



The Honourable Lindy Nelson-Carr MP
Member for Mundingburra



**Queensland
Government**

7 AUG 2007

**Minister for Environment
and Multiculturalism**

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letter dated 10 July 2007 relating to Petition No. 812-07 concerning the location of an alumina refinery waste disposal site at Woodstock.

This petition is in response to the current negotiations now underway between CHALCO (Aluminum Corporation of China) and the State, for the development of the Aurukun bauxite project. The petitioners have advised of their opposition to the establishment of any red mud disposal site at Woodstock.

The proposed project is being coordinated by the Department of Infrastructure. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has been consulted and will continue to provide advice regarding environmental impacts; however, the ultimate location of the site will be approved by the Department of Infrastructure after consideration of economic and environmental reports.

CHALCO has been awarded Preferred Developer status and, in May 2007, the company entered into an Indigenous Land Use Agreement with the Wik and Wik Way peoples and the Arukun Shire Council for the project. The Agreement will have a particular focus on the preservation of the cultural heritage of the Wik and Wik Way peoples, including a plan for the sustainable development of the Aurukun region.

The next stage is to conduct a feasibility study on the mine and refinery over a two year period. The ultimate project commitment by CHALCO will be subject to the satisfactory completion of the study.

I understand that CHALCO is expected to determine the preferred site for a \$2.2 billion alumina refinery during the early part of the feasibility study. Gladstone, Bowen and Townsville have each been identified as potential sites and negotiations are continuing between CHALCO and the State. No decision has been reached to date regarding the location for the refinery or the associated red mud disposal site.

In February 2007, the EPA met with CHALCO representatives to discuss the EPA's requirements for the project. When a location is chosen for construction of the refinery, an Environmental Impact Study will be undertaken in accordance with the *State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971*. The EPA will recommend conditions to ensure that red mud waste and other emissions are appropriately managed to protect the community and the environment.

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The Queensland Government is strongly committed to ensuring that the project meets world's best practice in managing all environmental impacts.

I thank the petitioners for their interest in this issue and for bringing their concerns to my attention.

Yours sincerely

~~Lindy Nelson~~
Minister for Environment and Multiculturalism