



IMPACTS OF ALT UK RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY (to May 2019)

As a result of the actions and advocacy by Andrew Lees Trust (ALT UK), Rio Tinto has made a series of admissions, changes and commitments with regard to its QMM Madagascar mine operation including:

- 1. Admission of the company to the buffer breach.** In a report from their field investigation, Rio Tinto shared their admission that QMM had indeed breached the buffer zone by as much as 90m in places. The report also confirmed that the breach occurred when mine tailings that had been used to build their 'berm' had encroached into the lake. The berm is meant to protect the lake from mine tailings, and the mine's radionuclide enriched waste-water. The breach confirms that the company broke agreements with the Malagasy government (to observe a 50-m buffer zone) and broke the law with regard to entering the public domain (a water body) without permissions. It also confirms that radionuclide enriched mine tailings entered the adjacent lake and waterways.
- 2. Commitment to revise the buffer zone design.** In January, Rio Tinto announced that for the next planned phase of mining, QMM will re-establish and respect an 80 m buffer zone between the mine and the lakes where people fish and collect water. The change that QMM has now made to the next stage of extraction recognises the need for the *statutory 80metre buffer* for a "sensitive zone", and will provide more protection against toxic waste-water entering nearby water courses from the mine. The company also conceded that the buffer breach had caused it to review the QMM berm design.
- 3. Commitment to a radioactivity investigation in 2019.** Both in its feedback document on Swanson's review, and at the Rio Tinto Annual General Meeting on 10th April, the company committed to carry out an additional review of the radioactivity situation in Anosy, planned for this year (2019).
- 4. Commitment to additional monitoring of radioactivity.** Both in its feedback document on Swanson's review, and at the Rio Tinto Annual General Meeting on 10th April, the company acknowledged the need for and committed to improve the monitoring of the QMM mine's radioactivity levels.
- 5. Commitment to translate the 68-page Swanson review into French.** Following public pressure at the AGM, and in recognition of the necessary communications at local level to ensure that QMM's local partners, QMM staff, and government agencies involved in monitoring and evaluating the mine have access to the Swanson report findings and recommendations, the company agreed to translate the report. ALT UK has translated the summary findings, but does not have the resources to translate the full 68 page technical report. ALT UK is adamant that the full report be made accessible at local level to ensure transparency.
- 6. Agreement to discuss local community communications and education programme about radioactivity.** In parallel to ensuring local staff and stakeholders can access the full review and its findings etc., ALT UK has advocated for an independently designed and delivered communications and education programme about radioactivity to be budgeted and supported for local communities. This will help to ensure the Swanson report findings are disseminated at local community level. The Trust has also proposed that local communities be engaged in participatory monitoring, for instance of water quality, in the future. At the Rio Tinto 2019 AGM, the CEO said the company would look to address the communications.

Updates to follow.