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PRESS RELEASE

## Ronald McDonald House North Queensland opens new housing extension with thanks to Xstrata

Townsville, Friday 30 November 2012

Ronald McDonald House North Queensland (NQ) today opened a new \$3 million 12 room housing extension following a \$1 million contribution from Mount Isa Mines in February this year through the Xstrata Community Program North Queensland (XCPNQ).

This is the second stage in the House's development which was originally opened in 2004 with 12 family rooms by founder and Board member George Colbran.

Mr Steve de Kruijff, Chief Operating Officer Xstrata Copper NQ helped officially open the new extension which will provide much needed accommodation to families from central and regional north and north-west Queensland with seriously ill children.

"Around 98% of families who stay at the Ronald McDonald House NQ are from regional areas of north Queensland and since its establishment in 2004, over 300 families from the local communities in which Xstrata operates have stayed at the house and received valuable support from staff and volunteers during difficult circumstances," said Mr de Kruijff.

"More than 170 families alone from Mount Isa and Cloncurry have benefited from living in this supported housing environment, located on the doorstep of the Townsville hospital's paediatric and neonatal ward," he said.

"While we have some excellent local medical services, we acknowledge that living in the north-west can often mean that vital specialist care is usually a long way from home.

"Childhood illness can have a devastating effect on families, and on top of that fear and uncertainty brings the practicalities of managing the family when a child is in hospital, often for extended periods of time.

"Many families cannot afford to stay in hotels while their children receive treatment which is why we are all so very grateful for the support the Ronald McDonald House provides to our local families.

"The additional accommodation is now an opportunity for the House to help even more families from regional north Queensland and it's a great feeling knowing we helped make this possible," said Mr de Kruijff.

Mr Paul Rissman, Ronald McDonald House NQ Chairman said the Board, Executive Officer and their many Townsville volunteers have been overwhelmed by Xstrata's generous support and have immensely enjoyed watching stage two of the House progress.

"When a family is faced with the sudden emergency of a seriously ill child needing specialist medical treatment not available at their regional district hospital, they find themselves in an unfamiliar city facing trauma and events that are overwhelming," said Mr Rissman

"We truly believe that children get better quicker when their families are nearby," he said.

"Ronald McDonald House NQ provides accommodation for families of seriously ill children being treated at the Townsville Hospital; we aim to provide a 'home-away-from-home', making our families feel as comfortable as possible.

"We've had families stay with us that have come from country north Queensland, up to the Gulf of Carpentaria and even as far away as Papua New Guinea. And it's not always just mum, dad and the kids, we've had aunties, uncles and grandparents stay with us too.

"A growing demand for our services has seen us fundraise over the past five years, through events such as the north Queensland charity balls, with the goal of being able to double the capacity of Ronald McDonald House in Townsville from 12 to 24 rooms and refurbish our existing rooms.

"We started with \$1 million from our fundraising efforts and received a \$1 million grant from Ronald McDonald House Australia, however it was the \$1 million from Xstrata that secured the future of this project and has helped make today's opening possible.

"Over eight years we have provided critical accommodation to over 1600 families while their children are being treated at the adjacent Townsville Hospital, and we have been full every night since we opened in 2004.

"Sadly, that means we have had to turn away many families every night who require critical accommodation at a time of great need. These families have to find accommodation and often resort to caravan parks, friends, or expensive motels, and then commute daily to the hospital to support their children during medical treatment.

"Ninety-eight per cent of families who stay with us come from regional areas of north Queensland, and we receive daily feedback from our families that Ronald McDonald House provides them with a friendly and caring environment that supports the entire family unit," he said.

"Our partnership with Xstrata through the Xstrata Community Program North Queensland has allowed us to get on with the job of helping more families in need," said Mr Rissman.

"We can now refocus our fundraising to deliver additional services for families such as:

- Growing our Ronald McDonald Learning Program here in NQ which currently assists more than 40 children catch up on missed schooling while suffering sickness or illness
- Extending our assistance to local Townsville families with programs like the Ronald McDonald Family Room, which will open in the Townsville Hospital in 2014
- Assisting us with the recent establishment of Queensland's first Ronald McDonald House Family Retreat in Palm Cove providing holiday accommodation for families who have missed out on a holiday due to the illness of their child. When the family gets back on its feet we offer the family one week free accommodation to help on the journey of recovery.

