

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Legislation Committee
Answers to questions on notice
Environment and Energy portfolio

Question No: 48
Hearing: Additional Estimates
Outcome: Outcome 1
Program: Science
Topic: Ranger uranium mine: elevated electrical conductivity levels
Hansard Page: 85 and 86
Question Date: 27 February 2017
Question Type: Spoken

Senator Ludlam asked:

Senator LUDLAM: I have one last one on elevated electrical conductivity levels in surrounding walkways. I know you would be disappointed if you did not get at least one of these from me. I understand that remedial work has been undertaken in an attempt to limit the elevated EC levels at some of the monitoring points around the tailings dam. Could you please give us an update on how the levels have been this year? Have there been any exceedances? What sort of levels are you recording? If you have any documentary evidence to give us a more detailed idea, we would appreciate seeing it.

Mr Tayler: There have been no statutory exceedances in the creeks around the mine this year yet. We have seen some elevated electrical conductivity events, but not above the limits. As you mentioned, there were remedial works that have been undertaken. Those remedial works were designed to cut off groundwater moving to the west of the site. It would be, and it was expected when those works were undertaken—it will take some years for that plume of solutes that was in the groundwater to express and to move through the system. So I think the events that we are seeing at the moment are not to suggest that that interception system has not worked; it is just that it will take some time for that system to flush through.

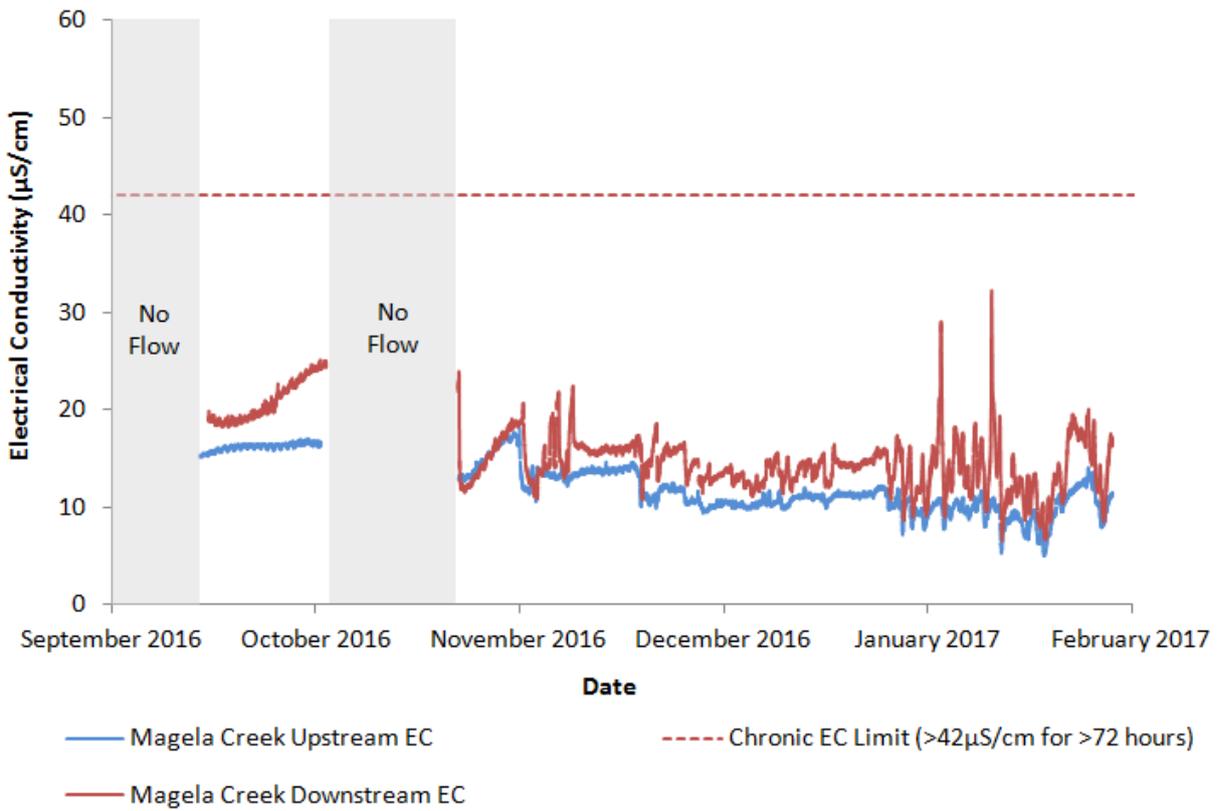
Senator LUDLAM: Could you take on notice to provide us with a record? You have said there were no exceedances of statutory guidelines but that you did see some elevated levels so, if there is anything you are able to provide us to document that, that would be good.

Mr Tayler: Sure

Answer:

Results from the Supervising Scientist's water quality monitoring program show that statutory water quality limits and guidelines for key contaminants of concern have not been exceeded in the waterways surrounding the Ranger mine site during the 2016/17 wet season to date.

- Figure 1 Electrical conductivity measured in Magela Creek during the 2016/17 wet season.



- Figure 2 Electrical conductivity measured in Gulungul Creek during the 2016/17 wet season.

