



Corporate Sustainable Solutions



Assurance Statement

URS Australia Pty Ltd (URS) was commissioned by BHP Billiton to provide an independent review of their 2004 Health Safety Environment and Community Report ("Report"). The Report covers the global operations of BHP Billiton for sites over which it has operational control. The Report relates to the 12 months to 30 June 2004.

Objectives

The objectives of the independent review were to provide an opinion on:

- data accuracy, capture processes and controls
- the corporate processes and mechanisms in place for the preparation and delivery of the Report
- adequacy and relevance of information contained in the Report
- compliance of the Report against the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) Sustainability Reporting Guidelines 2002.

Scope of Work

URS reviewed BHP Billiton sites' HSEC performance for the period ending 30 June 2004. We addressed this by:

- ♦ visits to 10 sites located in North America, South America, Australia and South Africa as a representative sample of commodities and regions . The sites visited included Escondida, Ferrometals, Gulf of Mexico, Mineral Exploration, MMC Nelspruit, Mount Arthur, Mount Whaleback, Optimum, Selbaie and Worsley. Please refer to [BHP Billiton Locations](#) for customer sector and commodity details for these sites
- ♦ review of case studies contained in the Report pertaining to the sites visited by URS
- ♦ review of the understanding by operations of BHP Billiton's Sustainability Challenges
- ♦ interviews with relevant BHP Billiton and contractor personnel.

URS reviewed the corporate processes and mechanisms in place for the preparation and delivery of the 2004 HSEC Report, in accordance with the AA1000 Assurance Standard. We addressed this by:

- ♦ review of data collation, transcription and reporting processes at corporate headquarters in Melbourne
- ♦ cross-checking of a selection of reported data from site questionnaires for approximately 30% of sites
- ♦ review of data trails from site retrieval to final report for selected parameters
- ♦ review of report drafts and the final Report for significant anomalies.

Where we have reviewed data and information it has been assessed on the basis of the three AA 1000 principles of completeness, materiality and responsiveness.

URS assessed the 2004 HSEC Report against the GRI Sustainability Reporting Guidelines 2002 and to confirm that the Report has been prepared in accordance with these Guidelines.

Whilst the URS scope of work did not allow detailed review of all data sets contained in the Report, it was designed to provide a representative sample. However, the scope specifically excluded verification of data relating to site ownership, commodity production and group-wide financial information.

Our review process has also referenced internally developed [URS Assurance Principles](#) for such work.

URS Independence and Impartiality

The data and information in the Report reviewed by URS does not include any work with which URS has had substantial involvement. URS has not been involved in the design or compilation of the Report or decisions regarding its content (except by way of this review). URS, its parent companies and related companies (collectively the "URS Group") have previously been engaged by BHP Billiton and its subsidiary companies and anticipates further engagements in relation to the provision of consultancy advice.

DISCLAIMER

It should be noted that the veracity of the information summarised in the Report is dependent upon the uniformity, consistency and thoroughness of site/operational staff reporting all relevant matters. Whilst URS identified a good appreciation of BHP Billiton's Sustainability Challenges and site specific initiatives at site level, URS did not and can not determine precisely the uniformity, consistency and thoroughness of reporting. URS has prepared this Statement for the use of BHP Billiton in accordance with the usual care and thoroughness of the consulting profession. The opinions provided are based on generally accepted practices and standards at the time they were prepared. No other warranty, expressed or implied, is made as to the professional advice included in this Statement. To the extent permitted by law, URS excludes all liability that may arise from the professional advice contained in this Statement. This Statement must be read in conjunction with the supporting document prepared by URS. No responsibility is accepted for use of any part or all of this Statement in any other context or for any other purpose or by third parties. No third party is entitled to rely on any matter contained in this Statement without URS's prior consent in writing. Neither URS's name nor the material submitted in this Statement may be included in any prospectus or use in offering or representations in connection with the sale of securities or participation interest to the public without URS's prior consent in writing. URS owes no duty of performance to any party other than our contracted client.

The average annual value of work carried out by URS globally on behalf of BHP Billiton over the 3 year period to June 2004 is approximately US\$ 1.3 million per year. This represents less than 0.1% of annual URS gross revenue based on our 2003 reporting year.

URS does not make any direct investment in any member of the BHP Billiton Group or their business interests and has no commercial interests or its securities other than as a service provider to BHP Billiton.

All team members were deemed competent in accordance with the URS' Assurance Principles, and their expertise and qualifications have been communicated to BHP Billiton.

Findings – Overall

Overall URS is of the opinion that the Report fairly represents the health, safety, environment and community performance of BHP Billiton within the context of our review.

URS is also of the opinion that the Report has been prepared in accordance with Part C of the GRI Sustainability Reporting Guidelines 2002.

In conjunction with this Statement, URS will be providing a supporting document to BHP Billiton that provides details of the corporate data review and the site reviews.

In reviewing information prepared for the Report, URS has identified a number of areas that BHP Billiton should consider as improvements to future Reports. These include greater clarity and understanding of definitions relating to some health and environment data; an increased appreciation at site level of the HSEC questionnaire's role and importance in the development of the Report; and reduction, where possible, of manual transcription processes at corporate level.

Findings – Materiality

During these reviews some inconsistencies were noted in data results affecting less than 1% of data reviewed. These inconsistencies were corrected by BHP Billiton prior to publication of the Report. We did not identify any inconsistencies that would have a material impact on items contained in the Report.

Findings – Completeness

Based on our review URS believes that BHP Billiton has an adequate process for identifying issues, impacts and stakeholder views considering the size and complexity of the organisation. However, we have identified some areas for improvement to data management. During our review we have seen evidence of the ongoing introduction and implementation of improved company wide systems, standards and policies to enhance consistency across the organisation.

Findings – Responsiveness

During our review process we observed a good appreciation of BHP Billiton's Sustainability Challenges and site specific initiatives at both corporate and site levels.

Based on our scope of work we conclude that the organisation has an effective process for responding to significant health, safety, environmental and community issues and for stakeholder engagement.

Disclaimer

See below.

18 August 2004

URS Australia Pty Ltd