"We would like to sincerely thank Xstrata for their wonderful donation towards our project and seeing it through to fruition. We can now provide our services to even more families in need," said Mr Rissman.

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*Neither the content of the company's website nor the content of any other website accessible from hyperlinks on the company's website is incorporated into, or forms part of, this announcement*

### Xstrata contacts:

**Melissa Trim**

Telephone +61 7 4744 2965  
Mobile +61 423 849 009  
Email [mtrim@xstrata.com.au](mailto:mtrim@xstrata.com.au)

**Danni Ross**

Telephone +61 7 4744 3146  
Mobile 0401 678 485  
Email [dross2@xstrata.com.au](mailto:dross2@xstrata.com.au)

[www.xstratacommunity.com.au](http://www.xstratacommunity.com.au)

### Partner contacts:

**Paul Rissman**

Chairman – Ronald McDonald House North Queensland  
Mobile +61 0417 638 769  
Email [paul@parcorpinvestments.com.au](mailto:paul@parcorpinvestments.com.au)

[www.rmhc.org.au](http://www.rmhc.org.au)

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## Notes to editors

### About the Xstrata Community Program North Queensland

The Xstrata Community Program North Queensland has entered its eighth year of working in partnership with community organisations and government to address the areas of greatest need in the north Queensland communities where our employees live and work.

The program addresses the six key areas of enterprise and job creation, education, environment, social and community development, health, and arts and culture.

Since 2005 we have made a significant contribution to north Queensland and Xstrata has provided almost \$25 million funding for projects in our local host communities such as installing computer rooms in schools, helping to train medical staff, improving medical services, and helping disadvantaged people gain skills and jobs.

We have proudly partnered the Townsville Hospital in previous years to provide much needed state of the art equipment for the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, such as the RETCAM II in 2008 to improve outcomes for premature babies in achieving full sight.

### About Xstrata plc

We are a major producer of a range of vital commodities used in everything from constructing buildings and delivering electricity, to developing jet engines and mobile phones. We are one of the top five global producers of copper, thermal and metallurgical coal, ferrochrome, zinc and nickel and we also produce silver, lead, platinum, gold, cobalt and vanadium.

Founded in 2002 and headquartered in Switzerland, we operate in over 20 countries and employ over 70,000 people at more than 100 operations and projects around the world. We work in a responsible and sustainable way, with an entrepreneurial spirit and dynamic approach. For more information, visit [www.xstrata.com](http://www.xstrata.com)

### About Xstrata Copper

We are the fourth largest global copper producer and one of the world's largest producers of smelter, refined and recycled copper, including from third party materials.

The copper we produce is essential to our modern society, being used extensively in electronic, consumer and building products, and with its use in green-technologies, anti-microbial applications and ability to be recycled, it is playing a vital role in our sustainable future.

Headquartered in Brisbane, Australia, we have operations and projects in eight countries and employ over 20,000 people. We play an essential role in the communities in which we live and work, by providing jobs, training, infrastructure, income for suppliers and support for social development. For more information, visit [www.xstratacopper.com](http://www.xstratacopper.com)

### **About Xstrata Zinc**

Headquartered in Madrid, Spain, we are one of the world's largest vertically integrated producers of zinc, with an annual production of about a million tons of mined zinc. We have operations in Australia, America, and Europe, including world-class mines and deposits in Northern and East Australia, Canada, Peru, and processing and refining facilities in Spain, Germany and the United Kingdom.

Zinc is a versatile material that plays a vital role in modern society. It is an essential nutrient in human health and very useful in crop yield improvement. Zinc in galvanizing protects steel against corrosion for its use in automobiles, buildings and others. It is also used for the production of zinc die-casting alloys, brass and oxide, and in manufacturing batteries and other electrical and consumer goods. For more information, visit [www.xstratazinc.com](http://www.xstratazinc.com)