



## Presentation of USW Local 6166 Visit to New Caledonia

November 17-29, 2007

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New Caledonia is a French “overseas territory” east of Australia, in the South Western Pacific, surrounded by the Coral Sea. New Caledonia is home to the second largest double barrier coral reef and has a global reputation for being a region of immense biodiversity. It is rich in natural resources, including nickel, chrome, iron, cobalt, silver, gold, lead, copper and manganese.

As of July 2007, New Caledonia had a population of 221,943, with approximately 40% living in the capital city Noumea. 27.9% of the population was between the ages of 0-14 years; 65.3% between the ages of 15-64 years and 6.8% are over the age of 65. The island’s population growth is 1.203%.<sup>1</sup>

In 2004, the total workforce was 78,990 with a break down by occupation as follows: Agriculture 20%; Industry, including mining, 20% and Service 60%. The unemployment rate in 2004 was 17.1%.<sup>2</sup>

New Caledonia is also known as “Kanaky”, after the indigenous people that make up 42.5% of the population. In 1775, British Captain Cook called the island New Caledonia after the Scottish Highlands. In 1864, France established a penal colony on the island and made it an official French territory in 1956.

The Matignon Accord, signed in 1988, divided the territory up into 3 administrative divisions. The Kanaky rule both the Northern Province and the Loyalty Island Province, while the majority European population controls the Southern Province. Each province has control over its natural resources, including granting permits to mining companies.

The Noumea Accord, signed in 1998, provided for a gradual transfer of responsibilities from France to the people of New Caledonia, over a 15-20 year

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<sup>1</sup> Information provided by the United States CIA World Fact book Website.

<sup>2</sup> Information provided by the United States CIA World Fact book Website.

period. The Accord also created a Caledonian citizenship, a referendum for independence from France to be held by 2018.

Small-scale mining in New Caledonia dates back to 1875. Recently, however, there has been a boom of major multinational mining companies exploring and developing in New Caledonia, particularly, Canadian Multinationals - Vale Inco, in the Southern Province and Xstrata in the Northern Province.

New Caledonia has about 25% of the world's known nickel resources. Only a small amount of the land is suitable for cultivation and food accounts for about 20% of imports. In addition to nickel, substantial financial support from France - equal to more than 15% of GDP and tourism are keys to the health of the economy. Substantial new investment in the nickel industry, combined with the recovery of global nickel prices, brightens the economic outlook for the next several years.<sup>3</sup>

The cost of living in New Caledonia is high, the minimum wage is approximately \$1,500 a month, the cost of a small apartment is approximately \$1,500 Canadian. Average housing prices range from \$400,000 to \$1 million, if you want an ocean view.<sup>4</sup> According to some people we talked to, the income tax rate is low, but there is a high import tax on most goods commonly used.

During our recent visit to the island, we met with a number of groups including - The Kanak Customary Senate; **Union des Syndicates de Oudriers et Employes de Nouvelle Caledonie (USOENC)** and the **Union Syndicale des Kanaks et des Exploites (USTKE)**.

We were scheduled to meet with the **Confederation Syndicate des Travailleurs de Nouvelle-Caledonie**, Confederation of New Caledonia's Workers Union, (**CSTNC**). Unfortunately, the meeting was cancelled at the last minute. A tour of the SLN Smelter in Noumea was also cancelled.

There are approximately 7 major unions in New Caledonia, the top 3 are USOENC, USTKE and CSTNC. The main difference in the top 3 is political belief. New Caledonia does not have an overseeing body to coordinate the different labour organizations on similar issues. In the meetings we attended with USOENC and USTKE, I got an impression of mistrust within the labour movement. This is probably the result of the ability of one Union to easily "raid" another's membership.

## KANAK CUSTOMARY SENATE

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<sup>3</sup> From United States CIA World Fact book Website.

<sup>4</sup> All values are Canadian dollars.

