



CAPS Newsletter

Spring-Summer 2007/8

Issue 8

Community Alliance for Positive Solutions Inc.

Representing 360+ supporters, including 167+ paid members, and growing...



Serving

Yarloop

Waroona

Hamel

Harvey

Cookernup

Wagerup

Other
Impacted
Areas

Comments on Alcoa Wagerup current and projected water use

(In reference to ENVIRON's Water Supply Study, Alcoa's Wagerup Refinery Unit 3, ERMP Appendices cd)

It appears that both Alcoa and the Dept of Works (now Department of Environment and Conservation) were not fully aware of the impact of global warming on water yield in this part of the region. Catchments and aquifers are now drying up, in comparison to when Alcoa was given their water allocation in the late 70's.

Alcoa agree that "sizable high quality ground water" does not exist at Wagerup. Existing water supply is limited and decant of supplementary sources into Alcoa's existing system is required considering the projected expansion of the plant at Wagerup. Alcoa have been drawing water from our surface catchment systems for more than 20 years! This roughly equates to refilling the Swan River and Canning Rivers about 1.8 times (more than 55 GL)!

Since recordings of rainfall began 25 years ago, the average amount of rainfall in the Wagerup area alone has more than halved. Alcoa still want 14.6 GL per annum with the upgrade, independent of environmental conditions. This suggests that this industry will use more water in a drier climate!

The Wagerup refinery sits on the Yoganup Formation, a highly permeable sandy formation. This means any onsite contamination may leach quickly and effectively into our ground water systems.

In this part of the region industry has been given a licensed water allocation of 10 GL. With the expansion Alcoa want more (14.6 GL pa) for Wagerup. This means that Alcoa want more than the total amount of water already allocated to industry. What does this mean to potable water supply? With the expansion, Alcoa will consume just under half (36.7%) of the total amount of water allocated for public supply.

Wagerup refinery has a licensed allocation of water of 9.05 GL per annum but last year used 9.46 GL. That amounts to about 5% more water than they were allowed to use. Inline with the projected water requirements (i.e. 14.6 GL per annum), errors in the amount of water used could be as high as 0.73 GL pa. That means more pressure on our fragile systems if they require more.

In light of news that the Water Corporation and Harvey Water have gained efficiencies in water use through their water initiatives, Yarloopian's and many other regional towns and cities are faced with water restrictions. Yet Alcoa want more water! This means they want access to the water we, as residents, have saved.

Alcoa indicate they are not in a position to achieve further efficiency in water savings using existing technologies. How long will this technological legacy burden our water resources because of economics – what is the profit/bottom line here!?!

Also, based on vapour recovery tests Alcoa recycled less than 3% of their water last year. Perhaps industry should only be allowed to use recycled water rather than our governments' push for the general public to accept it as their primary water source.

***These comments by CAPS (edited to save space), referencing Alcoa's own documents, appeared in the Harvey Reporter on 20-11-07. Subsequently, Alcoa denied these claims in a Letter to the Editor. Our response is forthcoming.*

Inside:

- AGM meeting minutes
- What's happening
- SPPP Update
- Mining leases
- MCS Support Group
- Local Hero Awards
- Grant for equipment

"With a good heart and wisdom you have right motivation and will automatically do what needs to be done." ***--The Dalai Lama***



Minutes from CAPS Annual General Meeting 26 September 2007

19 in attendance and 19 proxy votes. Highlights of items discussed:

- Investigation by Erin Brockovich and lawyers is progressing well.
- Memorandum of Understanding extended 12 months with DEC. Funding for transport of air samples. Lidar findings discussed.
- Farm Buy-out program (FBCO) suspended by HENDY Cowan in June. Straight-out sales continuing.
- Petition in with Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs concerning Alcoa's Land Management.
- Meetings with Environment Minister David Templeman and Michelle Andrews, and with Eric Ripper's Chief of Staff, Mike Megaw, and Principal Policy Advisor, Richard Lange.
- Write-up of ECU study by Dr Martin Brueckner nearing completion.
- Meeting with 'Alcoa All Union, All Sites Committee'.
- Office bearers re-elected.
- Support group for those with Multiple Chemical Sensitivity being formed.

What's Happening???

- Erin Brockovich, Masry and Vititoe, and Shine Lawyers continue investigation.
- URM research firm from Sydney recently conducting surveys of local residents for Alcoa on attitudes about CAPS and Erin Brockovich.
- **Petition and submission** by CAPS concerning Alcoa's land management issues is being discussed by Standing Committee on Environmental and Public Affairs.
- **Property sales:** Alcoa now own 231 properties in Yarloop, Cookernup, Hamel, Harvey and Hoffman. (Source: Harvey Shire)
- **Media:** CAPS have been interviewed recently by Brazilian television, a New Zealand journalist, an Italian magazine, and the Sydney Morning Herald. Other media coverage this year concerning CAPS' involvement with Erin Brockovich includes South Africa, Brunei, UK, USA, Canada, Iceland, Russia and India.
- **Bucket Brigade** to begin testing for Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons
- **Australian National Bucket Brigade/AIR CARE Australia:** Lawsuit against EPA by Geelong Community for Good Life.
- **Red mud** has been used for the new road bed on South West Highway.
- **Recognition:** Seven CAPS volunteers received awards for their efforts.

