

Hon Matthew Swinbourn MLC
Chairman
Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs

3rd January 2018

Dear Mr Swinbourn

Re: Petition No.44 – Proposed nickel sulphate plant in Esperance

This petition has not been taken to the Ombudsman

Thank you for your letter date the 13th December 2017. As Principal Petitioner, I make this submission on behalf of the concerned residents of Esperance, which are opposed to the construction and operation by Alpha Fine Chemicals (AFC) of the nickel sulphate plant on Lot 1 Myrup Road, Myrup (the site), in the Shire of Esperance.

The petition received 819 signatures in the short period of ten days. The amount of signatures is reflective of the high level of concern from the residents of Esperance regarding the hazards from the nickel sulphate plant.

Background Information

Alpha Fine Chemicals, purchased Lot 1 Myrup Road in July 2017. The site is not a suitable location for a nickel sulphate plant. The site is situated in an environmentally fragile area and the operation of the plant poses significant environmental and human health threats. Any accidents or failures in the operation of the plant risk the health and safety of the people, water sources and the environment and ecology of Esperance.

These concerns were reiterated to the AFC representatives repeatedly at the community consultation meetings held on the 20th and 21st November 2017.

The concerns surrounding the proposal were voiced by a large group of concerned residents, business owners, farmers/landholders and environmental specialists. The concerns raised focused on the fragile environmental nature of the site, its proximity to the RAMSAR Lake Warden Wetlands, the risk to the resident's potable water supply and the hazardous nature of the end product, nickel sulphate.

It was of great concern to the people at the meetings, that the AFC representatives were not aware of the unsuitability of the site and the environmental concerns, such as its close proximity to the RAMSAR wetlands, the underground water supply and residential dwellings.

It is evident that the site was chosen and purchased by AFC without any due diligence or research into the environmental impact that the nickel sulphate plant would have in that location.

Concerns regarding the Nickel Sulphate Plant

(a) RAMSAR Wetlands and Water Catchment Proximity

- The site is located 3.5 km from the RAMSAR listed Lake Warden Wetland system. Any contamination of the ground water on the site, will run directly into the system.
- The site is situated on top of a Priority 2 Zone water catchment system and is located immediately adjacent to a Priority 1 Zone. Drainage from the site flows into a tributary of the Lake Warden wetland system and ultimately into the Lake Warden itself.

(b) Location and Environmental Impact

- The site is located within 2km north/west of residential properties on Melijinup Road
- The site is situated on a sandy soil type which type makes the site unsuitable as the soil is very porous to water. Any contamination from the plant, or contamination caused from the leaking of the evaporation ponds, would flow through this soil type easily and into the underground water supply and the RAMSAR wetlands. A site with a clay soil structure would make it easier to contain any contamination.
- The site is 9.5km from the town centre of Esperance. The regular wind direction would see any dust or airborne contamination being blown in the direction of the town site and the majority of Esperance's residential dwellings, schools and sporting complexes.
- The site entrance is located on Myrup Rd. The intersection of Myrup Road with the Norseman Hwy is a dangerous intersection, with low visibility, a poor road surface and a tight turning corner. This road is not

