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## PRESS RELEASE

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### For Immediate Release

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[MDA calls for government action to protect the Basin from contaminated waste from abandoned mine]

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The Murray Darling Association has called on state and federal departments of the Environment, and the Qld Department of Natural Resources and Mines to immediately undertake all necessary remedial works to ensure the safety of Basin resources from the risk of contamination by mining waste water.

The Murray Darling Association is deeply concerned by the risk posed by contaminated waste remaining in storage ponds at the abandoned Texas Silver Mines Pty Ltd site, which could be spilled from the site with as little as 40 millimetres of rain, sending cyanide and other heavy metals into the waters of the Murray Darling Basin, via the Dumaresq River.

Testing by the Queensland Department of Environment and Heritage on those ponds has identified elevated levels of heavy metals in the water stored at the site, including copper, iron, manganese, zinc and nickel, compounding these concerns.

‘We are very concerned by the reports that heavy metals and cyanide are present in storage ponds which have not been designed with local conditions in mind’ said Murray Darling Association CEO Emma Bradbury.

The Murray Darling Association has called on Governments to ensure the safety of the Basin's water system by immediately undertaking the required remedial works, and commence action to recover rehabilitation costs from the liquidators, and or the personal guarantees of the directors responsible.

The fact that mining operators have the ability provide bonds which are, in this case, up to five time less than the actual cost of rehabilitating the site must also be reviewed. The Murray Darling Association is calling on

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*For conservation and sustainable development*

government to review policy to ensure that all mining activities are required to allocate sufficient reserves to ensure site clean-up and rehabilitation.

'That a company can declare insolvency and leave the cost of clean-up to be met by the community is unacceptable. Governments must ensure the bond taken will cover all possible costs in the case of insolvency, and full rehabilitation at the end of mine life.' Ms Bradbury said.

The MDA supports the call by Senator Di Natale for a national mining audit to determine if state governments have enough money to cover the full cost of mine rehabilitation.

The MDA is not opposed to mining, and supports a balanced approach managing the assets of the Murray Darling Basin, optimising social, economic and environmental benefits to our community. However, the risk posed by mining to our agricultural productivity and our water resources must be appropriately managed.

'The health of our inland waterways should be considered as the highest priority when approving mines and assessing the end of use requirements.' Ms Bradbury said. 'The potential for contamination should be deemed an unacceptable risk to Australia's agricultural and environmental assets. Mining companies must be required to make adequate provision to ensure full rehabilitation.'

[End]