

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment, Communications and the Arts
Legislation Committee**

Answers to questions on notice

Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts portfolio

Supplementary Budget Estimates, October 2009

Outcome:	1	Question No:	67
Program:	1.2		
Division/Agency:	Supervising Scientist Division		
Topic:	Caetite Mine, Brazil		
Hansard Page ECA:	Written Question on Notice		

Senator LUDLAM asked:

How long has that operation been running for?

Answers:

The operation at Caetité has been running for 10 years. Open pit mining works commenced in December 1999. Commercial production of uranium from the heap leach facility commenced at the end of 2001.

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Senator LUDLAM asked:

- Senator LUDLAM**—I will bring you back to the mine that you noted before that your team visited in Brazil. Were they made aware of the very high levels of uranium in drinking water found in areas surrounding that mine?

Mr Hughes—I could not answer that.
- Senator LUDLAM**—Did they provide a report to you on their return from Brazil?

Mr Hughes—They provided me with a verbal report, but they are still producing a final report, which is to be a written internal report on the issue.

...

Senator Wong—May I suggest, Senator, rather than having an argument about a document that has not yet been finalised, as I understand the evidence from Mr Hughes, it is open to you obviously at the next hearing to ask for the document. Mr Hughes can consider it then. It seems to be a slightly theoretical discussion at the moment, given that the document is not yet in existence, from the evidence given.

...
- Senator LUDLAM**—I will put my request for that document on notice now and wish you well in its speedy completion

Answers:

- Officers were made aware that Greenpeace had undertaken some investigations in the region and that a subsequent report by Greenpeace claimed elevated uranium levels in samples taken for the investigation.
- Officers provided a verbal report on their return from Brazil. A written internal report is yet to be finalised.
- The internal report is expected to be finalised after the return of one of the officers from extended leave in February 2010.