We are keen to demonstrate this capability to government and look forward to proving that."

Mr Margetic said Sitzler will be calling for tenders from local tradesmen later in the year.

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