

Media Release

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*Representing, promoting and protecting
the resources industry of South Australia*

No breaches acceptable!

The mining industry does not condone poor practices

South Australia's key mining industry body says any environmental breaches by explorers in the State are totally unacceptable. The South Australian Chamber of Mines and Energy (SACOME) strongly supports the Premier's contention that standards in the industry must be upheld in order to preserve the industry's excellent reputation.

Commenting on the current environmental breach by Marathon Resources in the State's Flinders Ranges, SACOME said it found the breach dismaying.

SACOME recognises that although the breach had occurred under Marathon's previous management, not the current management team, such incidents could not be condoned by the organisation.

"The mineral resources industry in South Australia and nationally has every right to be dismayed by the lack of care of the previous management at Marathon Resources that resulted in a breach of its licence conditions," SACOME President, Mr John Roberts said.

"Our resources sector is leading the way on best practice community engagement, third party accreditation, the development of a code of conduct for explorers and environmental leadership," Mr Roberts said.

"Against these endeavours, it is extremely disappointing when any mining or exploration company does not treat its environmental obligations with the upmost importance warranted."

SACOME's Chief Executive, Mr Jason Kuchel said, "As home to three of Australia's four current or imminent uranium producers, this vital section of South Australia's resources sector is attracting more scrutiny from resources, political and environmental interests nationally than any other single mineral commodity," Mr Kuchel said.

"We must strive to be, and ensure we remain so, leading edge in everything we do but particularly in uranium exploration and development, where statutory guidelines, and public expectations are at their highest.

"Whilst the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) considers that the unauthorised burial of a number of exploration samples, drilling material and other waste did not constitute environmental risk to the surrounding area, SACOME is disturbed by any such breach."

"This breach should serve as a reminder to the minerals industry to be ever-vigilant about its responsibilities," Mr Kuchel said.

Future confidence in Marathon

Mr Kuchel said that following recent changes in management and the appointment of specialist environmental personnel at Marathon Resources, SACOME is optimistic that the environmental and social performance of the company would be consistently high from now on.

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“Furthermore, SACOME is pleased to note that Marathon Resources has co-operated with Primary Industries and Resources South Australia and the EPA during their incident investigations,” Mr Kuchel said.

SACOME also noted that South Australia’s Minister for Resource Development, The Honourable Paul Holloway, had said in Parliament on 12 February that he considered the State to have an excellent record of compliance with licence conditions and environmental objectives. South Australia hosted more than 800 mineral exploration licences with the Minister acknowledging that compliance by licence holders to the State’s rigorous environmental conditions was extremely high.

Mr Roberts said SACOME concurred with this view of the industry and stated, “the sector overall could be very proud of its management record”.

“Resource companies often set themselves very high standards on environmental and social performance, exceeding the rigorous standards set by regulators, and this is no less so in South Australia’s mining and minerals exploration sectors,” Mr Roberts said.

Ends.

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