

**ELLENDALE MINE SITE — BURU REHAB**

*Statement by Minister for Mines and Petroleum*

**MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington — Minister for Mines and Petroleum)** [9.02 am]: The Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety's abandoned mines program has commenced a program of earthworks to remediate the Ellendale mine site on Bunuba country in the West Kimberley that was abandoned in 2015. The contract was awarded through an open tender process to Aboriginal business Buru Rehab. One of the key aims of the abandoned mines program contracted works is to facilitate employment of Aboriginal people on country. Under the Buru Rehab contract, this has included the development of the Ellendale Bunuba trainee program. Recently, senior officers from the department, together with directors and the operational team from Buru Rehab met on country with 12 representatives of the Bunuba Dawangarri Aboriginal Corporation to review the works progress. The Bunuba elders expressed how pleased they were that this work was being undertaken to help restore the country and were grateful for the funding allocated to the project through the mining rehabilitation fund—the pooled fund to which Western Australian mining operators contribute and that can be drawn on to rehabilitate abandoned mines under the Mining Rehabilitation Fund Act 2012.

Despite the extensive flooding throughout the Fitzroy River catchment causing delays, the 2023 dry season works program under the Buru Rehab Ellendale contract has been very positive, with the contract already achieving 50 per cent Indigenous participation in the workforce across its roster, with three Bunuba trainees in progress towards being certified competent on a range of equipment and tasks under the contract. The program of works under the Buru Rehab contract is planned over the current season and the next two dry seasons and it is anticipated it will enable further opportunities for at least 12 Indigenous trainees through the trainee program. As the work is seasonally campaigned due to the Kimberley tropical monsoon climate, the Buru Rehab directors have discussed options for industry placements for operators and for trainees to continue their training over the wet season within the resources sector. They have also indicated there is a long waiting list of potential trainees to join the program. Those involved with the abandoned mines program look forward to continuing the positive engagement with the Bunuba and to seeing the planned work improve conditions on the Ellendale site both in terms of the impact on country and with the community engagement through the Buru Rehab contract.