Hot Issue Brief Tracking System

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

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.

Date Issued: 6 November 2012