MRM EXPANSION TO GO AHEAD

The NT Government has moved to rectify a technical legal issue to ensure the expansion of the McArthur River Mine.

Minister for Mines and Energy Chris Natt will introduce a Bill for an amendment to the McArthur River Project Agreement Ratification Act into Territory Parliament today.

Mines Minister Chris Natt said the amendment will rectify a technical legal issue surrounding the initial application form lodged by Xstrata for the McArthur River Mine in 2002 – as determined by the Supreme Court.

“The Solicitor General for the Northern Territory, Mr Tom Pauling QC, has advised me that this decision is based on a technicality,” Mr Natt said.

“I will seek to insert a provision into the Act to provide that Xstrata’s original Authorisation is valid and specifically authorises all types of mining activities at the McArthur River Mine site.

“I would like to stress the court made no adverse findings on the extensive environmental assessment process or consultation with traditional owners or the general community.

“Open cut mining operations and all work already undertaken to convert the mine from underground to open cut will be covered by the amendment.

“Because of the wide ranging impact of this decision, Government will be seeking to introduce and pass the amendment during the current Sittings as a matter of urgency.

Chief Minister Clare Martin said the approval of the MRM Mining Management Plan last October achieved the right balance between development, the environment and the community.

“The mine will mean hundreds of jobs for Territorians and hundreds of millions of dollars for the economy,” Ms Martin said.
“The open pit lead and zinc mine will generate $328 million a year, employ 264 people directly and another 272 indirectly.

“During construction 300 people will be employed directly and another 162 people indirectly.

“A $55.5 million security will be imposed for the first year of the development and that will increase as the mine expands.

“An independent environmental monitoring process will be established – funded by MRM.

“The $32 million Community Benefits Package which is part of the agreement will make sure locals also gain from this project.”

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