

Media Release:

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Edith River Test Results Update

The Department of Natural Resources, Environment, The Arts and Sport (NRETAS) sampled the Edith River as a result of two incidents, the train derailment involving a spill of copper concentrate into the Edith River and the uncontrolled release of waste water from the Mt Todd mine site.

Water samples were collected on 19 and 23 January 2012 and sediment samples on 9, 11, 16, 19 and 23 January 2012 from a number of locations above and below the Edith River rail bridge.

Sediment results indicate that levels of metals tested were all below national sediment quality guideline trigger levels on the days sampled where such guideline levels exist.

Water results indicate that on 19 January 2012 the levels of metals were below Australian and New Zealand Guidelines for Fresh and Marine Water Quality trigger levels at all locations.

The level of uranium at the Daly River sampling location for the 19 and 23 January 2012 that is slightly above the national water quality guideline trigger level, however the Department of Health has confirmed that the levels are well below the health guideline levels in the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines 2011, and unlikely to present a human health or safety concern.

The national guideline trigger levels are not limits on water quality. If a trigger value is exceeded, this triggers an action (response), such as follow up sampling, further investigation of sources etc.

Surface and groundwaters in some areas in the Daly Catchment have shown trace levels of uranium in past sampling projects undertaken by the Territory Government (NRETAS and Department of Resources).

These traces indicate that there is a level of naturally occurring uranium in the Catchment which is related to the geology of the region.

NRETAS is testing the uranium traces sampled at the Daly River location to confirm its natural source.

Water results for 23 January 2012 also indicate that copper and zinc levels were slightly above the national water quality guideline trigger levels at locations above and below the Edith River bridge. Levels of copper and zinc were below guideline levels on 19 January.

The levels of all other metals on 23 January 2012 were below national guideline trigger levels.

Isotope testing of metals in Edith River are also being conducted in an effort to determine their origin; either natural or incident-related. This testing is ongoing and results will be released when available.

NRETAS is continuing to conduct water and sediment sampling of the Edith River twice per week until 15 May 2012 when further sampling requirements will be assessed. All results will be released when available.

The investigation is ongoing and may require further testing of the Edith River in the early Dry season to obtain a more complete assessment of any environmental impact.

Ends

For previous media releases and test results from Edith River incident visit:
<http://www.nretas.nt.gov.au/environmentprotection/waste/investigations>

Attachments

- Water Sampling Summary of Results 19 January 2012
- Water Sampling Summary of Results 23 January 2012
- Sediment Sampling Summary of Results 9 January 2012
- Sediment Sampling Summary of Results 11 January 2012
- Sediment Sampling Summary of Results 16 January 2012
- Sediment Sampling Summary of Results 19 January 2012
- NRETAS Water and Sediment Monitoring Plan

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