



Mr Vince Puccio and Mr Merv McDonald
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Vince *Merv*
Dear Mr ~~Puccio~~ and Mr ~~McDonald~~

ALCOA'S WAGERUP REFINERY – REQUEST FOR BUFFER

Thank you for your response of 6 July 2015 in response to my earlier correspondence dated 15 June 2015.

You have requested that the Department of Health (DOH) “research and revisit the issue once fully aware of the long history of this issue”.

Firstly, I am aware of the long-held differences in opinion between some members of the communities surrounding the Wagerup Refinery, senior Alcoa personnel and officers representing a number of Government agency stakeholders. A very small number of residents correspond with the DOH advising of a range of symptoms of poor health, which they attribute to emissions from the Refinery. These residents are advised by the DOH that they should refer these health issues to their selected medical consultant/specialist so that an individualised case management option can be established.

As you have confirmed to me on a number of occasions, a significant number of affected residents have chosen to relocate out of the area. Some chose to do this at their own volition, others chose to access Alcoa's buy-back plan implemented by the Carpenter Government. Either way, the numbers of affected residents appear to have substantially diminished, although I draw no comfort from this fact.

The DOH played no role in the relocation process, although I am aware that high level health and medical advice was provided to the Government for its consideration, prior to the formulation of the buy-back policy.


As an integral part of the proposed production increase (Wagerup 3), Alcoa was also required to implement a number of engineering upgrades at the Refinery – now completed. As a result, the Department of Environment Regulation (DER), which oversees and/or conducts monitoring of emissions from the Refinery, has not noted or

brought to the attention of DOH officers, any exceedance of individual compounds likely to give rise to ill-health.

I realise of course that you and/or your members are likely to hold a conflicting view; you have informed me of this on many occasions. However, the lack of evidence with results of intense air monitoring does not allow me to recommend to the Government or the Department of Planning, that it should consider any intensification of the existing 5km buffer zone.

I do not see in the foreseeable future that this position will alter, and the DER is aware of this position.

Yours sincerely



Professor Tarun Weeramanthri
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR GENERAL
PUBLIC HEALTH DIVISION

22nd September 2015