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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL 6am AEST Friday 5 December 2014**

### **Toxic dust found in children's playgrounds in Townsville**

Levels of lead, arsenic and cadmium in dust collected at four public children's playgrounds in inner Townsville have been found to exceed trigger levels for mining locations in Queensland.

Nickel levels in the dust failed to meet international standards.

The findings are included in a report prepared by Professor Mark Taylor from Macquarie University in Sydney, who was commissioned by North Queensland Conservation Council (NQCC) to investigate the infamous dust problem in inner Townsville.

'Dust samples were taken over a six-day period in September/October in accordance with accepted scientific methods and analysed at the Australian Government's National Measurement Institute in Sydney' said Prof. Taylor.

'The results are of concern' said NQCC Coordinator Wendy Tubman 'but now that we have firm data, it will be easier to identify how we can solve this long-standing problem for the benefit of the community.

'We have been heartened by the response of relevant stakeholders, who we alerted to the problem prior to making the results public so that the issue could be addressed promptly in a collaborative and constructive manner'.

Prof. Taylor commented 'Although the levels are lower than those found in mining and smelting cities throughout Australia, it is clear that the dust metal values in inner Townsville exceed acceptable standards. The evidence shows that the dust metal contaminants are sourced from ore movements in and out of the port.

The results will be discussed at a free community meeting at the Education Central Lecture Theatre, Building 134, James Cook University at 6.30pm on Thursday 11 December.

**Contact: Wendy Tubman 0428 987 535**