

Port Hedland Dust Management Taskforce Report to Government

Public Submission

From: Name Withheld

Date: 16 October 2017

Document: Letter attached to email

Response to Recommendations 1-7 Dust Task Force

Recommendation 1

DISAGREE: The National Environmental Protection Measure is a 24 hour PM10 limit of 50ug/m³ with 5 exceedences per year applies to all residents of Australia. The citizens of Port Hedland deserve the same as elsewhere. The town of Port Hedland is over a century old and the mining industry is a relative newcomer and should not change the health requirements, or living enjoyment of its citizens and employees.

Recommendation 2:

DISAGREE: It is not acceptable to have industry self monitor and self report. It is vital that monitoring be conducted by independent bodies but paid for by industry, who acknowledge their responsibility as creators of this industrial pollution. The recent trial of live monitoring for 3 months was very useful and demonstrated to the citizens of Port Hedland the timing of exceedences and the positioning of the highest concentration of dust. There is ambient dust, but clearly industry contributes significantly.

Recommendation 3:

AGREE: 3.1 I agree that the Department of Water and Environment Regulation (DWER) should implement a coordinated risk-based review and risk based assessment, through a review of all port premises licenses under Part V Division 3 of the Environmental Protection Act 1986. I feel it is only through **applying the regulations to ALL industry members, in the same way, irrespective of the size of the industry**, and irrespective of the dependence of state and local government on the income from the industry, or the threat of that being removed. The health of the citizens in West Australia should be the same priority whether they live in Perth or Esperance, Geraldton or Port Hedland. The WA Health Department Risk Assessment very carefully considered and clearly predicted the rise in mortality and morbidity, increased emergency department presentations, and hospital admissions from dust levels and exceedences experienced in Port Hedland. The WA Health Department should be able to continue to study the health of residents according to exposure and duration.

AGREE: 3.5 I agree that the Department of Environment Regulation finalises and implements dust management guidelines for bulk handling port premises, outlining its expectations in relation to the assessment of dust impacts, dust control and monitoring requirements from these premises.

Recommendation 4:

AGREE: 4.1 Unacceptable noise levels should be assessed by the Department of Environment Regulation and assesses whether additional controls can be introduced.

AGREE 4.2 The Town of Port Hedland uses the Port Hedland Cumulative Noise Study to inform its land use planning for the West End of Port Hedland.

Recommendation 5:

DISAGREE: 5.1 and 5.2: A Control Area is proposed westwards of McGregor Street and prohibits new permanent residents. This is a beautiful area for residents to live in who have a sea view, and is handy to the town shops and amenities. If the health risk is so concerning, why is there not an effort to reduce, remediate, or eliminate the industrial risk as happened in other particular instances of industrial pollution in the ports of Esperance and Geraldton? In these instances **the onus was on industry** to remove the risk or process it in a way that it didn't harm residents or contaminate

other exports. In Esperance case of lead contamination at the Esperance residents were not asked to move their family residences or require a change the Esperance town planning designation around the Port. **The moving of the Port Hedland BHP stockpiles away from the town to Boodarie, the same as other miners in Port Hedland, and the covering of conveyor belts would solve the issue of excessive dust for Port Hedland town area.** However this to date has not been countenanced, as BHP is a powerful agency that does not want to be on the same 'level playing field' as its competitors. To date the health of the town residents and the mining employees, who are in even closer proximity to the dust, has not appeared to be a priority.

Recommendation 6:

AGREE: The Town of Port Hedland works with key stakeholders to identify and mitigate dust from non-industry sources.

Recommendation 7:

DISAGREE 7.1 and 7.2 The suggestion is that the Taskforce continues to operate and reports to the Minister of State Development. The Taskforce need not continue as it has completed its function. The future resides with **allowing the expertise and function of the various government departments to occur in the usual way, as in any other town in WA, and conduct their roles in implementing regulations consistent with the law, and oversee the independent monitoring of dust,** or conduct studies on the health of the residents. The purpose of continuing the Taskforce would seem to be political.