

TO: STANDING COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

PETITION NO. 077 – PILBARA IMPROVEMENT LEVY

20 SEPTEMBER 2018

In response to your letter of 22 August 2018 (Your Ref: A707381), the Petitioners submit the following information on the issues that are the subject of the petition.

The area of the town of Port Hedland west of Taplin Street is known as the West End. The West End has been inundated with dust from iron ore transport, unloading, stockpiling and ship-loading for over 50 years since operations commenced in the late 1960s. The two stockpile areas closest to the West End are operated by BHP Billiton Iron Ore Ltd ('**BHP**') at Nelson Point and Finucane Island. Dust also comes from feed conveyors and loading of ships at 19 berths around the harbor. Of these 19 berths, four are operated by the Pilbara Ports Authority ('**PPA**'), eight by BHP, five by Fortescue Metals Group Ltd ('**FMG**') and two by Roy Hill Group ('**RH**'). Two more berths are currently under construction by PPA.

Successive West Australian State governments have failed to intervene to prevent the dust pollution in that time. In 2009, the Environmental Protection Authority ('**EPA**') raised concerns about the possible impact of dust on the health of Port Hedland residents.

In response, the Western Australian Government established the Port Hedland Dust Management Taskforce ('**Taskforce**') to co-ordinate and plan for dust management in the town. The Taskforce produced the *Port Hedland Air Quality and Noise Management Plan (2010)*, which included interim measures to limit exposure to dust by groups considered most at risk of health effects. The 2010 Taskforce Plan included recommendations for further work on identifying dust levels and sources across Port Hedland and on the health effects of the types of dust found in Port Hedland. The Port Hedland Industries Council established an air quality monitoring network in the Town, and the Department of Health conducted a Health Risk Assessment, which was published in February 2016 (*Port Hedland Air Quality Health Risk Assessment for Particulate Matter*).

The dust was found to be a significant health risk by the WA Department of Health in their report *Port Hedland Air Quality Health Risk Assessment for Particulate Matter. Environmental Health Directorate. January 2016* ("HRA"). Their report found: "*There is sufficient evidence of potential impacts on human health from dust, specifically PM₁₀ in the Toxikos HRA to warrant dust management controls and strategic and landuse planning to reduce community exposure to dust.*"

- *The majority of the public health burden of dust in Port Hedland is associated with PM₁₀ concentrations over 70 µg/m³. The burden is based on certain health outcomes that show an increase in all-cause mortality and an increase in hospitalisation for respiratory conditions. The areas affected are closest to the Port.*
- *The number of affected individuals is very low but only because the population is small. If the population was larger or is allowed to become larger, the health outcomes would be more readily discernible and demanding of more immediate regulatory control.*

• *A legacy of the rapid growth of Port Hedland is the close proximity of residential areas to commercial operations at Nelson Point and the port. This means that fugitive dust from port and commercial operations at Nelson Point and Finucane Island disperses over residential areas... There is sufficient evidence based on the pattern of exceedances that areas nearest the harbour at Nelson Point are unlikely to meet the interim guideline [70 µg/m³].... Exposure risk in these areas could be managed through land-use planning to limit exposure and population growth in Port Hedland.*

In August 2016, the Taskforce submitted a Report to Government with further recommendations for managing dust in Port Hedland. The main recommendations are:

- *"Exporters should continue to be required to reduce the dust emissions arising from port activities, and should be subject to more stringent risk-based regulation aimed at reducing the number of days when standards are exceeded.*
- *A **Special Control Area** should apply over the West End of Port Hedland, aimed at preventing further residential population growth west of Taplin Street, and limiting sensitive uses between Taplin and McGregor Streets.*
- *The State Government and the Town of Port Hedland should work with the community to improve Port Hedland's amenity..."*

The **Special Control Area** as stated above is specifically "*aimed at preventing further residential population growth west of Taplin Street*". This destroys the value of real estate properties, strangles expansion & development of the town, and, MOST IMPORTANTLY, **fails to solve the root cause**, which is dust pollution from the port and stockpile areas.

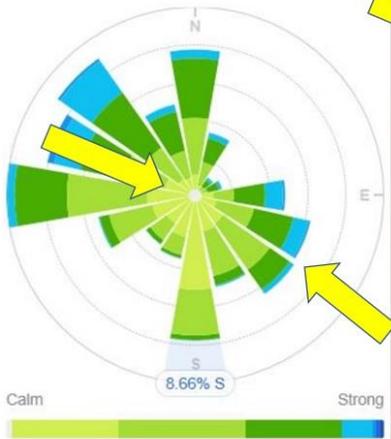
Why the WA State Government has decided to allow pollution to continue when it has clearly been shown to be a population health risk and the cause of increased mortality, and simply limit the population in the area affected by the pollution, is a mystery.

The Petitioners request for a \$1 per tonne levy ('Levy') on mined products exported from the port collects recompense to residents from all the polluters regardless of their relative proportion of pollution, as all the above-named berth operators contribute to the problem. The port exports some 500 million tonnes of ore per year, so the Levy would generate \$500 million per year into a Port Hedland Development Fund, to allow the town to expand without requesting funding from the government.

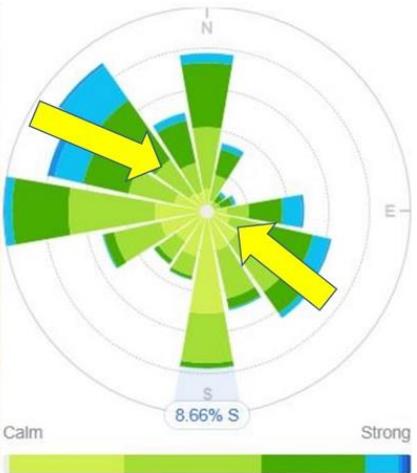
The Levy is proposed to be divided into four funds, with 25% going equally to the **Traditional Owners Fund** (funding indigenous self-help projects), the **Pilbara Wealth Fund** (funding new industry development), **Port Hedland Redevelopment Fund** (funding redevelopment of the West End and Port Hedland port area) and the **Economic Fund** (providing subsidies to residents to offset high living costs, such as subsidizing council rates, electricity costs, medical travel and freight).

The Petitioners trust that this is sufficient information to assist the preliminary investigation.

Wind rose diagram for 5 years to 2017 (from Page 40 of BHP Environmental Licence L4513/1969/18). Dominant wind directions blow dust over West End from Finucane Island Nelson Point

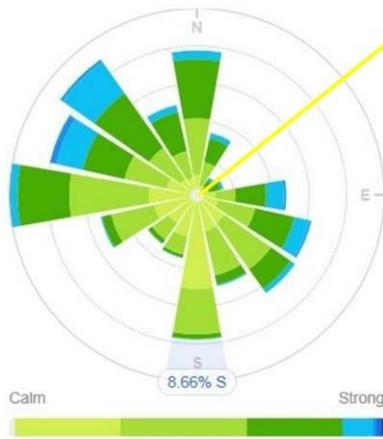


Wind rose diagram for 5 years to 2017 (from Page 40 of BHP Environmental Licence L4513/1969/18). Dominant wind directions blow dust over West End from Finucane Island Nelson Point



Wind rose diagram for 5 years to 2017
(from Page 40 of BHP Environmental
Licence L4513/1969/18).

This shows that placing the dust
monitor at Taplin St ensures it receives
the absolute minimum amount of dust
each year



END