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ChemCentre research could turn mineral processing by-products into a valuable new resource

Validation of internationally-recognised environmental tests will help establish a framework for converting the by-products of Western Australia's mineral processing industry from unused stockpiles into a valuable industrial resource.

This research, part of a major collaboration between the Minerals Research Institute of Western Australia (MRIWA), ChemCentre and sponsors Alcoa of Australia, Iluka Resources, and Aroona Alliance, sought to validate the internationally-recognised LEAF (Leaching Environmental Assessment Framework) methodology for use under Western Australian conditions.

By providing the means to simulate the long-term interactions of mineral processing residues and industrial by-products with local soils and climate, the work completed by Dr Silvia Black and her team could help local industry transform large volumes of mineral by-products produced in Western Australia every year into valuable raw materials for use in local construction and landfill.

“We have developed an initial database of Western Australian soils and industry by-products that will allow LEAF to predict the impact that a proposed use might have on the local environment,” Dr Black explained

“This new understanding could help form the basis of a robust regulatory framework governing the safe use of local industrial by-products in construction and related applications.”

“ChemCentre has now established the capability and expertise to provide full LEAF service to industry and government agencies in Western Australia, including accredited testing, data interpretation, modelling, field studies and consultant advice.”

In releasing the research report, MRIWA CEO Nicole Roocke said “This work provides Western Australian companies with the tools they need to predict the interactions between industrial materials and our unique local environment.”

“This understanding will support the safe commercial re-use of mineral materials, helping local companies to better manage the by-products of their output, and providing much-needed raw materials for construction and other uses.”

“By supporting the work of Dr Black and her team, the Western Australian Government is delivering industry the confidence to invest in better managing resources and creating jobs, while meeting the concerns of local communities and the needs of our environment.”

The technical report summarising the findings of this research can be found at <https://geodocs.dmirs.wa.gov.au/Web/document/486739>.

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For further information on the specific research findings of this study, contact ChemCentre Media and Communications Manager Lissa Manolas on 08 9422 9823