

Community Alliance for Positive Solutions Inc.

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

National Bucket Brigade Training: Creating a National Vision for Community Air Monitoring

The Community Alliance for Positive Solutions Inc (CAPS) and The Yarloop Bucket Brigade will host a two day training for community and environmental groups from across Australia who are interested in monitoring the air they breathe. The free training will be held 2-3 June 2007 at the Lotteries House, 2 Delhi Street, West Perth from 9 – 3pm. The training will be facilitated by Denny Larson and Ruth Breech of Global Community Monitor in San Francisco.

Greens WA have provided funding for the venue, and CAPS are currently seeking funding and in-kind support to cover airfares for the trainers, food, materials, and seed money to cover equipment for the new Bucket Brigades. Airlines have also been approached to provide discount vouchers for participants travelling from over east. The Greens WA are seeking billeting arrangements in Perth for these travellers, as well. CAPS are continuing to encourage the Federal Environment Minister to include air quality in its Natural Heritage Trust grants, as there is currently no provision for funding community air monitoring projects.

Anyone wanting more information or a registration form, or if you would like to make a donation to support this important project, please ring 08 9733 5011.

CHECK OUT OUR NEW WEBSITE -

www.cans6218.org.au

Bucket News

On 26 November 2006 the Yarloop Bucket Brigade were observed by staff from the Air Quality Management Branch of the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) to validate their protocol, documentation and quality assurance procedures used during air sampling. The DEC were satisfied that the Bucket Brigade provided reasonable assurance and care in their methods, and are offering this model of sampling as one of several possible methods for future community projects.

The latest set of data received by CAPS on a bucket air sample taken in Cookernup in November 2006 revealed levels of acetone, carbon disulfide and toluene that were not considered high enough to be a health risk. Because the sample was taken during the weekend, transit was delayed and, according to the lab, may have affected the results. A subsequent sample taken with a DEC Silcocon canister contained reportedly safe levels of formaldehyde, acetaldehyde and chloromethane. Further investigation is underway.

“...we should regard ourselves as being burdened: we have the burden of helping this world...But if we take our burden as a delight, we can actually liberate this world.”

-- Chogyam Trungpa



Serving

Yarloop

Waroona

Hamel

Harvey

Cookernup

Wagerup

Other
Impacted
Areas

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SPPP Update

- Nigel Hallett MLC, member for the South West and Opposition Spokesman for Regional Development, and Steve Thomas, Shadow Minister for the Environment, met with 15 community members at the Yarloop Town Hall on 6 February to hear residents' concerns about the Supplementary Property Purchasing Program (SPPP). Mr Hallett and Mr Thomas have both shown a sincere interest in seeking information on how this program and Alcoa are impacting the community, and taking their concerns to Parliament. The two members have also questioned Alcoa about some of the anomalies of this program and of the plans for the refinery's expansion.
- It is our understanding that Parliament was scheduled to approve or reject the SPPP by the end of September 2006, but the voting has yet to happen at the time we go to press. In February, CAPS wrote letters to every member of Parliament outlining the issues and concerns that community members have conveyed, and a number of politicians have responded with interest and additional questions. CAPS have also written a series of letters to the Premier, however, the answers to our questions tend to be vague or redundant, avoiding the more contentious points. We will continue this conversation with Mr Carpenter until we are satisfied that our issues are adequately acknowledged and addressed.
- According to Hendy Cowan, facilitator of the SPPP, there have been over 250 expressions of interest from residents, but only 85 valuations, with just 14 residents accepting the offer and another 6 considering acceptance.

Winter Complaints – What to do

Many of us consider the approaching cool season as the “winter of our discontent.” During cool, cloudy weather patterns, the area surrounding Wagerup tends to get hit more regularly by pollution events from Alcoa. These events are typically caused by the inversion of emission plumes, which dump a cloud of aerosol chemicals and particulates around our properties, onto our skin, up our noses and into our lungs.

When you experience one of these events, please take the following steps:

- **Photograph any visible plumes.**
- **Note time, weather conditions, wind direction, what you smell and what you feel.**
- **If the odour is strong and lingering, contact the Yarloop Bucket Brigade at 0400738273 or 9733 5011 to collect an air sample.**
- **Report the event to Adam West at the DEC on 9550 4231 and fill out your DEC log book, if you have one.**
- **Report your complaint to Alcoa at 9733 4641.**
- **Fill out a Yarloop Bucket Brigade pollution log. You may pick up and deposit these log sheets at the Yarloop General Store.**

Please take the time to report these events. It is vital to keep track of where and when the emissions hit. Records will help the Department of Environment and Conservation determine what is causing the problems the community has been experiencing, and to decide whether or not Alcoa's modelling is valid. Alcoa say there is no problem. We know better. Let's prove it!

