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MEDIA RELEASE

NQCC CALLS FOR URGENT ACTION ON LEAD

Following the release of “conclusive and unequivocal” information from Professor Mark Taylor of Macquarie University that high lead levels in the blood of children in Mount Isa was caused by mining rather than ‘natural exposure’, North Queensland Conservation Council (NQCC) has called for urgent and widespread testing and swift action on the issue.

“It has been shown that even when exposed to small amounts of lead levels, children may appear inattentive, hyperactive and irritable. Children with greater lead levels may also have problems with learning and reading, delayed growth and hearing loss. At high levels, lead can cause permanent brain damage and even death” said NQCC Coordinator Wendy Tubman.

“Lead has been a major issue in Mt Isa for years. It is time the government and industry stopped trying to push the problem under the carpet. The evidence is now out; the industry is damaging our children’s health. Action needs to be urgent and drastic – more inquiries and consideration is not the answer.

“And that action needs to include Townsville – from where the lead mined in Mt Isa is exported. There have been many rumours of lead pollution associated with the port, and the recent Environmental Impact Statement undertaken for the proposed expansion of the port of Townsville identified lead as a ‘Contaminant of Potential Concern’ Ms Tubman said.

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