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Australian Mining Information For Community Decision-Making: Site Level Water Disclosures For The Macquarie And Lachlan Catchments

Shane Leong

Department of Accounting and Corporate Governance, Macquarie University
sleongrydeis@hotmail.com

James Hazleton (presenting author)

Department of Accounting and Corporate Governance, Macquarie University
james.hazleton@mq.edu.au

Ros Taplin

Australian Centre for Sustainable Mining Practices, University of New South Wales
r.taplin@unsw.edu.au

Wendy Timms

Australian Centre for Sustainable Mining Practices, University of New South Wales
w.timms@unsw.edu.au

David Laurence

Australian Centre for Sustainable Mining Practices, University of New South Wales

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the adequacy of both the regulatory regime and reporting practices of water reporting of Australian mine sites in the context of the Macquarie and Lachlan catchments of New South Wales. The water disclosure requirements placed on the mining industry via Australian legislation are compared to the suggested water reporting indicators of the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) and Water Accounting Framework for the Minerals Industry (WAFMI) and the reporting practices of nine mining operations are reviewed. It is found that while legislation places very little direct reporting requirements on mining companies, the web-based disclosure requirements of development consent conditions are quite significant. This study suggests that government regulations may mean that substantial sustainability information is publicly available, but may not be contained within corporate sustainability reports.

Keywords: mining, water, disclosure