

## Fortescue wins top honours at global water awards

**PERTH, 14 August 2012:** Fortescue Metals Group's (Fortescue) ground breaking water management team has won top honours at the International Water Association's (IWA) prestigious Project Innovation Awards.

The team, spearheaded by Doug Brown, Fortescue's Group Manager Water, will be announced Global Grand Winner in the Operations/Management category at the IWA World Water Congress and Exhibition in Busan, Korea in September.

The IWA unveiled the results of its 2012 Project Innovation Awards this week.

The global award continues the widespread recognition of Fortescue's innovative Managed Aquifer Recharge (MAR) scheme, which has been implemented at the company's Cloudbreak and nearby Christmas Creek mine sites in the Pilbara region of Western Australia.

"We're proud our achievements in the Pilbara have been recognised on a global scale," Mr Brown said. "The remote location of Fortescue's operations and the adjacent environmentally sensitive wetlands provides us with a number of challenges but we believe the scheme we have implemented mitigates the environmental impact of dewatering and surface water discharge."

The groundwater system at both sites extends beneath the Fortescue Marsh, an internally-draining wetland of national significance. Excess groundwater derived from advance dewatering at both sites is managed by the *Papa Warringka* water management scheme, which in the language of the Nyiyaparli traditional owners means "water in the ground".

The scheme is based on groundwater reinjection, which allows Fortescue to return almost 75% of extracted water back into local aquifers instead of discharging it and in so doing greatly reducing the impact of mining on groundwater levels and water quality. The initial 40 gegalitre stage of an ultimate 100 gegalitre per year capacity scheme, one of the largest in Australia, has been operating as a sustainable "closed" system with zero surface discharge since September 2009.

"The Cloudbreak scheme showcases how Managed Aquifer Recharge can be used to meet a range of complex multi-aquifer/multi quality water management objectives in a dynamic mining environment," Mr Brown said.

He said Fortescue's success had encouraged other proponents and operators in the Pilbara to investigate the application of Managed Aquifer Recharge to deal with their excess water discharges which would otherwise be lost to evaporation through creek discharge.

“The approach to water management adopted by Fortescue continues to provide opportunities for technical innovation, which are leading edge in terms of global mine site water management.”

Fortescue’s water management approach has been previously recognised by the Australian Water Association and the Western Australian Department of Water as leading the mining industry in terms of mine site water management.

Fortescue also received international recognition in July when it won the Operations/Management Category of the 2012 IWA Project Innovation Awards (PIA) at the Asia Pacific Awards.

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