The Kanak Customary Senate is an aboriginal group formed to help fight for the rights of their people in New Caledonia. Under French law, aboriginal rights are not recognized.

During a meeting with the Kanak Customary Senate, Jeff Richardson, from the United Steelworkers, National Office in Canada, gave a brief report on what actions have taken place since the visit that took place in 2005. Meetings were held with Senior Management People at CVRD Inco in Toronto to try and address some of these issues. These meetings did not result in much action.

The Senate explained there are 5 new processing mining projects, planning to be built in New Caledonia, along with SLN Eramet planning a new coal fired Generating Plant. Their concern is, can the island support such growth, given the population and resource base. SLN Eramet later noted during a presentation at the USOENC Conference, the new power plant would utilize the new **Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS)** method of emission control.

CCS is an approach to mitigate global warming by capturing carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) from large point sources such as fossil fuel power plants and storing it instead of releasing it into the atmosphere. Technology for large scale capture of CO<sub>2</sub> is already commercially available and fairly well developed. Although CO<sub>2</sub> has been injected into geological formations for various purposes, the long term storage of CO<sub>2</sub> is a relatively untried concept and as of 2007, no large scale power plant operates with a full carbon capture and storage system.

CCS applied to a modern conventional power plant could reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions to the atmosphere by approximately 80 - 90%, compared to a plant without CCS. Capturing and compressing CO<sub>2</sub> requires much energy and would increase the fuel needs of a plant with CCS by about 11 - 40%. These and other system costs are estimated to increase the cost of energy from a new power plant with CCS by 21 - 91%. These estimates apply to purpose-built plants near a storage location: applying the technology to pre-existing plants, otherwise plants further from a storage location will be more expensive.

Storage of the CO<sub>2</sub> is envisaged either in deep geological formations, deep oceans or in the form of mineral carbonates. In the case of deep ocean storage, there is a risk of greatly increasing the problem of ocean acidification, a problem which also stems from the excess of carbon dioxide already in the atmosphere and oceans. Geological formations are currently considered the most promising sequestration sites and these are estimated to have a storage capacity of at least 2000 Gt CO<sub>2</sub> (currently, 30 Gt per year of CO<sub>2</sub> is emitted due to human activities). IPCC estimates the economic potential of CCS could be between 10% and 55% of the total carbon mitigation effort until the year 2100.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> From Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia.

The Kanak Customary Senate works with a council of indigenous peoples who are responsible for looking into resource management issues. This council has not been active over the past few years, with the Rheebeu Nuu leading most of the recent actions against CRVD Inco. The council is planning to work harder in the future to force the local government to pass laws to protect the people and environment of New Caledonia.

Jeff talked about the reception he received while touring different Mine sites during his last visit and how the companies indicated everything was “wine & roses” on the island. Given the number of demonstrations and other actions locals have taken against them, these multinational companies did not follow through on their promises.

There was a discussion of what may have taken place in 2006, if the proposed INCO/ Falconbridge merger would have happened. Most likely, the Koniambo, the proposed Falconbridge project in the Northern Province, would process ore grades greater than 2% nickel, while Goro, the proposed INCO project in the Southern Province, would process ore grades less than 2%. Even though both companies have been bought out by Xstrata Falconbridge, and CVRD INCO, this could still be reality as both companies are looking at synergies at the Sudbury Ontario operations and there is nothing stopping them from doing the same in New Caledonia.

The Kanak people have been working on building a relationship with Xstrata in respect to the Koniambo project. This has resulted in commitments in local hiring and training. Given Xstrata’s history in other parts of the world, Jeff cautioned the Senate on any relationship with them.

During the visit that took place in 2005, there were 2 main issues identified - Environmental Regulations and the recognition of Aboriginal Rights by the French government.

There have not been any new environmental laws passed since the last visit. The Colony’s mining code, which was developed prior to the 2005 visit, has an environment section in it, but this code has not yet been adopted. When asked what the public opinion has been towards the lack of environmental regulations, we were told they are becoming more aware of the issues and have been able to put some pressure on the local governments. This is evident by the fact the Southern Province revoked Goro’s construction permit last year.

