

# Asbestos risk 'not dealt with'

## WORKER CLAIMS EXPOSURE IN 2012

**Vanessa Schmitt**

GREENFIELDS resident Phil Boyle cannot believe workers are still at risk of being exposed to asbestos at Alcoa worksites.

Mr Boyle claims he was exposed to asbestos while using an air chisel on a valve at Alcoa's Pinjarra refinery while he was a contractor for Cape plc in 2012.

"The fibres became airborne and there was a huge amount of dust blowing around," he said.

Mr Boyle claims he was made redundant and "driven off site" when he found out the valves tested positive to asbestos.

At the time, Mr Boyle said he felt angry, frustrated and betrayed.

He said exposure to asbestos and the risk of developing asbestosis felt like a "death sentence."

Mr Boyle said he did not speak out publicly at the time because there were investigations and he did not want to risk his chances of finding employment.

He contacted the *Times* after seeing reports of workers potentially exposed to asbestos at Alcoa's Kwinana refinery and Pinjarra refinery in May.

"I can't believe it's allowed to happen," he said.

"I am disappointed it happened to us and was not dealt with."

An Alcoa spokeswoman said Pinjarra refinery's incident records had

been reviewed and there was no incident reported by or involving Mr Boyle in 2012.

"All Alcoa and contractor employees are required to report any environmental, health and safety incidents through formal reporting channels," she said.

Cape plc declined to comment.

Department of Mines and Petroleum State mining engineer Andrew Chaplyn said an inspector investigated an incident in 2012 at Alcoa's refinery in Pinjarra.

The incident findings were reviewed in conjunction with Cape and Alcoa management.

"This process included recommendations to improve the management of samples taken when working where asbestos may be present," he said.

"Recent changes have also been incorporated into processes to further mitigate exposure risks.

"Workers are encouraged to raise any safety concerns with their supervisor or their elected safety and health representatives."

Mr Chaplyn said professionals employed on site were best placed to understand, resource and manage the risks across their operation.

"However, if the worker does not feel as though the matter is being given due consideration or has reoccurred due to poor controls, they can report the matter to the department to investigate," he said.