PILBARA ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT GROUP

Newsletter No. 11
May 1997

A jam packed conference room, full of interested people - where did this happen you might ask?? BHP Iron Ore, Newman on the 23rd of May.
Thankyou to everyone for attending the biannual PEMG meeting and mine tour. The meeting was very productive and it appeared that everyone enjoyed learning about the geology and environmental issues of Mt Whaleback.

An informal 'get to know each other' dinner was held the night before the meeting This is where environmental issues of the world were sorted out with over some red wine and a delicious meal!!

The meeting began bright and early the next morning. As with previous meetings there was a great representation from key groups including, Hamersley Iron, Robe River Iron, BHP Iron Ore, Dampier Salt, Ashburton Shire, UWA, Woodside Petroleum, Astron Environmental, DME, DEP, ECOS and Western Land Management. It was great to see all these groups working together in a productive way.

Thankyou to speakers Greg Oliver and Steve Vellacott for taking the time to prepare interesting and informative presentations. Thank you also, to Mark Endersby and Felicity Littleton for organising the logistics associated with the meeting.

A very sincere thank you to BHP Iron Ore for hosting an excellent meal, meeting and excursion. Thanks also to Kerry Edwards and Priscilla Hubbard for putting together this Newsletter. Don't miss details of our next excursion, please RSVP Neville Havelberg ASAP - look forward to seeing you at "Camp Anderson". (Vicki)

Update on TBT Monitoring - Dampier Archipelago

Greg Oliver (Woodside) presented an update of the TBT Monitoring at Dampier Archipelago. TBT is a toxic, antifouling agent used to prevent marine organisms attaching to ship hulls. TBT appears to be causing oyster shell thickening and imposex (imposition of male sex organs on female parts) in neogastropods.

The proposed study targets the bioindicator *Morula granulata* a common neogastropod found in the intertidal zone. This species is sensitive to low levels of TBT and is exposed to the toxin as it feeds on barnacles and oysters.

The objectives of the study are to: assess suitability of the species, determine levels of TBT in water sediments, determine suitable index of imposex and to compare imposex and TBT contamination inside and outside of the Port areas.

The sampling strategy will involve collecting 50+ individuals at each site and will be dissected at the Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS) in Dampier. The

percentage of females displaying imposex will be recorded, and the relative penis size index will be determined. A further 20 samples will be forwarded for further tissue analysis.

If you would like to know more details regarding this project I am sure that Greg Oliver would be happy to answer any questions.

I am sure that we all will be interested to see the end result.

The Shire of Ashburton, through Landvision Pty Ltd, is currently preparing a District Town Planning Scheme which will include all of the land within the municipality.

If any members would like to put forward any suggestions or make comment on matters that you think should be addressed by the new Scheme, please contact **Stacey Towne** (Senior Planning Officer) on 08 91891029.

The Code for Environmental Management (Dec. 1996) was passed around at the meeting for people to take a look at. If you would like a copy it can be obtained by ringing the Secretariat for the Minerals Council of Australia on (06) 279 3600 or fax (06)279 3699.

BHP Iron Ore Mine Tour

After the meeting was closed a number of presentations were given by the Environmental and Geology Staff from BHP Iron Ore. A brief description on the Geology of Mt Whaleback was presented by Peter Waters, Superintendent of Geological Services. This was followed by an overview of the BHP Minerals Environmental Management System, and what it means for BHP Iron Ore by David Porterfield, Senior Environmental Officer.
A discussion was then held on the waste rock capping trial which is currently being established on a waste dump at the mine.
A short presentation was also given on the proposed research program which is being instigated with the help of the Centre for Land Rehabilitation (University of Western Australia). The program will be aimed at land stability and rehabilitation and will involve a number of smaller projects over about three years.

We then piled into the bus and spent the afternoon on a mine tour, which began at the pit Lookout - where all features of the mine were viewed. This was then followed by a trip into the pit to collect samples of iron ore and to check out the shovels and haul trucks. The tour then went onto look at the Waste Management Facility which collects, recycles (where possible) and tracks most waste products on site. The ARD containment dam which has been designed to capture any acidic runoff from the waste dumps was visited, the dam is a short term solution to a much bigger problem. This was followed by another visit to the Lookout, where the daily blast in the pit was watched (with great anticipation!!). A couple of the rehabilitation sites within the pit were also pointed out, showing both good and poor examples of the 'scalloping' method.