

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY**WRITTEN QUESTION****Mining Royalties**

Mr Wood to Treasurer

In the *NT News* of Wednesday 06 August 2008 an article by Alison Bevage said the NT Government refuses to say how much it receives in royalties from individual mining companies, claiming that the information was exempt under the *Freedom of Information Act* as it was 'in the public interest':

1. Why is it 'in the public interest' not to tell the public what royalties are received from mining companies.

Information about the affairs of individual miners cannot be disclosed because of the operation of the secrecy provisions in the *Mineral Royalty Act*.

In addition, the *Information Act* would also support the non-disclosure of information that relates to the commercial affairs of a person.

This outcome is consistent with the position in the other states and territories and the Commonwealth.

2. If you are not willing to tell the public would you allow the Auditor-General to check to see what royalties are being paid and if they are being calculated correctly according to the *Mining Royalty Act*.

Treasury is required by the *Mineral Royalty Act* to assess every mineral royalty return. This involves a comprehensive audit that looks at all aspects of a royalty return, including deductions that are used to calculate a mining venture's profit. This process reduces the scope for royalty avoidance.

The Territory's royalty administration processes are audited as part of the Auditor-General's annual audit of Treasury's activities, to provide Territorians with assurance that royalties are being collected in accordance with the provisions of the *Mineral Royalty Act*.

3. When could we expect to see a report from the Auditor-General on the audit results of the extent and correctness of mining royalties paid by mining companies.

The Auditor-General tables reports in the Legislative Assembly of the annual audits conducted on Treasury's operations, including the Territory's royalty administration processes, each year after the audits have been completed.
