



## ***Community Alliance for Positive Solutions Inc.***

*Representing 340+ supporters, including 100+ paid members, and growing...*

### **PASSING THE BUCKET**

**“There’s something in the air, mate!” has become the battle cry for the newly-formed Yarloop Bucket Brigade.** Yarloop has joined communities around the globe who are fighting local industries for the truth about the air they breathe.

After reading about Bucket Brigades in a magazine, a local resident contacted Denny Larson, the “Johnny Appleseed” of Bucket Brigades. Larson’s organisation, Global Community Monitor, helps to empower communities such as Yarloop, assisting them in collecting air pollution samples in homemade “buckets” which are then analysed by independent, accredited laboratories. Larson, working with Ed Masry of Erin Brokovich fame, helped to create a bucket system for collecting air samples that is both affordable and easy to use. The system is approved by the US EPA. Through the power of the Bucket Brigade network, communities worldwide are forcing governments to lower acceptable toxin limits, successfully challenging polluters in court, and holding industries accountable when they make exaggerated claims about high environmental standards.

Larson was in Yarloop and Geelong in January to help start-up Australia’s first Bucket Brigades. Twenty seven local CAPS members were trained as “sniffers” and “samplers”, and five buckets were assembled. Hot spots where residents are more prone to pollution impacts have been identified and samples will be taken when pollution events occur. Samples will be sent to the US for analyses. CAPS will make public all data from bucket samples and dust wipes. Larson stated that Yarloop is one of the most toxic situations he has encountered. “You don’t have just one source of pollution, you’ve got everything from cradle to grave – a mine site, a refinery, and a toxic waste dump.”

With the help of donations from residents, Greens (WA) members, and Greens MLA, Paul Llewellyn, the Yarloop Bucket Brigade is ready to roll. For more information about Bucket Brigades, see [www.bucketbrigade.net](http://www.bucketbrigade.net).

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### **Alinta Cogeneration Plans**

Alinta’s gas-powered cogeneration plant will be built at Wagerup, regardless of whether or when Alcoa’s expansion goes ahead. Alcoa stated in last year’s ERMP report that the proposed cogeneration plant would involve two 140 megawatt units. Subsequently, a news report stated Alinta’s new units would be 162 megawatts. Now Alinta’s Wagerup Cogeneration Project Environmental Impact Statement of February 2006 states that there will be two 175 megawatt units in the plant. Why and how the size of these units keeps changing have not been addressed. Neither has the issue about a buffer zone. What is evident, however, is the dramatic increase in greenhouse gases, particulate matter and water usage resulting from the construction of this facility.

The EPA will be releasing the report for public comment in the near future. If you would like to have a copy of this statement emailed to you immediately, you may contact Vince Puccio 9733 5011 or Merv McDonald 9733 5244 or email [caps6218@yahoo.com](mailto:caps6218@yahoo.com).

*“Struggle without unity enables the other side to pick us off one by one.”*

*--Nelson Mandela*



## The Dirt on Red Mud – what you don't know can hurt you!

*If you haven't been concerned about Alcoa's growing Residue Drying Area, think about this:*

- The caustic residue in the mud lakes contains concentrations of radioactive thorium, uranium, barium, chromium, fluoride, arsenic, copper, zinc, aluminium, cobalt, lead, mercury, cadmium and beryllium.
- Particulate matter from the mud lakes can travel with the wind for kilometres, posing possible health risks. Caustic residue can adhere to dust particles, which, when inhaled, can cause serious lung problems.
- Though sprinkler systems were installed to keep the dust under control, dust emissions are still occurring.
- There is no buffer zone around the mud lakes, nor is there one proposed in the expansion plans.
- Red mud has been used as an experimental agricultural soil conditioner in the Peel-Harvey catchment area, even though it contains radioactive and toxic heavy metals which could leach into the waterways.
- Other uses for this toxic waste are being investigated.
- Bauxite residue, mainly composed of residue from caustic and oxalate, is currently produced at a rate of 4.8 million tonnes per year at Wagerup. This figure will double with the proposed expansion.
- According to the Waroona Shire, the Residue Drying Area currently covers 380 hectares of land. This area is calculated to grow to 1150 hectares over the next 30 years, and the piles of waste are expected to reach a height of 40 metres. Quite obviously, Alcoa have a toxic waste disposal problem.

CAPS are currently conducting dust wipe sampling in the community which will be analysed for toxic heavy metals by a certified lab in the United States, and the results announced by email to members, on our website, and in the media.

### **What's happening???**

- Yarloop and CAPS featured on ABC TV's Four Corners on 3 October 2005 in a segment called "Something in the Air".
- Ombudsman investigation continues into cover-up of Croft report. Additional investigations requested.
- Local protestors at Alcoa's Open Day.
- CAPS' appeals EPA expansion approval and assists community members with submissions.
- Yarloop Bucket Brigade get national and international media and web coverage, and invitations to provide presentations to groups in Perth.
- Submitted request to join Alumina Action Alliance.
- Videos available for lending from CAPS: The Corporation on dvd, and ABC Four Corners on videotape.

### **Check out our new website:**

[www.geocities.com/caps6218](http://www.geocities.com/caps6218)

Our new website features the mission and goals of CAPS, as well as links to the ABC Four Corners investigative report, a website for those with Multiple Chemical Sensitivity, information on corporate accountability, and a website on human rights and environmental damage. This is information that every resident should know. In the near future, we will have a bigger and better website which will include updated information on the Yarloop Bucket Brigade and emission test results, so keep checking in. Until then, you can read about our Bucket Brigade, and the Bucket Brigades worldwide, on [www.bucketbrigade.net](http://www.bucketbrigade.net).