The Senate felt the Southern Province should review all of Goro Nickel’s environmental permits because they think the environmental impact studies done are not accurate.

On the issue of Aboriginal Rights, the Island has adopted the United Nation’s declaration on Indigenous People’s Rights, but the Senate does not see it having a practical application here.

With an overwhelming majority of 143 votes in favor, there were only 4 negative votes cast (Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the United States) and 11 abstentions. The United Nations General Assembly (GA) adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples on September 13, 2007.

The text recognizes the wide range of basic human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples. Among these are the right to unrestricted self-determination, an inalienable collective right to the ownership, use and control of lands, territories and other natural resources, their rights in terms of maintaining and developing their own political, religious, cultural and educational institutions, along with the protection of their cultural and intellectual property. The Declaration highlights the requirement for prior and informed consultation, participation and consents in activities of any kind that impact on indigenous peoples, their property or territories. It also establishes the requirement for fair and adequate compensation for violation of the rights recognized in the Declaration and establishes guarantees against ethnocide and genocide.<sup>6</sup>

The Customary Senate has filed 15 court cases against the Goro project with 5 to 6 of them outstanding at the time of our meeting. They felt this is the only method they have to fight for their rights, but it is not easy and very costly. Currently, they have the assistance of a local lawyer, who does work as an activist for native rights, to help them with their fight. The Senate also talked of a global group of lawyers, 1 each from Canada, Northern Australia, and New Caledonia, who fight for native rights throughout the world. Jeff offered to take the contact information for this group back to the USW Canadian office, although making no promises, to see if there is anything they can do to help.

The Customary Senate felt it is difficult to get the different Unions in New Caledonia to work together, with them, even though they share the same basic goals. They made a request of Jeff to bring this issue up with the different Unions we were planning on meeting with. When this was brought up with USOENC, we were told even though they share the same basic goals, local employment and revenue sharing, the Kanak felt that this should only apply to the aboriginal people in the affected regions, while the labour movement feels it should go to everyone in the region.

There has been a Tri-Party Revenue Committee, consisting of representation from the Kanak people, the Southern Province and Goro Nickel to look into issues with the Goro project. An International Non Governmental Organization (NGO) is facilitating this committee.

The agreement this committee is trying to reach would help with things like social and environmental issues, as well as make provisions for contributions to a Future Generations Fund. They were hoping to have an agreement in place by the end of 2007, but still had a couple of issues. The idea "He who pollutes pays for the clean

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<sup>6</sup> From the International Working Group For Indigenous Affairs website.

up and the cost of de-commissioning should be included in the initial cost of constructing the project to clean up.

After a meeting held on November 19<sup>th</sup> 2007, the Senate walked away from the committee over frustration with how the process was working. They were to meet with the NGO after our meeting to request a letter be sent to CVRD Inco's head office in Brazil asking for representation at that level so the committee can move forward.

One of the concerns the Kanak people have with the committee is a dispute over who should pay for the services of the NGO. Goro Nickel felt that the cost should be shared equally between the 3 parties, while the Senate feels Goro Nickel should cover the full cost because they are already paying for interpretation and cannot afford to pay for a share of the NGO cost as well.

It is the intention of the Customary Senate to lobby all mining companies in New Caledonia to come to a forum on how to change their attitude toward the native people on the island.

The Senate feels the native NGO's in New Caledonia do not receive any support from the democratically elected Kanak people in Congress. Jacque Boengkih, of the Agence Kanak de Development, felt this could partly be contributed to the fact that these people are new in Congress and do not want to lose their positions in future elections because they are viewed as trouble makers.

One of the main concerns the NGO's have is the lack of government support to get Kanak youth employment on these new mining projects. They feel the government should help establish training programs to give these youth the skills these projects require.