SPPP UPDATE: On 14 September 2006, Premier Alan Carpenter presented a Brief Ministerial Statement, the second point of which stated: *"expanded and enhanced land purchase and relocation programs to be funded by Alcoa."* The SPPP commenced in October 2006. More than 200 property owners expressed an interest in participating in the Program. As more than 180 property owners were ruled eligible to participate in the Program, not all properties could be valued within the original three month time frame. It is expected that all eligible properties will be valued by mid-December 2007. The Program is not expected to be completed until March/ April 2008.

To date, more than 60 property owners have agreed to sell their property to Alcoa for the price determined by the Government appointed Valuer. It is likely there will be further sales to Alcoa when the SPPP Farm Business Continuation Option (FBCO), which was suspended by the Administrator in June 2007, is reinstated. There are 56 property owners who exercised the Farm Business Continuation Option in their SPPP application. Until there is agreement on the methodology that is applied to make a determination in regard to an equalisation payment, applicants who exercised FBCO are unable to complete the Program and move to a "like for like" property away from the vicinity of the Refinery.

Though the land purchase program under the SPPP has expanded the land management area that may be purchased by Alcoa, there has, to date, been no enhancement of land purchase and relocation programs as promised by Mr Carpenter. Instead, Alcoa has continued to chop and change the parameters within which they are operating this program, delaying the relocation of the majority of impacted residents and forcing many who leave to face major financial losses.

Remember to fill in your DEC log books and Yarloop Bucket Brigade log sheets when you are impacted by pollution. Return the log sheets to the Yarloop General Store, or phone 9733 5011.



Alcoa Mining slated to impact Perth Hills

The northern jarrah forest of Western Australia is covered to a large extent by a mineral lease granted to Alcoa World Alumina Australia (Alcoa) in 1961. The area extends from north of the Great Eastern Highway, Mundaring to south of Collie and from Lake C.Y O'Connor in the west to Chidlow in the east.

Alcoa commenced operations in the jarrah forest of Western Australia in 1963. There are currently 2 bauxite mines, Huntly (Pinjarra) and Willowdale, between Waroona and Yarloop. Individual mine pits range in size from 5-50 hectares and on average ore depth is 4-5 metres.

The Company anticipates a 100-year life span for the viable bauxite reserves in their lease agreement.

(Source: John Gardner and Geoff Stoneman Bauxite Mining and Conservation of the Jarrah Forest in South-West Australia - paper presented to the World Conservation Union and International Council for Mining and Metals. Gland, Switzerland 2004).

For more information, visit www.saveperthhills.org/mining.html

CAPS receive equipment grant

CAPS were successful in their application for a Federal Volunteer Small Equipment Grant of \$2286. The grant has been used to purchase a video camera, laptop computer, portable printer, and software.

Workshops and pollution events can now be recorded on video. Meeting minutes and documents needing approval and signatures can be produced quickly and handed out to members attending the meeting. New software will improve the quality of documents, brochures, and newsletters published by CAPS. Our volunteers are very grateful for these items which will make their tasks so much easier!

CIRCLE OF FRIENDS SOUTH WEST

A group for individuals with Multiple Chemical Sensitivity/Chemical Hypersensitivity was launched at a breakfast on Human Rights Day, Monday December 10th. Seven local residents attended the bountiful breakfast at Cookernup Hall.

The advocacy and support group, Circle of Friends South West, aim to educate the public about sensitivity issues, such as fragrance and smoke in public places, as well as advocating for more social access for sufferers. The group have addressed access and inclusion issues with the Shire of Harvey, and local events of discrimination and harassment with South West Development Corporation.

A logo is being designed by a local artist and a constitution created for future incorporation. The group are looking for committee members to assist with the organisation.

For more information, call 9733 4242 or email electron@oceanbroadband.net.au.

2007 Local Hero Awards

Say thank you to those who did so much for you during 2007. Nominate your **Local Hero**. Local Heroes have spent countless hours listening to community concerns, making numerous submissions, visiting politicians and attending endless stakeholder meetings, to raise the community's voice about local issues that put at risk our health, lifestyles and amenity.

Each nominated person or organisation will receive a Certificate of Appreciation/Hero Award. The individual or organisation receiving the most nominations will receive the special **Jim Ife Award**. *Professor Jim Ife is an internationally recognized champion of human rights, Head of the School of Social Work and Social Policy at Curtin University and a former president of Amnesty International Australia.*

Submit the following details by mail to: P.O. Box 529, Harvey WA 6220 or by email to electron@oceanbroadband.net.au by 30th December 2007:

- Name of nominated person or organization;
- Contact details for nominated person or organization;
- Reason for Nomination;
- Your name;
- Your address.

You may nominate more than one Hero or Heroine. Winners will be announced on Australia Day, 26 January 2008.

The 2007 Local Hero Awards

*An initiative of **Circle of Friends South West**, support group for people with Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS) / Chemical Hypersensitivity. Telephone contact: 9733 4242.*

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www.caps6218.org.au

it's updated frequently!

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SEASON'S GREETINGS FROM CAPS!

The CAPS Executive Committee send all members and supporters our very best wishes for a wonderful holiday season.

We thank our volunteers for the heartfelt hours and effort they have donated to our cause.

Our greatest hope is that 2008 will be a new year full of positive resolutions!

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.

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

