

Hot Issue Brief Tracking System

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Subject: MULWALA PROPELLANT MANUFACTURING FACILITY - ACID VALVE RUPTURE
Comment:
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MULWALA PROPELLANT MANUFACTURING FACILITY – ACID VALVE RUPTURE

NATURE OF THE INCIDENT:

- A valve on a mixed acid tank at the Lend Lease-controlled, Defence-owned Mulwala facility ruptured during maintenance.
- The rupture resulted in a loud noise and the release of about 5.25 cubic metres of high-strength mixed acid and vapour into a bunded capture area below the tank.
- All staff were wearing appropriate personal protective equipment.
- Six maintenance personnel were taken to Yarrawonga hospital as a precautionary measure but were released with no apparent injuries.

THE DATE AND TIME OF THE INCIDENT:

- The incident occurred at 9:15 pm on 5 November 2012.

ACTIONS CURRENTLY UNDERWAY:

- The area has been made safe by Lend Lease: all acid was contained in the bunded area and was pumped to safe storage.
- NSW WorkCover, Comcare and the EPA have been notified by Lend Lease, which launched a full investigation into the incident.

RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

- The production of propellant requires highly concentrated nitric and sulphuric acids to be mixed with cellulose to produce nitrocellulose.
- This part of the facility currently operates on a 24 hour 7 day shift.
- The facility is undergoing commissioning works as part of JP2086 Mulwala Redevelopment Project

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