#### USOENC:

USOENC is made up of 10 branches, or sectors, which are stand-alone units on all, but have common issues like health, retirement, and training. Commerce is the largest branch with 2,350 members working in large/small companies. All international, national and regional issues are to go through the overseeing body of USOENC.

The structure of the Union is 2 tier system, first there is a 32 person bureau representing all branches. They meet every 1 1/2 months. The bureau then elects a 13-member Executive, who meet every week to conduct the normal business of the Union.

USOENC held their conference in Noumea. The last conference was held in 2004, at which time their membership was at 3,500. At that time, they had set a goal of achieving a membership of 5,000 by the next conference. They were able to report

as of the start of this conference they were at 5,500 members. They then set a goal of 8,000 members by the next conference in 2011.

It was hard to understand most of what went on at the conference, as translation was an issue. USOENC provided a translator for us, but he did not understand the labour movement and had some troubles with translating some of the issues. The other problem was that we were seated in the front of the room where the video camera was located, the translator was not able to speak loud enough for the 3 of us to hear him.

One of the major issues brought up at the conference was the hiring practices of these large nickel projects when it comes to hiring local people. On average, close to 50% of the people working on these projects are foreigners, mostly from the Philippines.

The availability of basic **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)** is another concern raised during the conference. While the large mining projects require the basic PPE, like hard hats, boots and reflective vests, it is the people working for the small operations that do not. There is no labour law at this time to require employers to supply these needs.

French law requires salaries to be negotiated annually, as well as the companies to offer some type of share program, but neither of these occur in New Caledonia.

During a presentation for SLN, we learned they are planning on building 2 new Smelters in New Caledonia, a 25,000 ton facility in the Northern Province and a 60,000 ton facility in the Southern Province. The new proposed Generating Plant will supply power to these new projects.

Currently SLN sees about 100 employees retire each year and has plans to hire 150 new employees in 2008. This will be a challenge, due to the lack of qualified people on the island.

#### USTKE:

USTKE, which was established in 1981, has 5,000 paying members divided into 11 federations, or sectors. Currently, their largest sector is construction, which accounts for approximately 60% of their membership. They only have approximately 450 members in the mining sector.

USTKE recently started their own political party, with the aim to fight for worker rights. One of their main fights is for independence from France. They feel they are no longer a part of France, as they have their own unique culture and beliefs. Please note, a referendum for independence was held in 1998, which did not pass, another

is scheduled for 2014.<sup>7</sup> They are the Union, who works the closest with the Kanak Customary Senate, as they share common ideals. They are working with the senate on issues of heritage and independence. They are also working on ways to improve the way of life of the people, on holding companies responsible for any environmental damage, as a result of their activities and issues of local employment. They also feel, that as a part of every project, mining companies should be forced to start heritage funds to help local communities with things like schools, and social services.

USTKE feels they cannot support the CVRD Inco project at Goro because they do not agree with CVRD's approach to people and the environment. They do not hold the same vision for New Caledonia, which is independence.

It is the belief of USTKE, the Goro project should follow strict rules when it comes to the environment, the way of life of the people in the area and local hiring practices.

It is the view of USTKE, Xstrata is backing away from commitments made earlier in Koniambo project. The original commitment was to build a community at the site, now they are only going to build the processing plant. Xstrata feels building a community at the site is the responsibility of community groups.

USTKE's continued support for the Koniambo project still depends on the company's commitment to environmental protection, no degradation to the local way of life and maximum local hiring.

#### Visit to the Village of Thio:

The region of Thio, located on the east coast of New Caledonia, has a strange and varied beauty, with the delta formed by the Thio River, around the rocky islet of Bota Méré, a ring of hills whose green sides contrast sharply with the fierce red of the summit mines. Nickel was discovered near Thio in 1876 and the whole district still lives off the nickel mining industry.<sup>8</sup>

There were four main issues that came up during a meeting with some of the locals at Thio:

1. They were looking for support from trade unions for their fights with the major mining companies. They feel that they are having difficulties working with USOENC because they do not listen to what the native communities are telling them. Both during our visit in 2005 and this year we have stressed that the environment and native rights are key issues to the Steelworkers.
2. They are still under French control. We stressed we cannot tell them what type of government they should be under. Whatever type of government you

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<sup>7</sup> From United States CIA World Fact book Website.

