



global lead advice  
& support service

Run by



The Lead Education and Abatement Design Group

Working to eliminate childhood and foetal lead poisoning  
by the year 2012 and to protect the environment from lead

ABN 25 819 463 114

## MEDIA RELEASE - Monday 24/05/10

### Toxic mining exports need Oz mining tax income to be managed safely always

The LEAD Group Inc. fully supports the 40% mining tax that Australian mining companies are currently complaining about. Australians should also have more say in where our toxic mining exports go and the purposes they are used for. Mining tax income is needed to manage past mine product contamination and poisonings that have occurred on a global scale. We wouldn't export uranium to terrorists or their suppliers so why do we sell lead, nickel, etc, so freely?

"Who among us, besides politicians and mining executives, would approve of Swiss mining giant Xstrata's Mount Isa Mine lead continuing to be sent to the UK to be made into the lead additive for all the leaded petrol that is still sold in the world, for instance?" asks LEAD Group President, Elizabeth O'Brien.

"With great power comes great responsibility, and some huge mining companies simply don't act responsibly on the world stage, but rather will sell their product to the highest bidder no matter how irresponsibly it will be used. This new mining tax income would give the government the resources to force mining companies to improve their stewardship."

"Some of the tax income should be used to introduce a long-needed licence to export toxic ores and smelting products, just as there is already a licence system to export toxic wastes such as used lead acid batteries (ULABs). Some is needed for regulation and enforcement to safely remove all the lead paint that's "out there" so that the poisonings-to-come from that paint, can be prevented. And some must be used for research to help Global Jo Citizen avert the early death that's coming his or her way because of the past use of lead in petrol, paint, pesticides, food cans, etc."

"Before ULABs can be exported for recycling, Peter Garrett's Department checks out the OH&S and Environmental compliance of the receiving country's recycling facility and ports along the way. This should happen for lead and nickel ore, concentrate and refined metal exports too, and if investigation shows that the smelted lead goes to dispersive, uncontrollable uses of lead, then a licence should not be granted. For instance, mining companies should not be able to get one of the new licences to ship lead ore to Chinese smelters which are selling it to paint companies who will sell their paint to toymakers."

O'Brien is heading off today for a World Health Organisation / United Nations Environment Programme meeting of the Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead in Paint, in Geneva this week. "And I have to wonder, how much of the lead that is currently used in all kinds of paint including house paint and toy paint, in countries with a total population of 2.5 billion people, comes originally from Australia? We are the world's largest exporter of lead so I'm guessing it's quite a lot! And I have to wonder how many of the 6.5 billion people alive today will die early because of past uses of lead which have created a legacy of lead-painted buildings full of leaded dust and surrounded by leaded soils and sediments in every urban centre on the planet."

"Yet no Australian medical research is even looking into how the lead that's in my bones and yours, is going to be managed for the rest of our lives to prevent it's gradual release into our blood stream, ageing our minds, causing osteoporosis or Alzheimer's disease and causing early death, mainly via fatal heart attacks and strokes."

"The LEAD Group calls on the Australian government to invest mining tax income into well-resourced licensing systems, toxic metal management information services, and research into how the lead and other toxic metals already in all of us, can be controlled to enable healthier, smarter aging. Kevin Rudd could eliminate leaded petrol globally before this financial year is over, if he took the reins and stopped Xstrata supplying lead for leaded petrol today."

**Contact Elizabeth O'Brien +61 2 97160014 (mobile 0431 184 933 only until 4pm today), President, The LEAD Group\*, Australia ###**

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