

Queensland mine owner fined \$80,000 following a release of mine affected water

Written by Andrew Powell



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A far north Queensland mine owner has been fined \$80,000 following a release of mine affected water to Jamie Creek and Walsh River west of Herberton during the 2011/12 wet season.

The owner of the Baal Gammon mine, Baal Gammon Copper Pty Ltd, pleaded guilty to two breaches of the Environmental Protection Act 1994.

Baal Gammon Copper Pty Ltd was sentenced today for one offence of failing to ensure a person acting under its Environmental Authority complied with its conditions, and one offence of breaching an Environmental Protection Order.

Environment and Heritage Protection Minister Andrew Powell said the charges were laid after discharges of contamination into Jamie Creek and the Walsh River near the Baal Gammon mine.

“Although the mine works were operated by another company under a ‘tribute mining’ arrangement, Baal Gammon Copper Pty Ltd held the relevant authority for the mine,” Mr Powell said.

“Authority holders are responsible for their mine even when another company, acting under the environment authority, manages the day to day operations at the site.

“This government has made sure the owner of the Baal Gammon mine has been held to account over mine water contamination in far north Queensland.

“The government takes non-compliance with environmental authorities seriously, and owners should be aware that they have a responsibility for the consequences that occur at a mine site.”

The former operator of the Baal Gammon mine has also been charged with a number of offences in relation to the matter, including breaches of an Environmental Authority, breach of an Environmental Protection Order, and causing environmental harm. Those charges will be mentioned in Cairns Magistrates Court on 10 October. .