<sup>8</sup> From [www.newcaledoniatourism-south.com](http://www.newcaledoniatourism-south.com)

- have has to have the ability to pass laws; with no environmental laws it is evident that the current system does not allow for this.
3. Unions only benefit small groups of people. We could not speak for the Unions in New Caledonia but in Canada our number one fight is for social justice, when we fight it is for all workers and not just our members. An example of this was when we negotiated the native **Impact Benefits Agreement (IBA)** into the collective agreement at Voisey's Bay. By including the IBA into the contract it gives the local natives another avenue to resolve any disputes. We have also successfully lobbied the Canadian government to make changes to Safety, Health and Environment as well as other laws that help all working people in Canada.
  4. The idea this is their wealth and they do not understand why it should go elsewhere. We stressed it is important for the local people to work with trade unions to negotiate IBA's, so some of the profits from these projects can benefit the local areas.

There was some concern over the social and cultural impact mining has had on the region. "Nickel" is being ingrained in every aspect of life. From the time they are young, most kids are taught "nickel" is the answer to most of their problems. When they grow up, they can get good paying jobs in the mines. Therefore, there is no need to complete their education. There is not a lot of interest in moving into other career fields that are not related to mining.

One local told us New Caledonia has actually be colonized three times; first by France; second by the Roman Catholic Church and finally by Nickel. When mining first started on the island, the church tried to keep the Kanak people from working in the mines. From what we were told, and shown, the statement does hold some truth.

After a lunch with the locals, they took us on a tour of the area showing us the damage that 100+ years of mining has done.

The first stop was at a Cemetery that floods every year after the rainy season. Once the floodwater recedes, the locals have to go in and reset the grave markers. The locals believe the flooding is a result of a century of mine tailings being washed into the local river, both changing the depth and flow of it. The locals have sent a letter to SLN, the mining company in the region, each year for the past 20 years asking for assistance with the problem, but have gotten no reply. The locals have also approached the French High Command for help, as a lot of the people buried in the cemetery had fought for France during World War I and II; again the have not received a reply.

Next, we went to look at the river. The spot where we stopped used to flow straight, but now has a large bend in it. The locals have started to do some shoreline rehab, but, this is a slow and expensive process. When they went to SLN for assistance, they were told the problem was caused by natural erosion and not the fault of SLN.

As you look around from the bridge, you can see remnants of past mining operations, some have been abandoned for a 100 years. Basically, the method of mining used in this area was to come in, cut the top off a mountain, crush it smaller and ship it out for processing. Given the fact that the ore was only crushed in this area and processed elsewhere, what the locals are calling tailing is probably actually just the fines from the crushing process, without any chemicals added to it. This left reddish brown scars on the landscape. The fertile soils, needed for plant life to grow, only go down a few inches, so when mining companies scrape this off to get at the minerals below, new plant life cannot take hold.

Our next stop was to look at a re-greening site being undertaken by SLN. The re-greening, basically, consisted of a few plants placed directly into the mine waste rock, along a dried up riverbed. It is doubtful if these plants will last the next raining season, when this area gets flooded.

There is some belief from the locals, when you mention the name SLN to some people, including the elected officials, they are afraid to do anything. The meeting in Thio was not well attended and it was the belief of some that it was because it was not sanctioned by SLN. When asked if CVRD and Xstrata have the same power, it was felt not yet, but, once their projects start producing they will. I am not sure if that will be the case for the following reasons:

- SLN is a French company, which would be considered an insider and can influence the French government, while both CVRD and Xstrata are considered outsiders.
- The Southern Province has suspended CVRD's construction permit and has not yet given them their main operating permits.