Points to Ponder

- Yarloop and the surrounding areas are now on water restrictions imposed by the Water Corporation. During this serious drought, have Alcoa been restricted on their use of local water sources?

- When a complaint about local air quality is made to the DEC, the complaint is forwarded to Alcoa. Then a fairly standard report is drawn up with graphs, usually indicating that all operations are normal. So, could we possibly *deduct* that emissions from Alcoa's normal everyday operations, not just unusual pollution events, are contributing to our odour and health problems?

- If the Pinjarra-Brunswick Sustainability Strategy is such a brilliant plan, and Yarloop's viability as a community is to be sustained (according to the Government and Alcoa), then why are businesses, important infrastructure and residents leaving town?

Remember, we were here first!



Discrimination: where has all the compassion gone?

The September 2006 issue of Yarloop Yarning featured a photograph of a poster that had hung on the side of the pumphouse, across from the Cabin Restaurant, for about one month which stated "It's time for you greedy whinging hypocondriac's [sic] to leave and let some real people move into our great town!!"

In a text box to the left of the photograph, the editor of the Yarning printed the following comment: "We had to smile at the sense of humour evident in the wording of this notice our photographer spied on entering Yarloop last week. It looks as if it has been originally affixed to something, but was leaning against one of the old pumphouses when we saw it. It is gratifying to see that some people must still jealously consider the uniqueness and the beauty of Yarloop, and don't like others 'loud-mouthing' it in a derogatory sort of way."

A group of residents who have suffered ill effects related to or worsened by Alcoa's emissions found this poster to be offensive, harassing and discriminatory, and the Yarloop Yarning's publication of the photo and commentary to be, at the very least, insensitive. Nine residents signed a formal complaint that was lodged with the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission in November. The Commission replied in January, determining that the complaint did not fall under the scope of the Disability Discrimination Act. However, legal advice is being sought.

The real shame here is that there are people in this community, and others who do not live here but claim to represent its interests, who have no ability to feel compassion for those who suffer. No one in this area, ill or not, would ever negate the beauty of nature that surrounds us here or the specialness of Yarloop's history. But, unfortunately, it is with nostalgia that the former level of kindness, tranquillity, and security of our community is remembered. In a "real" community, people support each other and lend a hand when someone is ill. They do not put their hostilities and small-mindedness on display in an effort to cause harm to other human beings.

"We're all in this together!"

What's happening????

- **Members' Night Out** – Sunday 29 April 4-7pm, Yarloop Town Hall. Meeting (members only), then byo bbq and video viewing for members and non-members.
- **Free Confidential Counselling** for area residents under stress. Harvey Family Support - 9782 4000. Ask for Ray Lanbly.
- **CCC and Ombudsman investigations**, as requested by CAPS, still underway.
- **National Bucket Brigade Training**, 2-3 June 2007, Lotteries House, West Perth, hosted by CAPS.
- **Have you seen CAPS' new website yet?** It is full of interesting links and valuable information. Visit CAPS on www.caps6218.org.au

Salt water to be a waste product of Cogeneration Plant

Paul Llewellyn (Greens MLC for South West) confirmed during Question Time in Parliament that "blow-down water" will be a waste product from Alinta's new cogeneration power station, now under construction, and that the water will contain various salts. Between 25-35 mega litres of this blow-down water will be generated per year, and will be disposed of in either Alcoa's cooling lakes or residue area. If the salt-water leaches into the groundwater, there will be one more pollutant compromising the environmental integrity of this region.

Particulate Matter matters!

Links to info on particulate matter

United States EPA information
www.epa.gov/air/urbanair/pm

Green Facts information on health and environment
<http://www.greenfacts.org/air-pollution/particulate-matter-pm/index.htm>

Australian Government database
www.npi.gov.au/database/substance-info/profiles/69.html

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Members' Night Out

All CAPS members are invited to attend our Members' Night Out

- **Sunday 29 April 2007**
- **4-7 pm** *Mark your Calendar!!!*
- **Yarloop Town Hall**

Membership Meeting from 4-5pm; BBQ (byo) 5-6pm; view "The Bucket Brigade" video from 6-7pm. Meeting is for members only. Non-members are welcome to BBQ and Video.

Join us for an informative, inspirational and enjoyable evening! Meet new friends and catch up with the old ones! Find out the latest news on the SPPP and the Yarloop Bucket Brigade! Learn how Bucket Brigades are making a difference around the world!

Please BYO meats, beverages and salads to share.

RSVP - please, by 22 April by calling 9733 5011.

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.

