

**Deputy Premier
Attorney-General
Minister for Justice
Minister for Health**

Executive Building, Level 10, 15 Murray Street, HOBART TAS 7000, Australia
Ph: (03) 6233 6752 Fax: (03) 6233 2806
Web: www.justice.tas.gov.au www.dhhs.tas.gov.au



MTS No.:51863 - CHO - PoH

Ms McGregor and Ms Stejskal
Email: zmeteku@hotmail.com

Dear Ms McGregor and Ms Stejskal

Thank you for asking me to speak today. Unfortunately, I have another appointment so cannot be with you in person, but I would appreciate you reading my letter out to the meeting.

I would like to reassure you the Government is committed to the health of the Rosebery community and to ensuring that it is protected from any health hazard. I am aware of recent claims of heavy metal poisoning among a cluster of residents and ex-residents. Importantly, the Director of Public Health has re-opened the exhaustive investigation completed in 2009 to re-examine this potential cluster. This investigation is still underway and will include input from a number of independent clinical and non-clinical experts.

In addition I am aware that the mine owner, MMG, has recently started an environmental sampling program. This information will also contribute to the information the Director of Public Health is gathering.

It is important to note that Rosebery is a mining town and taking action to protect against heavy metals is not new. Pleasingly, testing over a number of years has shown the average blood lead levels in children in Rosebery to be the same as the national average. While this is good news for our children and for the whole community, I acknowledge it does not mean that nothing further needs to be done.

I would urge you all to support the current investigative processes, in particular:

- See a health professional if you have any health concerns;
- If you are concerned about your pets, take them to a Veterinarian;
- Offer your house and garden for environmental samples through the MMG program;
- Follow the good practice guide detailed in fact sheets provided by the Public and Environmental Health Service (available through the Rosebery Health Centre); and
- Share that good practice with neighbours and friends particularly if they are new to the area.


For those of you involved in the cluster investigation, I urge you to co-operate fully with the requests of the Director of Public Health and his staff. I have every confidence in their integrity and objectivity in finding the truth of the matter.

This morning I met with the Australian Workers Union (AWU), Ian Wakefield and Robert Flanagan, to discuss the establishment of a committee with various organisations and community members represented on it to work with stakeholders through the current process being undertaken. I have spoken with the Director of Public Health and others in Government and I agree that we need an effective community relationship approach especially given the broader environmental sampling program now underway through MMG.

I understand that the West Coast Council is considering the establishment of a Community Reference Group tonight in line with this proposal and we are more than happy to support it. I anticipate that at the very least Public Health, Council, AWU, MMG, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Healthwest and membership from the community and the Heavy Metal Taskforce would be involved.

I look forward to seeing such a group established and I wish you well for your meeting tonight.

Yours sincerely



Lara Giddings MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Health