Most of the small communities in the region were built by the mining companies and then turned over to the people when the mine was finished. These villages do not have any sewage treatment facilities; effluent is allowed to discharge into local rivers where children play.

The concept of the "company store", where people can purchase common goods from a company owned store, where the cost would be deducted from their next paycheck, is still alive in the region. The maximum wage for a team leader in the mines was approximately 6,000 XPF, while the starting wage was approximately 1600 XPF.<sup>9</sup> Usually the first thing a local person buys once they get hired, is a new vehicle.

### Goro Nickel Site Visit:

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<sup>9</sup> \$1 Cnd = 79.8175 XPF, as of January 20, 2008

Jean-Michel Berlioz, Deputy County Director for the Goro Construction Team, conducted the Goro Mine tour. The tour started with a presentation on the status of the project.

Currently, there are 5,700 people working at the site; 41% foreigners, 54% local and 5% French. Of these, there were 695 full time workers as of the end of October 2007. There is a need to recruit another 350 people in 2008. There is also a need for another 1,000 employees to be able to finish the construction phase one time.

The camp is designed to have 4,500 beds in a single, double and 4 place room configuration. To help accommodate the number of employees on site during the height of the construction phase, they have obtained permission to increase the 4 place rooms to 6 place rooms, with increased cleaning, ventilation and other requirements to maintain the health of the workers. To accommodate the additional workers, the project will be bringing in a self contained cruise ship for a 6 month period.

New Caledonia law limits the hours one is allowed to work in a week to 46 hrs and none on Sundays, without permission. With special authorization, one can work to a maximum of 60 hours. To meet the construction schedule, the Goro project has received permission to extend hours worked to 60 and certain tasks, including heavy transport and testing, can be done on Sundays. Currently, 35 foreigner work groups have been extended to 60 hrs/week and 15 groups work on Sunday, while 72 local work groups have been extended to 60 hrs/week and 25 groups work on Sunday.

All people working on the Goro site are paid the New Caledonian minimum wage, no matter their nationality. Foreign workers are paid less at the higher pay scales as was negotiated by their local governments and unions. This was done to keep them employable when the Goro project is finished. The new Caledonian government audits the foreign worker's pay to ensure they are being paid correctly and are getting all that is owed to them.

The Goro Mine/processing plant is approximately 50% complete, but it is expected to go through commissioning in July 2008. Full production is expected by 2012 with a mine life of 20 to 25 years.

The Goro project is being built in compliance to the French regulations, where these regulations are not well defined, they are reverting to the more stringent European regulations. CVRD has decided to adopt the latest European standard for air quality at an extra cost of \$100 million US.

The project has set up 2 local coordination centers, one in Mont Dore and the other in Yate, to help address local issues like employment. 2,500 people have visited the centers in the past two years to inquire about the project or hand in resumes. It is the goal of the project to have 90% local hiring when the plant goes into production.

The demonstration plant has been turned into a training center to train local operators. To date there has been 350,000 hours of training at a cost of \$15 million US.

Fresh water is supplied by a man made lake, Lake Yate, in the region and pumped approximately 36km to the Goro mine site. The pipeline and pumping stations are in place and functioning at this time. The Pipeline right of way will not be re-vegetated as it will be used as a firebreak at the direction of the New Caledonia Fire Brigade.

Currently power for the construction phase of the project is coming from the main Noumea power grid with diesel-powered generators providing added power during peak times. A 25-megawatt coal fired generating station is being built on site to be the main source of power to the facility. The station has been built to older, less environmentally friendly, technology and is owned by an outside service provider Prony Energies. The plant will have the ability to transfer any unused power back to the Noumea grid.

Over 450 species of flora have been identified as being only found on the Goro plateau. As part of the project, Goro Nickel has set up a 2500m<sup>2</sup> greenhouse to try and reproduce these flora to be used as part of their re-greening effort. To date, they have been successful in reproducing 150 species, some of which have been sent to arboretums around the world.

