

Environment Protection Authority (EPA)

Communiqué

7 October 2008

The Board travelled to the northwest in early October to inspect the remediation program at the Savage River Mine and the tin mine operation at Mt Bischoff, Warratah. The Board's monthly meeting was held at Cradle Mountain to consider the reply to the Ministerial Statement of Expectation, the Statement of Intent, and the Board's Strategic Plan.

STATEMENT OF EXPECTATION AND STATEMENT OF INTENT

The Minister's Statement of Expectation was received by the Board. The Minister's response to the Board's comments on the Statement of Expectation was also noted. The Board discussed the process to prepare a Statement of Intent in response to the Minister's Statement of Expectation, noting that this is required by 1 January 2009. It was also noted that both the Statement of Expectation and Statement of Intent will be available on the EPA Website.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

The Board agreed that strategic planning would commence with the preparation of the Statement of Intent and a major strategic planning session would be held by February 2009.

PLANNED BURNING

The Board received a verbal report from the Director on the current status of a number of initiatives that have been taken with a view to improving the management of smoke from planned burning. This included the development of a proposal to monitor particle levels resulting from planned burning. The proposal is consistent with the recommendations of the report prepared for the Board by the University of Tasmania. It was agreed that the Chair would write to the Minister for Environment, Parks, Heritage and the Arts recommending that the pilot monitoring proposal be implemented next year.

KING ISLAND EIP

The Board examined a report introduced by the Director detailing wastewater treatment facilities at the King Island Abattoir. The Board considered a request from the new owner of the King Island Abattoir, Swift Australia (Southern) Pty Ltd, that they be given a further 2 years to complete the EIP commitment for the abattoir. After considering a range of recent issues, including current effluent quality and the impact of the effluent discharge on Porky's Creek, the Board requested the Director to meet with Swift to discuss the EIP timeframe and report back to the Board.

WASTE MANGEMENT COMMITTEE

The Director outlined that the current draft Waste Strategy identified the need for a Waste Management Committee and suggested that this would be best formed as a committee of the EPA Board. The Board agreed, in principle, to the formulation of a Waste Advisory Committee- as a committee of the EPA Board.

SAVAGE RIVER REHABILITATION PROJECT (SRRP) AND MT BISCHOFF MINE INSPECTIONS

As part of the trip to the northwest, the Board inspected the Savage River mine site and the associated remediation program. The Board examined remediation works to date including the construction of a water-shedding and alkaline side hill cover system, using eight million bulk cubic metres of alkaline rock and clay, to B Dump, a large historical dump which contributes around 40 % of the whole-of-site copper load at Savage River. The Board also inspected the North Dump Drain project, recently completed at a cost of \$1.2 million, which transfers acid drainage from the historic North Dump to the disused South Lens pit for passive treatment. This will address a total of 15% of the copper pollution load. The Board also examined the old tailings dam and ABM's plan to look at putting in a new tailings dam – designed to help neutralise the acid drainage from B dump and the Old Tailings Dam.

The Board also toured the Mount Bischoff tin mining operation at Warratah to examine how the new mining operation, licenced by the Board in 2007, is progressing, particularly with respect to the management of historic acid drainage sources.

For more details about the EPA, visit www.epa.tas.gov.au

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