*Those who receive this newsletter online may click on the blue underlined areas above to directly enter the websites. If you are not receiving this newsletter online yet, you can send us your email address to have future issues emailed directly to you. Emailing the newsletter saves CAPS both printing and postage costs.*

### **Membership Meeting Notice**

**All financial members of CAPS are encouraged to attend the membership meeting Wednesday 15 March at 7:00 pm at the Yarloop Town Hall.**

*Please be advised that this meeting is for members only. If you are not yet a member, join before 15 March to be able to attend the meeting.*



### CAPS submission to appeal EPA approval of Wagerup 3

The Community Alliance for Positive Solutions Inc. submitted an appeal on behalf of the CAPS membership to the EPA in regards to their approval of the expansion at Wagerup, as well as assisting community members in writing their own appeals. Approximately 50 appeals were received by the EPA, which they considered to be a very impressive response. Thank you to those who filed an appeal for taking the time to support your community. The new Environment Minister, Mark McGowan will be making a final decision in the coming months. CAPS have invited Mr McGowan to meet with our group prior to making the decision. To date, we have not received a response.

Main points that were featured in CAPS' appeal included the following:

- The health effects of particulate matter need to be addressed.
- A buffer zone should be established, with or without the expansion, of at least 10-20 kms in size and should encompass the footprint of the emissions. (*Please note that CAPS agrees with the EPA that the buffer zone should not be a no-residents zone.*)
- A buffer zone should be created around the residue drying area (mud lakes).
- No mention has been made by Alcoa or the EPA about a required buffer zone around the co-generation plant.
- The modelling used by Alcoa to predict contaminant concentrations can have error as high as 100%.
- A health survey should be done before the expansion is approved, and should include residents who have relocated to assess changes in states of health after relocation.
- Health assessment for those who are impacted outside the proposed buffer zone should be a simple process which is independent of Alcoa.
- CAPS fervently oppose any increase to greenhouse gas emissions.
- Water usage should be considered a relevant environmental issue, as should be the increase in oxalate use and residue disposal.
- A new town should be created where displaced residents can choose to move so as to maintain a sense of community.

The Appeals Convenor has stated that they will send an anonymous summary of each appeal to Alcoa for comment. CAPS have requested that they also forward a copy of Alcoa's appeal submission to CAPS to share with the community. The CAPS appeal is available for viewing by members on request.

#### Healthwise to cross-reference cancer cases

The Healthwise Advisory Board has decided to co-operate with the Dept of Health to cross-reference the Alumina Widows and Workers Action Groups' listing of Alcoa workers who have suffered from cancer with cancer cases identified in the Healthwise study.

Dr Janet Woollard MLA, of Alfred Cove, stated that the cross matching would ensure the validity of the Healthwise study, as it had not represented the full workforce of Alcoa. "Up until now, the study only involved male employees, it excluded workers who left Alcoa before 1983, it did not include contractors who worked for Alcoa over the years and some Alcoa workers were left out because they refused to be part of the study," said Dr Woollard.

The Alumina Widows and Workers Action Groups had identified 62 Alcoa workers who have cancer or who had died of cancer, but only 11 had confirmed that they had been a part of the Healthwise study. The groups have also identified many other chronic illnesses amongst workers, including multiple chemical sensitivity, cardiovascular disease, and renal disease.

#### Australian Health Standards Questioned

CAPS will be questioning the Federal Government about their current health standards, having found the acceptable limits for toxins to be set substantially higher in Australia than in other countries.

For example, the benzene standard in Australia is 75 micrograms per cubic metre, 300 times higher than in the US state of Texas, where the standard is 12, and in India where it is .25.

An air sample collected in Yarloop recently showed a formaldehyde level of 20 micrograms per cubic metre. According to the DOE, though this sample was higher than expected, it was still within acceptable health guidelines. However, when compared to US standards, the formaldehyde level was far greater than healthy exposure limits, including the American Toxic Substances and Disease Registry Chronic Minimal Risk Level of 9.58 micrograms per cubic metre.

We need to go beyond collecting air and dust samples for comparison. We need to challenge Australia's standards and question why the Federal Government finds it acceptable for Australians to be forced to breathe in poisonous toxins that risk our health and the health of our children.



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Visit our new website -  
[www.geocities.com/caps6218](http://www.geocities.com/caps6218)

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## ***How your membership helps the community***

Since the incorporation of the Community Alliance for Positive Solutions in March 2005, at least 100 individuals have paid a \$10 membership fee to join CAPS. Many individuals and groups have also made additional donations. To all our supporters, we say THANK YOU! Your dollars have assisted with the following projects of CAPS:

- On-going local newspaper advertisements to educate and inform the community about issues, current information, and submission requests that affect us all.
- Covering the cost of three workshops to empower the community and its residents, at no charge to attendees.
- Expert consultation from environmental scientists.
- The creation of one of Australia's first Bucket Brigades.
- The printing of this newsletter.

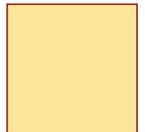
Some costs that CAPS incur are covered out-of-pocket by members of the executive committee, or supplied as pro bono services or in-kind support.

New members and donations are always welcome and appreciated.

**We couldn't do it without YOU!**

***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 and the executive committee in person at the membership meeting on 15 March. Questions concerning this policy can be addressed by co-chairs Vince Puccio 9733 5011 or Merv McDonald 9733 5244.

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



**TO THE HOUSEHOLDER**

***Attention Members – mark 15 March on your calendar for the CAPS membership meeting. Details on page 2 of this newsletter.***