



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Health**
Public Health Division

Ref: D-AA-15/184948
Contact: L. Gillam
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Mr Vince Puccio and Mr Merv McDonald ASFM
Community Alliance for Positive Solutions
PO Box 69
YARLOOP WA 6218

Vince *Merv*

Dear Mr ~~Puccio~~ and Mr ~~McDonald~~

POTENTIAL GROUNDWATER CONTAMINATION AND WATER USAGE

Thank you for your letter of 15 April 2015 regarding water usage for Alcoa's Wagerup Refinery.

Your earlier letter of 15 January 2015 and the response by Dr Andrew Robertson from the Department of Health (DOH) dated 5 February 2015 also relate to this issue. I apologise for the delay in reply, due in part to reasons I have provided to you in other correspondence.

DOH officers have now assessed your questions posed to the Department of Water (DOW) and have considered the responses provided by that agency.

I am advised by senior officers in the DOH that your group has referenced the DOH in only Points 5.2 (page 1/5) and 11 (page 3/5) and it is appropriate that only comment on these two points is therefore provided.

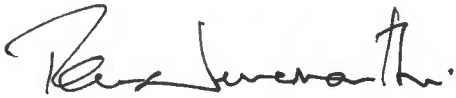
5.2 – The DOH has not been involved in assessing “downstream water” as detailed in your submission. This is not an issue over which this agency has routine jurisdiction. However, the widely distributed DOH recommendation is that water from any source is not suitable for consumption without appropriate treatment, extending to groundwater, natural water bodies and also including rain water tanks.

11 – DOH officers have not been requested to provide any “third party critical reviews” on the matter of ground water to any agency, including Alcoa. As I have outlined in correspondence with your group, matters relating to water usage in this region would not routinely be referred to the DOH, and this would occur only in circumstances where some specific potential risk to health was noted. There is no legislation requiring such referrals, however the DOH has provided information to the DOW on the circumstances which it believes require this agency's advice.

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Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to make comment.

Yours sincerely



Professor Tarun Weeramanthri
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR GENERAL
PUBLIC HEALTH DIVISION

2nd July 2015