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To

firecleanup@dpc.wa.gov.au

CC

'Vince Puccio'

Apr 14 at 2:57 PM

Dear Team

Having been suffering a back injury earlier this year I unfortunately missed the opportunity to make comment to the Yarloop fire inquiry.

However, I note that the State Government still has not finalised its position of the future of Yarloop.

I would therefore like to draw the attention to particular findings of the

*Report 11 by the Standing Committee of the Legislative Council on Environment and Public Affairs "In Relation to the Alcoa Refinery at Wagerup" Inquiry of Oct 2004.*

*See pp 212-225.*

These relate to the particular meteorology pertaining at the nearby Wagerup Refinery in relation to the Yarloop townsite.

In brief this Parliamentary Inquiry found that this location is likely to be subject to katabatic wind effects.

These are caused by the proximity of the Darling Scarp.

This steep change in topography can cause particular local wind effects.

In winter mornings the result can be temperature inversions that trap the plume from the refinery under a layer of cold air rolling from the scarp.

This can cause pollution events.

Whilst on summer nights the result of this katabatic effect is strong down draughts of very fierce hot winds, again caused by the nearby cliffs over which hot air descends.

This could intensify night winds during a fire event, instead of reducing fire intensity after dark, as is normally the case.

Naturally this Parliamentary *Inquiry* did not consider fire events.

However, the implications of this topography means that Yarloop site is vulnerable to both refinery pollution and gale force night winds.

I note that that Alcoa has just recently requested an extension of its approvals for a potential significant expansion in refinery production levels for a further five years.

I submit that both the recent catastrophic fire and the pollution issues that have effected Yarloop for many years, plus the potential expansion of refinery emissions, *all* point to a precautionary conclusion that Yarloop town site should not be rebuilt in the same location.

If the alumina refinery were to be built today, it is unlikely that it would be allowed construction on the current site. We cannot relocate this infrastructure. Ironically the opportunity now presents to move the residents instead.

Dr. Chrissy Sharp  
MLC for the South West 1997-2005  
Chair of the Inquiry.