



CAPS Newsletter

Winter 2007

Issue 7

Community Alliance for Positive Solutions Inc.

Representing 360+ supporters, including 150+ paid members, and growing...



Serving

Yarloop

Waroona

Hamel

Harvey

Cookernup

Wagerup

Other
Impacted
Areas

Alcoa, Government asked to resolve compensation issue

A move by Southwest Greens MLC Paul Llewellyn to send Alcoa and the Government back to the drawing board over community compensation claims for residents impacted by the Wagerup alumina refinery has failed to gain support in Parliament.

“The Legislative Council has the power to reject Alcoa’s expansion agreement, forcing the company to the negotiating table.” Mr Llewellyn said. “Due to lack of support from the Government and the Opposition, the people around Alcoa have now been left stranded and are facing financial hardship.”

South West Liberal MLC’s Robyn McSweeney, Barry House and Nigel Hallett moved for an Inquiry to be conducted by the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs into the fairness of the compensation process, including the Supplementary Property Purchase Program (SPPP). “While such a move does have merits, it’s a weak-willed response to the situation,” stated Mr Llewellyn.

According to Mr Llewellyn, “We’ve been steadily working with the local community and government to try and gain fair and adequate compensation for those affected. Over the years Alcoa’s compensation schemes have become less and less generous with this latest offering being a ‘take it or leave it’ valuation with no funding to cover moving costs and a very tight time frame for making a decision. Alcoa’s terms demanded that those wishing to move on had to sell, fund the move themselves and find a replacement home within 7 months.

“Offering compensation is acknowledgement by the government and Alcoa that people need to move due to health reasons brought about by Alcoa’s pollution. To offer a scheme that puts these people under financial and emotional pressure is unfair and unjust.

“I attempted in Parliament to call the Government and Alcoa into account over the unfair structure of this latest compensation. I wasn’t calling for a halt to Alcoa’s expansion or for tighter environmental controls, but that they take proper financial responsibility for their impact on those living nearby.

“Due to lack of support from the Government and the Opposition the people around Alcoa have now been left stranded and facing financial hardship. ...This was a real opportunity for Parliament to show leadership but the Government and the Opposition have put big business ahead of community protection,” said Mr Llewellyn.

The Legislative Council has called for Alcoa and the Government to resolve the issue before 14th of August. To ensure that the matter is dealt with accordingly, a petition to the Legislative Council is currently circulating in Yarloop, calling “for the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs to enquire into the fairness and just terms of Alcoa’s compensation arrangements, including the SPPP, with particular reference to the financial impacts and hardship experienced by the affected landholders and that the committee report back no later than 30th November 2007.”

If you have not yet signed the petition and wish to do so, please contact CAPS at 9733 5011 before 9th of August.

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- Pollution log report
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“We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used to create them.”

--Albert Einstein



DEC's preliminary LIDAR report supports community complaints

An interim report by Arizona State University researchers, working in conjunction with the DEC, stated that the Lidar tests around Yarloop in 2006 detected "persistent, low-level (i.e. low height) refinery plumes occurring under stable atmospheric conditions...especially during winter." The study found that the plumes extended "over distances of 3 to 5 km from the refinery" and that the plumes remained "for up to 18 hours...Both the ASU and NOAA (*US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration*) highlighted the possibility that meteorological conditions in the Wagerup region could bring plumes down to the ground level."

The report indicated that "the Lidar also detected numerous dust emissions from the Residue Drying Areas...mainly short-lived puffs, several plumes up to two kilometres long and persisting for up to half an hour."

The Power Point presentation at the DEC community meetings in June showed a time-lapse representation of the Lidar tracking plumes from the refinery and RDA, also indicating where a canister was taken while the plume passed by. For a canister to be taken, an odour must be noticed at ground level, confirming that the plumes do, indeed, reach the ground.

John Sutton, manager of the Air Quality Management Branch of the DEC, stated that these findings warrant further investigation, including more research into the particulate matter onto which chemicals may adhere.

Because current air quality standards are based on industrial exposure and not long-term, low-level exposure as residents may experience, there is reason to question the viability of these standards in determining what is actually "safe" for communities in close proximity to industrial sites.

The actual findings and discussion with the DEC representatives were in sharp contrast to media stories on the ABC and GWN following the release of the Lidar report, which stated that the DEC had assured residents that they should not be worried about air quality near Wagerup.

What's Happening???

- **Free Confidential Counselling** for area residents under stress. Harvey Family Support - 9782 4000. Ask for Ray Lanbly.
- **Application for extension** of the DEC's financial support of the Yarloop Bucket Brigade submitted.
- **WA Human Rights Act** draft can be found on www.humanrights.wa.gov.au. This act does not cover our right to live and work in a healthy environment. Please visit the website and make comments in the Feedback section, emphasizing the importance of protecting these basic rights.
- **If you have not received our emails**, add caps6218@yahoo.com to your list of trusted senders in your email account. Call us for details.
- **\$100 sponsorship available for members registered in The Forum.** Powerful personal development seminar by Landmark Education. Call us for details.

Pollution Logs are vital documents!

Enclosed in this newsletter you will find a copy of the Yarloop Bucket Brigade Pollution Log. Feel free to photocopy this log, or email us if you would like an electronic copy to print out when needed. Please use these logs to keep track of odour and health events associated with Alcoa emissions. Completed log sheets can be dropped off at the Yarloop General Store.

