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Mr Vince Puccio
CAPS
PO Box 69
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Dear Vince

RE: WATER SOURCE QUESTIONS

Thank you for your queries on behalf of CAPS in relation to water sourcing for the Wagerup refinery. I have drawn on presentations made at the Community Consultative Network (CCN) meetings to provide a response to each of your queries.

Why does Alcoa not use recycled water from other sources such as Perth, Mandurah or Bunbury for their industrial purposes, rather than scarce and precious fresh water used at present?

At this point in time the infrastructure to deliver recycled water for use at the Wagerup refinery does not exist. Any recycled water option would require considerable investment for treatment, supply delivery and water storage given the physical distance of the locations you mentioned from the Wagerup refinery. The option is not currently required nor viable.

Alcoa acknowledges that our refining processes do require considerable water but any claims that this is obtained from freshwater sources that could be put to other uses such as drinking water are misleading.

Alcoa Wagerup Refinery operates as a closed water circuit meaning all surface water from the refinery site, the refinery process and residue operations area is captured and continually recirculated back into operations. None of this water could be considered fresh water suitable for domestic purposes.

Where additional water is introduced into the cycle it is gathered from surface water catchments at site or immediately adjacent, ground water bores and the pumping back of water from the Harvey Main drain during winter that has previously been identified as a source of nitrogen & phosphorous pollution to the Peel Harvey Catchment. While these sources are suitable for dust suppression and industrial processing requirements none of these sources have been approved as meeting public drinking quality standards.

When additional industrial water supplies are required by Wagerup Refinery these are provided by the locally owned Harvey Water Irrigation Cooperative. This water comes from dams (such as Wellington Dam) on which recreational activities occur resulting in the Health Department of Western Australia determining that these sources are not of public drinking quality standard.

Could Alcoa/industry build a desalination plant to provide water for processing from Wellington Dam or the Indian Ocean?

At this time no desalination plant is required by Alcoa or industry in the immediate region to fulfil their water needs.

Many industries, including Alcoa's Wagerup operation, are using water that is deemed "fit for purpose". This means the water quality is suitable for the given use (eg. dust suppression). While a generally good standard of water is preferred, the "fit for purpose" approach means water supplies such as the nutrient laden brackish water going down the Harvey Main Drain is pumped into storage adjacent to Wagerup residue ready for use.

Alcoa regularly participates in discussions with the Department of Water in regard to our short and long term water needs and believes we have in place appropriate measures to secure our water requirements at Wagerup without any negative impact on the community. We will continue to do this into the future and work with the community and regulators to ensure the best possible long term outcomes for this precious resource.

We appreciate your correspondence.

Kind regards,

Tom Busher
Community Relations Manager
Wagerup Refinery