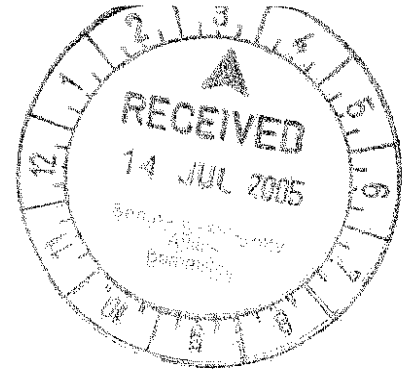


Sent: Saturday, 9 July 2005 3:04 PM  
Attach: Health Statement.jpg; health State 2.jpg  
Subject: Senate Community Affairs Reference Committee  
The Secretary.  
Senate Community Affairs References Committee.  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT. 2600



Edward Kittel  
Chairman  
Whyalla Red Dust Action Group Inc.  
43 Whitehead Street  
Whyalla SA 5600

Dear Secretary,

I wish to make submissions to the Senate Inquiry investigation into toxic dust exposure.

I represent the dust affected community of East Whyalla in my role as Chairman of the Whyalla Red Dust Action Group Inc.

I will endeavour to provide a brief background in relation to a very serious dust pollution problem which prevails at East Whyalla causing the community to be exposed to high levels of iron ore dust consisting of PM10 and smaller dust particles.

The East Whyalla Community is located close to the Onesteel Steelworks, and in particular to the Onesteel Pellet Plant which processes iron ore.

The Pellet Plant process generates much fine iron ore dust which is carried by specific wind directions onto the populated areas of East Whyalla.  
The Pellet Plant was built and Commissioned in 1968 long after most houses in the affected area, and despite community protest.

The dust problem has prevailed since 1968 and has progressively worsened over the years with 2003 having official EPA dust recordings of "worst ever", and 2004 recording "equal to worst ever".

The fine red dust which is emitted from the Pellet Plant seriously contaminates approximately 1000 homes and it it seriously cotaminates public facilities, Schools, Central Business District, and Sporting Complexes.

The dust affects all aspects of normal daily lifestyle and according to the South Australian EPA and DoH and I quote **"They consider that it is possible for some people in the exposed population to experience adverse health effects as a result of exposure to Onesteel's dust emissions"**----end of quote.

Since September 2004 until June 2005 the Environment Protection Authority has measured

9/07/05

**24 exceedences** of the National Environment Protection Council and NEPM Standard/ Target of 50 micrograms PM10 per cubic metre at it's Walls Street TEOM at East Whyalla.-----The Standard / Target calls for no more than **five exceedences** in one year.

**The TEOM is situated just 25 metres from the Town Primary School, and approximately 100 metres from the Saint Theresa's Primary School.-----The Town Primary School is physically liberally coated with red iron ore dust.**

In July 2003 the South Australian Environment Protection Authority and the Dept. of Human Services issued a joint public statement which advised the exposed community that it may suffer adverse health effects from exposure to Onesteel's dust-----This advice has been almost totally ignored by the South Australian Government Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Health . I attach a copy of the July 2003 document.----- Onesteel refutes the health advice/ statement in the attached document.

I am very concerned that this community is, and has, historically been heavily exposed to PM10 and smaller dust particles which have been recorded as massive exceedences of the NEPM Target.

Even more alarming is the fact that the children attending the Town Primary School are severely exposed to PM10 and smaller particulate matter.

The South Australian Premier has issued Onesteel with an Indenture which has not yet passed through Parliament ,which we fear will allow Onesteel to continue for some years to expose the dust affected community to dust levels like those recorded that have already exceeded the **NEPM target 24 times in 9 months.**

Accordingly, I respectfully appeal to your committee to mount a robust and full investigation into this matter, and I ask your committee to seek answers to the following questions:

1. Should the EPA -DoH health statement be taken seriously by all stakeholders.
2. Should those entrusted with a Duty of Care in respect to managing this issue be made to more actively address this issue.?
3. Is it safe from a health harm point of view to continue to expose the children at the Whyalla Town Primary School to the officially recorded high levels of PM10.?
4. Is it safe from a health harm point of view for the East Whyalla community to continue to be exposed to the high officially recorded levels of PM10?

Yours Sincerely

Edward Kittel  
Chair / Spokesperson  
Whyalla Red Dust Action Group Inc



*PM10 = 10 Millionths of a metre*

**ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION  
AUTHORITY**

**MEDIA RELEASE**

09/07/2003

*9/7/2003*

**EPA Licence Condition to Regulate Onesteel Dust Emissions**

The Environment Protection Authority has reviewed its options for managing Onesteel's dust emissions.

Subject to normal regulatory appeals, the EPA will regulate dust emissions from the Onesteel Whyalla site by imposing a condition of licence.

The licence condition will stipulate that dust measured at a monitoring station in the Walls Street council car park should not exceed the national standard.

The National Environment Protection Council's national standard is 50 micrograms PM10 per cubic metre (measured over 24 hours) not to be exceeded by more than five times a year.

EPA Chief Executive Dr Paul Vogel said Onesteel has agreed to submit a report to the EPA by October 2 this year outlining how it will manage its operations to ensure that the national standard is achieved at the Walls Street monitoring site by 2008.

"Based on Onesteel's report the EPA may impose additional conditions of licence that require an incremental reduction in dust measured at the Walls Street site, through performance based improvements at the steelworks," Dr Vogel said.

The EPA expects that as a result of Onesteel ultimately achieving the national standard the amenity of the affected area will also improve.

Due to concerns regarding the potential health implications of fine dust exposure adjacent to the Onesteel Pellet Plant, the EPA requested Onesteel to undertake a health risk study in 2002.

A steering committee was formed to oversee the study, comprising representatives from the EPA, Department of Human Services (DHS), Adelaide University, and Whyalla City Council, Onesteel and their consultants.

The study has now been completed.

The EPA and DHS disagree with conclusions in a report drawn from the study by Onesteel's consultants.

more



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Terry Clark  
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A recent Onesteel media release stated that the health study concluded that it is unlikely that PM10 is adversely affecting community health in Whyalla.

This is not the opinion of the EPA and DHS. They consider that it is possible for some people in the exposed population to experience adverse health effects as a result of exposure to Onesteel's dust emissions.

The Environment Protection Authority and the Department of Human Services have developed the following joint statement in relation to dust emissions from Onesteel's Whyalla plant.

A substantial amount of international research shows that increases in respirable particulate matter below 10 millionths of a metre in diameter in ambient air (PM10) can cause adverse health effects.

The National Environment Protection Council has established a national standard of 50 micrograms PM10 per cubic metre (measured over 24 hours), not to be exceeded by more than five times a year. This standard is intended to protect the health of the vast majority of Australians.

Air quality monitoring results collected adjacent to the Onesteel plant in Whyalla indicated that this standard has been exceeded a number of times.

It is possible that levels of PM10 above the standard may impact on the health of people in the exposed community. However, an accurate and robust assessment of any health risk requires further investigation.

A strategy is being developed to work with Onesteel towards achieving the nationally agreed level of protection for residents adjacent to the Onesteel Pellet Plant, to provide a better assessment of any health risk, and to identify residents whose health might be adversely affected by the dust emissions.



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