These logs assist CAPS in comparing dates, times and nature of odour and health complaints with other information we receive. If you also possess a DEC Wagerup Community Air Sampling Program Observation Log Book, we recommend that you keep that up to date.

Since 15 February 2006, 38 events have been noted on Yarloop Bucket Brigade log sheets by local residents. However, we have heard many more complaints from residents that weren't recorded. Please help us document proof of the impact Alcoa has on this community!

Mark your calendar – CAPS Annual General Meeting – 26 September.



“The Doomsday Horn Sound”

CAPS were contacted recently by David Rivett of the Pioneers Bush Band. After reading a newspaper story about the plight of local residents, Rivett was moved to write a song about Yarloop which his band has been performing in the Perth area. We think this song says it all. The stirring words are written below:

The Doomsday Horn Sound

Words and Music © David Rivett 24th May 2007

**He once had a farm just south of Pinjarra
Near a place called Yarloop sweet meadows so green
The sweet smell of gum trees and cows at the milking
So long had pervaded this pastoral scene.**

Chorus:

**Now he’s gone from the farmland of such green
meadows
He’s gone from the country his family loved
He’s run from the wind that blew from the
northland
Tears from the gas the bauxite mine spewed up**

**Who profits from poison that’s killing the country
What anger resides in the sons of the land?
As nature’s sweet pastures the land of the dairy
Is turned by pure greed of the shareholder’s hand.**

**Who can believe that it’s not an old story
From days gone by when ignorance reigned?
Who can believe that nothing is changing?
The rich still destroy and inflict so much pain.**

**It’s not far away, it’s right on our doorstep
Perhaps you know someone who lived in that town
And all over this world the same thing is happening
We’re so slow to hear the doomsday horn’s sound.**

Highlights of Minutes from Executive Committee

- 17 June: CAPS to be member of AIR CARE Australia. Plans to expand CAPS membership.
- 26 June: Met with David Templeman, Minister for Environment and Michelle Andrews, policy maker, to discuss Yarloop issues.
- 27 June: Met with Michael Megaw, Chief of Staff to Eric Ripper, and Richard Lang, policy maker, to discuss Yarloop issues, in particular the land management problems.
- 18 July: Approved 5 sponsorships of \$100 for members registered for Landmark Education seminar, The Forum.

AIR CARE AUSTRALIA

Rising community concerns regarding the ongoing adverse impact on the environment and community health from industrial pollution within Australia has led to the formation of community-based group AIR CARE AUSTRALIA- an initiative of the *Australian National Bucket Brigade*.

Denny Larson, executive director of *Global Community Monitor* and program director Ruth Breech were back in Australia to facilitate the “*National Bucket Brigade Training*” in West Perth, 2-3 June, organized by CAPS.

The “*National Bucket Brigade Training*” involved community participants from Kwinana Progress Group, Midland Frogs, Alliance for a Clean Environment, Townsville Bucket Brigade, Locals for Esperance Development, Canning Melville Community Odour Action Group, Geelong Community for Good Life, and Community Alliance for Positive Solutions Inc. (CAPS, Yarloop).

The training was sponsored by the Department of Environment and Conservation (WA), South West Catchment Council, Greens WA and the Australian Greens, Harvey Fresh, Harvey IGA, Harvey Cheese, and Mimmi’s Quality Fruit and Veg.

AIR CARE AUSTRALIA, will spearhead a collaborative effort between Australian communities, industries and government that allows for the protection of the environment and public health, preserves and improves the quality of life of citizens, and allows truly sustainable development¹ by Australian industry.

In line with the principles of *Community Right to Know*, AIR CARE AUSTRALIA recognize that participatory democracy must be the driving force behind any community air monitoring program and must be funded by government.

AIR CARE AUSTRALIA will work constructively with all stakeholders in order to:

- Prevent the impact and exposure to pollution in Australian communities;
- Establish a national Community Engagement Process including a National Education Program for air quality and monitoring;
- Establish an open and transparent process regarding all monitoring results;
- Establish a new community endorsed standard for air monitoring methods;
- Establish new community endorsed air quality standards for health and environment protection;
- Ensure that air monitoring programs involve the use of an independent laboratory with results being provided by the laboratory directly to communities;
- Work collaboratively in an open and transparent process with communities and environment groups to identify and resolve pollution concerns.

Community
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Annual General Meeting

CAPS members are urged to attend the AGM-

- **Wed 26 September 2007**
- **7 pm**
- **Yarloop Town Hall**

Those who are unable to attend can fill out the enclosed proxy form and nominate another member to represent you at the meeting.

Protecting your privacy It is our duty of care to protect the privacy of our members. There are still a few people who are not sympathetic to our cause or compassionate towards those suffering health effects, and these people have, at times, been confrontational. To protect the privacy of our members, we will only publish names with expressed consent. You may meet other members, supporters and the executive committee in person at CAPS Membership Meetings. Questions concerning this policy can be addressed by co-chairs Vince Puccio 9733 5011 or Merv McDonald 0409370235.

A healthy environment for living and working is your basic human right.

Visit our website often-

www.caps6218.org.au

it's updated frequently!

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Are you relocating? Please keep us informed by phoning or emailing us with your new contact details!

