



CAPS Newsletter

Autumn-Winter 2008

Issue 9

Community Alliance for Positive Solutions Inc.

Representing 410+ supporters, including 210+ paid members, and growing...



Serving

Yarloop

Waroona

Hamel

Harvey

Cookernup

Wagerup

Other
Impacted
Areas

Parliamentarians Turn Their Backs on Yarloop Residents

Parliament has witnessed one of the most hypocritical, stage-managed backdowns in its history. According to Greens MLC for the South West, Paul Llewellyn, the Liberal Party, with the full support of the Nationals and the Labour Government voted against their own motion calling for an inquiry into the fairness of the ALCOA property purchase program

“Residents suffering from the harmful impacts of the air pollution around Alcoa’s Wagerup alumina refinery have been pleading for a fair and just exit deal to move away from in the area.

“The ‘Supplementary Property Purchase Program’ (SPPP), announced by the Premier when granting Alcoa approval to expand its operations in 2007, has been plagued by delays and accusation of unfair dealings.

“In a face-saving exercise last year, Liberal Upper House Member, Robyn McSweeney; put forward a motion to conduct an inquiry into the fairness and just terms of the SPPP.

“Today she and her colleagues voted against her own motion, effectively abandoning her South West constituents and putting her support behind Alcoa,” Mr. Llewellyn said.

“This cynical maneuver shuts down community access to independent assessment of their concerns by the Parliament.”

According to the Hansard report, Barry House MLC felt that they had to “consider the threat surrounding this issue of a class action by Erin Brockovich. It is inappropriate that a parliamentary committee consider a matter that may be litigated.”

Shine Lawyers Update Work continues on the case in the US with Erin Brockovich and law firms Masry & Vititoe, and Girardi & Keese. Court documents for the action are currently being planned and drafted.

Inside:

- Yarloop Study Update
- Circle of Friends
- Yarloop Health Centre
- Log Sheets
- AIR CARE Australia
- Local Hero Awards

“Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak. Courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen.”

--Winston Churchill



Yarloop Study Update

Dr Martin Brueckner and Dr Dyan Ross, formerly of Edith Cowan University, are working toward the completion of their study called "Sustainable Futures". Their study will result in a series of joint publications, linking data from their respective studies on the conflict history of Yarloop. To this end, they are approaching publishers nationally and internationally with the intention of having a book in print within the next 8 months. Other publications will include a series of articles in academic journals to be published over the next 12 months.

Dr Brueckner is currently completing a conference paper and book chapter dealing with aspects of the Yarloop/Wagerup controversy. These should be published within the next 2 –5 months, as publishers have already been secured. Community members will be kept informed of future developments and research outputs.

Finally, a number of research participants will be contacted by phone over the next few weeks as permission is still needed for the interview data to be used for publication purposes.

Circle of Friends is a support group of ECHO Environmental Chemical Hypersensitivity Organisation

What's happening:

- Shire of Harvey have included Multiple Chemical Sensitivity in their Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) and have allocated funds for our needs to access the community safely, such as warning signs of chemical spraying and the provision of air filters in library and shire offices.
- Grant submission to Harvey Shire to cover cost of incorporation.
- Application for DEC grant to provide air filters in the homes of those affected by airborne pollution from industry sources. If you would like to be included in this request, please phone 0447 215 280.
- Interview on Harvey Radio with group representative and Harvey Shire's DAIP officer regarding MCS (Multiple Chemical Sensitivity) Global Awareness Campaign.
- MCS Hospital Protocol discussed with Harvey Hospital manager and the District Manager of W.A Country Health Services. Their DAIP requires equity and access for all patients. An allergy form has been developed by ECHO which will be distributed to patients.
- The Wish Foundation is now *Connect Groups*. Circle of Friends has been included on their database and web page.
- Interview organised with Disability Services Commission, raising awareness of the needs of individuals with MCS.

Wanted: Volunteer to assist with secretarial activities for ECHO. Contact CAPS at 9733 5011 and leave contact info.

YARLOOP COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE

Open Monday to Friday
8am – 4pm

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| ◆ Social Worker | ◆ Child health and immunisations |
| ◆ Financial Counseling | ◆ Counseling |
| ◆ Mental Health Services | ◆ Confidential needle & syringe program |

For appointments or information, phone 9782 2350.

