

Press Release

29 November 2017

Research partnership looks to coral to develop comprehensive history of water quality near Onslow

Curtin University and German resources company, K+S, have signed a research partnership to develop a comprehensive historical record of water properties off the Ashburton Coast near Onslow and the neighbouring regions of the Exmouth Gulf.

Dr Mick O’Leary, from Curtin’s Department of Environment and Agriculture, is leading the research which involves taking a range of coral samples in coastal waters south of Onslow.

The research will also involve researchers from Germany’s Freie Universität Berlin.

“This industry-university collaboration will provide a unique opportunity to investigate the largely unstudied nearshore environments along Exmouth Gulf and Ashburton Coast,” Dr O’Leary said.

The research seeks to assess how changes in natural climate and other impacts have influenced water quality measures (salinity, sediment runoff, heavy metals) and sea surface temperatures along the Exmouth Gulf and Ashburton several decades.

Growing at approximately 1cm a year, massive corals capture a record of the ambient water chemistry as they grow by incorporating various chemical elements into their skeleton. By obtaining long cores from coral, researchers will be able to develop a geochemical record of sea surface temperature, salinity and sediment runoff for coral communities spanning several decades.

K+S is developing plans for a solar salt project south west of Onslow. The studies will help provide a basis for the Ashburton Salt project’s environmental impact modelling.

K+S Salt Australia Managing Director Gerrit Gödecke said he was pleased to be partnering with Curtin University.

“K+S is delighted to be partnering with Curtin University,” said Mr Gödecke.

“The research team have shown to have unique skills and research methods to develop accurate and detailed data on water near our project and further south into the Exmouth Gulf. We are looking forward to the results so we can develop our project in the most environmentally sensitive way possible. “

The research project runs from November 2017 to June 2018.

About K+S

K+S considers itself as a customer-focused, independent minerals company for the segments of Agriculture, Industry, Communities and Consumers and wants to grow the EBITDA to € 3 billion in 2030. Our over 14,000 employees enable farmers to provide nutrition for the world, provide solutions that keep industries going, improve daily life for consumers and provide safety in the winter. We continually meet the growing demand for mineral products from production sites in Europe, North and South America as well as a worldwide sales network. We strive for sustainability because we are deeply committed to our responsibilities to people, environment, communities and economy of the regions in which we operate. Learn more about K+S at www.k-plus-s.com.

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