Currently, Goro Nickel is vegetating areas of natural erosion as test areas to ensure their methods will work long term. Their procedure is to move topsoil removed from the mining and processing areas to the areas to be planted. They then install an anti-erosion mat and plant the local flora. It is estimated it will take over 1 million plants to vegetate the site, all of which are expected to come from their own greenhouse. Currently, the greenhouse is producing twice what the Goro site requires. The excess is to be used by the government to vegetate old mine sites.

The project transplanted 1700 pieces of coral from the port side of the lagoon to marine reserves on the other side; these will be monitored over the next 5 years. To date, all are doing well.

The project includes an Effluent Treatment Plant that will separate the solid waste from the liquid. The treated, clean, liquid waste will then be pumped through a 25km effluent pipeline to a discharge point in the ocean. The discharge point had been chosen for its ability to mix the effluent discharge with the natural ocean currents, as decided by experts in oceanography. The routing of the effluent pipe has been changed, so the bulk of the pipe will be underwater, instead of using the shorter over land route to cut down on the impact it would have on the area. All elements in the discharge will be below natural background levels, including manganese, which will be below the international limit of 1 mg/m<sup>3</sup> or 1 part per million.

Solid waste from the effluent plant will be trucked to a containment pit, which has a projected storage capacity to last approximately 7 years. At that time, the first mine pit will be depleted and it would then be used for waste containment. These containment pits will have a geo tech lining that will not allow leaking into the ground water table. Once the pit is full, it will be capped and vegetated back to nature.

The site will have 5 fixed air monitoring stations and 1 mobile unit that will measure Sulfur Dioxide SO<sub>2</sub>, Nitrogen Dioxide NO<sub>2</sub>, Particulate Matter 10 microns PM<sub>10</sub> and Particulate Matter 2.5 microns PM<sub>2.5</sub>. Currently, in Thompson, we have 4 fixed stations and 1 mobile unit measuring SO<sub>2</sub>, PM<sub>10</sub>, and PM<sub>2.5</sub>.

They will be monitoring 17 sites in the lagoon as well as 22 surface water and 46 ground water wells for metal accumulation. There will be 120 samples taken per month, 1,600 annually, of the surface water sites and 40 per month, 1,100 annually of the ground water sites.

The project has a 19 member Joint Safety Committee, while all contractors with 50+ workers are required to have a full time Safety Officer.

Aside from the Joint Safety Committee, the project also has a group responsible for traffic safety, including speeding, use of seat belts and cell phone usage, which is prohibited while driving on site. They are also responsible to keep the road signs clean and legible. If caught for traffic infractions, the first offence would result in a meeting with the Supervisor for retraining, the second offence would result in removal from the site. In October, this group caught 75 people speeding, 61 for not obeying signs and 1 for not wearing a seatbelt. This is in line with what I witnessed of the driving habits in Noumea.

Goro Nickel records the same safety stats as the rest of the CVRD Inco family, first aids, medicals, accommodations and lost time accidents (**LTA**). At the time of our visit, they had experienced 146 days accident free and 4 million hours without an LTA. The project marks milestones with different events, for example, when they reached 1 million hours LTA free, they had fireworks, at 2 Million hours, they held raffles. The disabling injury rate for the Goro project was 1.7 compared to a global rate of 19.35.

New Caledonian law requires employers to accommodate injured workers; Goro is one of the few companies to put this into practice.

Shepell-fgi is the service provider for occupational health at the Goro site. Currently, they have 4 emergency doctors and 12 occupational nurses staffing a 30 bed medical facility. When not treating accidents/ injuries, they work to promote healthy lifestyles.

Cholesterol and obesity are 2 major problems they are facing at the site. It was felt the reason for this is the quantity of food that is available in the cafeteria; deserts and

other high calorie foods are readily available. Most of the employees are not used to these types of food. The Shepell-fgi people are working with the employees through health education packages. The site also has strict rules against taking food back to the living quarters.

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