



Environmental Protection Authority

Bulletin No: 1006

Hon Cheryl Edwardes (Mrs) MLA
MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Dear Minister

Wagerup Alumina Refinery

Thank you for your letter of December 7, 2000 in relation to the proposed expansion of the Wagerup Alumina Refinery.

Your letter requested the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) to consider, pursuant to section 46(1) of the Environmental Protection Act, Condition 6-2 and Procedures 5 and 7 so as to bring into those paragraphs the refinery expansion to add to the current wording which covers the mining operations.

Currently the conditions provide for an annual production level of up to 3.3 million tonnes, although the plant is currently operating at 2.2 million tonnes per annum. Alcoa will be seeking to amend the Ministerial approval to increase the figure from 3.3 million tonnes to 3.65 million tonnes. However, before it would be appropriate for this change in the Ministerial Statement to be given consideration, it is necessary for the Company to undertake high level discussions with the residents whose properties are likely to be affected by any expansion of the refinery, specifically in relation to odour and noise.

There has been established a Mining and Management Programme Liaison Group under Procedure 5 of the Ministerial Statement as an avenue for discussion with local residents in relation to the impact on amenity as a result of the mining operation. It could be argued that the definition of mining includes an expansion in the production levels. However, it would be more appropriate to amend the Environmental Conditions to ensure that there is a specific reference to the refinery expansion. This would provide an impetus for the Company to consult with local residents on an on-going basis in relation to the impact of the refinery on the environmental factor of amenity. Discussions have been held between the Department of Environmental Protection, Department of Resources Development and Alcoa in relation to the proposed expansion

The Environmental Protection Authority considered your proposed modifications to the Environmental Condition 6 and Procedure 5 at its meeting on Friday, 8 December 2000. You have not proposed a change to Procedure 7, but it has been included because of the reference to this Procedure in Condition 6 and Procedure 5. The EPA agreed to recommend to you that the proposed changes be adopted with a slight modification which results in there being four points under Procedure 5(2) rather than the proposed three points. The reason for this is to ensure that there is clarity in what is being proposed. Accordingly, I recommend that you amend Statement 390 published on 11 August 1995 in relation to Wagerup Alumina Refinery so as to include the refinery expansion and odour in Condition 6 and Procedure 5.

Attached is the text of the proposed new Condition 6 and Procedure 5 with the additions being shown in italic for ease of reading.

Yours sincerely



Bernard Bowen
CHAIRMAN

12 December 2000

Attach

Modified Conditions and Procedures

Conditions

- 6 Community Consultation
- 6-1 The proponent shall consult with the affected local government authorities in the preparation of mining plans and report the results to the Mining and Management Programme Liaison Group.
- 6-2 The proponent shall consult with residents of private property whose amenity (dust, noise, vibration, visual, *odour*) or hydrology are likely to be affected by the mining operations *and any refinery expansion*, and report the results to the Mining and Management Programme Liaison Group. In the first instance the proponent shall consult with those residents within the predicted 35 dB(A) noise contour (worst case) for the mining operations *and any refinery expansion*.
- 6-3 In implementing conditions 6-1 and 6-2, the proponent shall apply best practice environmental management principles (see Procedure 7).

Procedures

- 5 Buffer distances and amenity provisions to manage the impacts on the local community from the impacts of *the mining operations and any refinery expansion*.
- (1) The proponent and the Mining Management Programme Liaison Group shall prepare and implement a plan to manage the impacts of the mining operations *and any refinery expansion* on the local community in consultation with the affected local government authorities.
- (2) In developing appropriate buffer distances and amenity provisions, the proponent and the Mining and Management Programme Liaison Group shall take into account any local agreements between the proponent and local property owners and issues that concern local property owners, including:
- 1 likely noise, vibration, dust and *odour* impacts on residents and property from the type of mining proposed *and any refinery expansion*.
 - 2 aesthetic and conservation values of the forest affected in relation to the properties;
 - 3 *amenity values of the land use affected by any refinery expansion;*
and

4 potential hydrological impacts on private properties *from the mining operations*.

(3) Best practice environmental management principles shall be applied (see Procedure 7).

7 Best Practice Environmental Management Principles

For the purposes of this statement, best practice environmental management principles to be employed by the proponent and the Mining and Management Programme Liaison Group shall include:

- (1) the development of an environmental policy and its transmittal to the Environmental Protection Authority to ensure its coverage of issues;
- (2) commitment to continuous improvement;
- (3) the setting of agreed environmental protection objectives;
- (4) commitment to manage those objectives;
- (5) the auditing of performance against performance indicators;
- (6) regular reporting to the Environmental Protection Authority;
- (7) a 5-yearly review; and
- (8) commitment to a quality assurance system.