

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
Question on notice

Tuesday, 10 September 2013

273. Hon Robin Chapple to the Minister for the Leader of the House representing the Minister for State Development.

With respect to Alcoa in Australia, and its subsidiaries and associated companies, and their bauxite mining operations in Western Australia, I ask:

- (a) how many tenements are held by each company by type, number and hectare size;
- (b) how many hectares have been mined in each of the last five years;
- (c) how many hectares will be mined each year when the company expands to its full approved rate of production;
- (d) what is the total area mined to date;
- (e) how much of the total area mined required the clearing of native forest;
- (f) how many hectares have been rehabilitated to date;
- (g) how much of this area has been rehabilitated with jarrah forest species;
- (h) what is the current annual production of bauxite and alumina;
- (i) when the company expands to its full approved rate of production, what will be the annual production of bauxite and alumina;
- (j) how many hectares are currently used as Residue Disposal Areas;
- (k) what is the total area of closed Residue Disposal Areas;
- (l) what area of new Residue Disposal Areas will be required when the company expands to its full approved rate of production;
- (m) how much residue has been produced in each of the last five years;
- (n) what is the total amount of residue produced to date;
- (o) how much residue will be produced each year when the company expands to its full approved rate of production;
- (p) when do the company's mining leases expire;
- (q) when does the company anticipate completion of its approved expansion; and
- (r) will the Minister please table a map showing the mining leases, the area mined to date, and the area rehabilitated to date?

Answer

Department of State Development

(a) Mineral Lease 1SA (ML 1SA) is the only tenement held by Alcoa. ML 1SA was originally granted under the Alumina Refinery Agreement Act 1961, which is the responsibility of the Minister for State Development. ML 1SA covers 7,129 square kilometres.

(b) [see tabled paper no]

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(c) Alcoa's refining operations are currently producing at full capacity. The Wagerup Unit Three expansion remains on hold. This information is publicly available. See:
http://www.alcoa.com/australia/en/info_page/WAG_home.asp

On 5 August 2013, the Minister for Environment announced an amendment to Wagerup refinery's environmental licence to increase the annual production limit from 2.6 million tonnes to 2.65 million tonnes a year.

See the Minister's media statement at
<http://www.mediastatements.wa.gov.au/pages/StatementDetails.aspx?listName=StatementsBarnett&StatId=7627>

See the Alcoa press release:
http://www.alcoa.com/australia/en/news/releases/20130813_wageruplicence.asp

(d) Approximately 17,234 hectares has been mined to date. (This figure *excludes* infrastructure, haul roads, conveyors etc).

(e) Approximately 21,104 hectares. (This figure *includes* infrastructure, haul roads, conveyors etc).

(f) Approximately 17,356 hectares.

(g) Alcoa's rehabilitation process has been developed and continually improved for many decades.

Non-native eucalypt species were used up until 1988 in accordance with prescriptions agreed with State Government agencies. This was due to the concern that the native forest dominant (Jarrah) would be killed by dieback caused by a tropical fungus (*Phytophthora cinnamomi*) if it was established in rehabilitated areas.

Research showed that Jarrah survived well even in rehabilitated areas that were known to contain the fungus. As a result, only native jarrah forest species have been used in rehabilitation since 1988.

More information is available at:
http://www.alcoa.com/australia/en/info_page/mining_rehab.asp

(h) Bauxite – approximately 34 million tonnes per annum.
Alumina – approximately 9 million tonnes per annum.

(i) Alcoa of Australia's refining operations are currently producing at full capacity. The Wagerup Unit Three expansion remains on hold. See:
http://www.alcoa.com/australia/en/info_page/WAG_home.asp

(j) Alcoa residue planning is based on the following required active drying areas for each location:

Kwinana: 148 ha

Pinjarra: 337 ha

Wagerup: 194 ha

Alcoa's residue area requirements are outlined in Long Term Residue Management Strategy (LTRMS) documents for each location. These are published on Alcoa's website at:

http://www.alcoa.com/australia/en/info_page/Residue_Management_Links.asp

(k) Total of 270 hectares which includes full closure of Areas A,B & C at Kwinana and embankment slopes on permanent external walls.

This information is made available in Long Term Residue Management Strategy (LTRMS) documents for each location. These are published on Alcoa's website at:

http://www.alcoa.com/australia/en/info_page/Residue_Management_Links.asp

(l) Alcoa of Australia's refining operations are currently producing at full capacity. The Wagerup Unit Three expansion remains on hold. See:

http://www.alcoa.com/australia/en/info_page/WAG_home.asp

(m) Residue produced between 2008 and 2012: (in tonnes)

2012 : 18,094,344

2011 : 18,268,681

2010 : 18,190,662

2009 : 17,689,287

2008 : 17,061,134

(n) As at December 2012, the following amounts of residue produced by each of Alcoa's refineries were:

Kwinana: 152,501,818 tonnes

Pinjarra: 220,715,233 tonnes

Wagerup: 97,988,668 tonnes

(o) Alcoa of Australia's refining operations are currently producing at full capacity. The Wagerup Unit Three expansion remains on hold. See:

http://www.alcoa.com/australia/en/info_page/WAG_home.asp

(p) ML 1SA currently expires in 2045 but provision exists in the Alumina Refinery Agreement Act 1961 for Alcoa to apply for a further mineral lease. This information is publicly available at:

http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/wa/consol_act/araa1961256/

(q) Alcoa's Wagerup Unit Three expansion remains on hold. See:

http://www.alcoa.com/australia/en/info_page/WAG_home.asp

(r) [see tabled paper no]

Total area mined over the last five years :

| YEAR | HUNTLY | WILLOW DALE | TOTAL |
|--------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| | Area mined (ha) | Area mined (ha) | Area mined (ha) |
| 2008 | 309.6 | 131.3 | 440.9 |
| 2009 | 340.4 | 142.8 | 483.2 |
| 2010 | 338.5 | 125.5 | 464.1 |
| 2011 | 322.2 | 120.5 | 442.8 |
| 2012 | 380.4 | 127.2 | 507.6 |
| Total | 1691.2 | 647.4 | 2338.6 |



