



Premier of Western Australia

Our Reference: 59-228391

Hon Matthew Swinbourn MLC
Chairman
Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs
Parliament House
4 Harvest Terrace
WEST PERTH WA 6005
env@parliament.wa.gov.au

Dear Mr  Swinbourn

I refer to your Standing Committee's letter of 10 November 2020 regarding Petition No. 168 – Pinjarra Alumina Refinery that was sent to the Minister for Mines and Petroleum and has been referred to me as the responsible Minister.

Alcoa of Australia Limited (Alcoa) has been operating as an integrated bauxite miner and alumina producer in Western Australia since 1963. Its Western Australian operations are covered under three State Agreements – *Alumina Refinery Agreement Act 1961*, *Alumina Refinery (Pinjarra) Agreement Act 1969*; and *Alumina Refinery (Wagerup) Agreement and Acts Amendment Act 1978*.

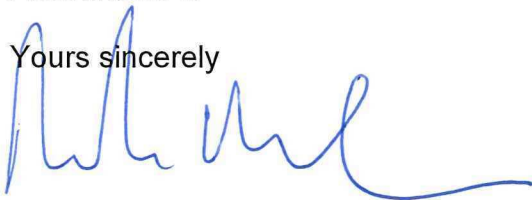
The company has two bauxite mines – Huntly and Willowdale – and three alumina refineries – Kwinana, Pinjarra and Wagerup. Alcoa's Western Australian operations directly employ approximately 3800 people. In 2019, Alcoa invested nearly \$1.5 billion with 842 Western Australian suppliers.

Alcoa's two mines produce approximately 37 million dry tonnes per annum (mtpa) of bauxite and the three refineries produce around 45 per cent of Australia's alumina. The Pinjarra refinery currently produces around 4.7 mtpa of alumina and has an existing approval to produce up to 5 mtpa.

I note in your letter that the Petition was recently tabled in the Legislative Council and the Committee is undertaking preliminary inquiries into the Petition and has requested my comments.

Accordingly, to assist the Committee, I have provided background information in Attachment 1.

Yours sincerely



Mark McGowan MLA
PREMIER; MINISTER FOR STATE DEVELOPMENT, JOBS & TRADE

Att Enc

30 NOV 2020

Background Information

- Alcoa has referred to the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) its Pinjarra Alumina Refinery Revised Proposal (Proposal) (<https://www.alcoa.com/australia/en/sustainability/pinjarra-huntly-environmental-assessment/our-proposal>) to provide for:
 - an increase in alumina production at the Pinjarra alumina refinery (the refinery) by 5 per cent from 5.0 million tonnes per annum (mtpa) to 5.25mtpa
 - a transition of the Huntly bauxite mine (Huntly mine) into the Myara North and Holyoake regions
 - the mining of bauxite within its Mining Lease 1SA (ML 1SA) to supply up to 2.5mtpa for export from the Huntly mine.
- The Proposal requires additional clearing of approximately 6700 hectares (ha) of native vegetation for mining and related purposes and 10 ha of clearing near the refinery.
- The refinery operates in accordance with the *Alumina Refinery (Pinjarra) Agreement Act 1969* and the Huntly mine operates within ML 1SA, established under the *Alumina Refinery Agreement Act 1961*, and also provides bauxite for the Kwinana refinery.
- The Proposal is being assessed under Part IV of the *WA Environmental Protection Act 1986* (<https://www.epa.wa.gov.au/proposals/pinjarra-alumina-refinery-revised-proposal>) and also under the Australian Government's *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC), Referral No. 2020/8743 at <http://epbcnotices.environment.gov.au/referralslist/>. The Australian Government's assessment process is being conducted in parallel.
- Alcoa requested and the EPA determined that the Proposal will be subject to a Public Environmental Review (PER), the highest level of assessment. It is understood that approximately 1700 public submissions mainly relating to ecotourism were received in total.
- The EPA will assess the potential environmental impacts of a 10-year plan for the Huntly mine from 2025-2035 that will take in areas commonly referred to as Myara North (south east of Jarrahdale) and Holyoake (approximately 5 kilometres from Dwellingup).
- Alcoa has advised that to date, less than 4 per cent of the jarrah forest within ML 1SA has been mined and that it has completed rehabilitation of 77 per cent of the areas it has mined.
- Alcoa is currently developing its Environmental Scoping Document in conjunction with the State and the Australian Government. The required studies will be finalised around mid-2021.
- The PER process is expected to take approximately two and a half years to complete. It will include a comprehensive public consultation stage to enable submissions to be made by all stakeholders and considered as part of the overall assessment process.
- The PER process is the appropriate mechanism for community consultation regarding the environmental acceptability of the Proposal.

It is suggested that the petitioners participate in the public consultation process stage of the PER process. Additional information is available at – www.epa.wa.gov.au.