IMPORTANT: 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.



***AIR CARE AUSTRALIA** - addressing air quality issues across the country*

Western Australia: CAPS' meetings with the Air Quality Management Branch of the DEC concerning grants for statewide community air monitoring projects have resulted in the \$100,000 Air Quality Management Community Grants Program. Environment and Climate Change Minister David Templeman said individual grants of between \$5,000 and \$10,000 are being offered to support grassroots projects that have the potential to enhance air quality management well into the future. For more information, visit <http://www.dec.wa.gov.au/airquality> and click Community Grants Program in the blue box labeled "Active Projects and Programs". You'll be able to download useful tools such as an Air Monitoring Equipment Operating Manual from this site.

Geelong: The Supreme Court case against the EPA for amending Shell's license against the powers of the Environment Protection Act is over and the Geelong Community for Good Life is currently awaiting judgment. Meanwhile, their Freedom of Information case against the EPA and Shell is progressing. As the hearing date approaches, the EPA continues to release more documents. Though this creates a further need for adjournment, the group is gaining access to the documents they need. The group has also received notice that the Victorian Worksafe Department, which monitors Major Hazard Facilities, has just nominated the chair of the group for a State Award as a community representative who has helped to improve safety in the community.

Maitland, NSW: Rutherford Industrial Estate, west of Maitland, contains various heavy industries. Maitland is a low lying valley area, subject to frequent inversion layers, particularly in the cooler months of the year. For 10 years the EPA has received pollution complaints. For 15 years the local council has approved residential development in close proximity to this site; one of the residential streets is located only 200m from a polluting industry.

In the last five years at least two more heavy industries have moved in, the most recent approved by the State government despite strong objections from the council and community. One heavy industry in this estate has a long history of odour and ground water pollution breaches, combined with at least 24 incidents of non-compliance with EPA license conditions over the last 6 years. Odour reports conducted on behalf of this particular industry describe the odour emitted from the stack in great detail. The odour description is the same as residents and adjacent industry have been reporting to the EPA for years. This industry is required to conduct monitoring of emission levels and afterburner temperatures, but repeatedly submits annual returns stating they have not conducted monitoring and failed to comply. EPA has refused to prosecute this industry. Because these plumes move rapidly, often the event has moved from the original report by the time an EPA officer arrives.

The local council insisted residents ring the EPA and did nothing to support the community. The EPA stated they would distribute sampling canisters amongst the community, but the people who have reported the most were not given a canister despite requests. The EPA claimed five had been distributed, but not one person had sampled in 9 months. There are a growing number of reports of serious illness within the community, including a rare cluster of transverse myelitis incidents. The Health Department response vehemently denied that there is anything odd about this cluster, stating that it is just a coincidence and does not require investigation. These people are very ill and unable to fight their cause. In 12 houses there are seven incidents of cancer and tumours.

As a result of a public meeting, a committee has been organised which includes two Maitland City Council members. A campaign is being conducted with the intent of forcing the EPA to protect the environment. A Bucket Brigade is being created, with direction from the Yarloop Bucket Brigade, and funding is being sought. Canisters from the EPA have been received. However, the EPA's canisters failed to operate.

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(CAPS)

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Visit our website often-

www.caps6218.org.au

it's updated frequently!

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Australia**

Local Hero Awards, an initiative of the Environmental Chemical Hypersensitivity Organisation (ECHO), is running from 10th Dec 07 to the 10th of Dec 08, as part of Human Rights Year. The Awards are for individuals or groups that have been active in our community to ensure the protection of our health and lifestyles.

Each nominee will receive a Certificate of Appreciation/Hero Award. The individual or group that receives the most nominations will receive the **Jim Ife Award**. Professor Ife is an internationally recognised Champion of Human Rights and has been head of the School of Social Work and Social Policy at Curtin University. He is former president of Amnesty International Australia.

How to Nominate: Submit the name and address of the person you are nominating, the reason you are nominating them, along with your name and contact details. Send details to Local Hero Awards, PO Box 529, Harvey 6220.

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!

