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AUDITOR GENERAL FINDS IMPROVED ENVIRONMENTAL AND FINANCIAL PROTECTION SINCE HIS 2011 MINING AUDIT

In his follow-up audit on compliance with mining conditions tabled in Parliament today, Auditor General Colin Murphy found significant improvements across agencies in response to the findings in his 2011 report.

Mr Murphy found that the State is better protected from mine operators failing to rehabilitate their sites, through the implementation of the Mining Rehabilitation Fund.

“The introduction of a public register has brought much needed transparency to the often controversial area of offsets,” Mr Murphy said.

Operators are now more closely monitored to check if they are meeting environmental and aboriginal heritage conditions.

There has also been progress in clarifying responsibilities for monitoring mining carried out under State Agreements, where the relevant agencies are finalising detailed protocols.

The Auditor General noted that State Agreement mines remain outside the Mining Rehabilitation Fund, and although they can opt in, none have yet done so.

A number of the changes made to improve mining condition compliance are quite new, and it will take time for the full benefits to be realised.

“I previously cautioned that the State risked losing financial, economic and social returns and gained potential liabilities if the risks weren’t well managed, but I am pleased to see agencies have taken action on the recommendations made,” said Mr Murphy.

The Auditor General’s report ‘Ensuring Compliance with Conditions on Mining – Follow-up’ (Report 20 – November 2014) can be downloaded from the Office of the Auditor General website at www.audit.wa.gov.au

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