

exemplified by the information exchanged, has allowed a mature debate to develop which focuses on protection of the environment; debate on the political issues does not fall within the terms of reference of the stakeholder group.

The EPR process has resulted in much improved, collaborative action by industry, State and Federal Government to effectively demonstrate the level of government supervision of the mining operations, the standard of environmental protection being achieved, and the commitment to continual improvement in the quality of environmental protection.

#### **MOUNT LYELL RESEARCH AND DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM**

The Mount Lyell Remediation Research and Demonstration Program (MLRRDP) was launched in Hobart on 4 May by the Tasmanian Minister for Environment and Land Management, John Cleary, and myself.

The main purpose of the Program is to formulate options for a comprehensive remediation program for the Mt Lyell lease site, The King and Queen Rivers and Macquarie Harbour. It is a joint State-Commonwealth approach to the Mt Lyell problem and the Program is likely to provide a role model for tackling industrially polluted sites elsewhere in the world.

The Mount Lyell Mine at Queenstown, Western Tasmania, has been the site of copper mining and processing on a continuous basis from 1893 to 1994. The mining and processing operations have resulted in severe environmental damage to not only the immediate mine area, but wider afield covering an area of some 50km<sup>2</sup>. This damage includes the removal of all vegetation over a 15km<sup>2</sup> area, modification to the hydrology, impacts on the physical landscape, degradation of the natural river water quality, and the creation of tailings levees along the rivers and a 250 ha tailings delta at the mouth of the King River in Macquarie Harbour.

In early 1995 the Commonwealth and Tasmanian Governments agreed to fund a program of studies and works to progress the remediation of the Mount Lyell lease site, the King and Queen Rivers and Macquarie Harbour. The \$2m Mt Lyell Remediation Research and Demonstration Program (MLRRDP) will form an important component of a larger and longer term program which will be required to understand and overcome the environmental problems caused by historical mining activities at Mt Lyell. It will complement and build on the present Macquarie Harbour study which is being funded by the Tasmanian Government and the Hydro-Electric Commission and an intensive aquatic monitoring program being carried out by the Department of Environment and Land Management.

The Program is overseen by a committee which includes representatives of the Tasmanian Department of Environment and