



Weston Aluminium Pty Ltd
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21 June 2012

Ms Emma Barnet
Environmental Planning Officer
Major Projects Assessment
NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure
GPO Box 39 Sydney NSW 2001

Re: Proposed Modification to Development Consent (DA-86-04-01-MOD 7 and 10397 of 1995-MOD 5) - Response to Public Exhibition Submissions

I refer to the various submissions received by the NSW Department of Planning & Infrastructure during (and following) the Public Exhibition period in relation to the above project. Submissions received are referred to herein as follows:

- **Submission 1:** Department of Primary Industries – Crown Lands; dated 1 June 2012
- **Submission 2:** Tomago Aluminium Company Pty Limited; dated 7 June 2012
- **Submission 3:** Hydro Aluminium Kurri Kurri Pty Limited; dated 8 June 2012
- **Submission 4:** Col Maybury of 21 Brooks St Kurri Kurri; dated 11 June 2012
- **Submission 5:** NSW EPA; received 12 June 2012
- **Submission 6:** Cessnock City Council; dated 21 June 2012

Where relevant and appropriate, we have provided our considered response and comment.

Should you require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned on 4936 2166.

Yours sincerely,

Weston Aluminium Pty Ltd

Christopher McClung
Plant Manager

Submission 1

Weston Aluminium acknowledges the Department's determination of negligible impact on the easterly adjoining Crown land (public pound). Weston Aluminium is happy to consider, and respond to, any associated comments that may be made by the current property trustee, Cessnock City Council.

Submission 2

Weston Aluminium acknowledges and appreciates the ongoing support of Tomago Aluminium. Weston Aluminium personnel are acutely aware of the need to develop local solutions for SPL management in Australia, and thereby mitigate the need for onsite storages and reliance upon overseas treatment. Existing efforts are environmentally and commercially unsustainable. Weston Aluminium will continue to work closely with Tomago Aluminium to foster viable and sustainable reuse markets.

Submission 3

Weston Aluminium acknowledges and appreciates the ongoing support of Hydro Aluminium. In the context of recent smelter curtailments and announcement of indefinite operational mothballing beyond November 2012, Weston Aluminium's confirmed treatment viability, availability and sustainability of 2nd cut SPL material treatment and reuse is of considerable and timely importance. Weston Aluminium will continue to work closely with Hydro Aluminium to foster viable and sustainable reuse markets for the existing SPL stockpiled on site.

Submission 4

Weston Aluminium does not accept the unfounded claims made by Mr Maybury.

Weston Aluminium has maintained a history of strong environmental regulatory compliance, and due to our location relative to sensitive receptors, and our establishment long after that of other local industrial operations, we operate within the most stringent regulatory requirements for our sector. We are proud of this performance, and are committed to ongoing compliance with existing emission limits and investment in continuous improvement to further differentiate ourselves from our competitors as a leader in the marketplace.

Weston Aluminium personnel have extensive experience with the transport, handling, storage and processing of aluminium smelting by-products. Such by-products have an identical Dangerous Goods classification to that of SPL, and hence, existing practices and facilities have been designed to appropriately manage these materials in a safe and environmentally-responsible manner. We have demonstrated the integrity of our management strategies and operational protocols via recent hygiene monitoring (performed during SPL Trial processing) and Independent Environmental and Hazard Audits, thereby ensuring the safety, health and wellbeing of both employee personnel and neighbouring community residents. Weston Aluminium is committed to ongoing compliance with standard industry practice and regulatory requirements.

Whilst Weston Aluminium is not in a position to comment on the Hydro Aluminium smelter's SPL storage and management strategies, it is noted that on-site storage is considered by the industry and regulatory authorities to be unsustainable. Weston Aluminium's proposal for treatment and reuse will eliminate the storage and stockpiling of SPL, and will add value to many industrial activities.

Submission 5

Air Quality

On the behalf of Weston Aluminium, AECOM have provided relevant air dispersion modeling results in relation to predicted fluoride emissions (refer **Attachment 1**). Whilst all guideline criteria are satisfied, it is emphasized that the air dispersion modeling assessment was prepared using historical ambient fluoride concentrations as baseline (background) conditions, which reflect (dominant source) fluoride emissions associated with full-scale production of the neighbouring Hydro Aluminium Kurri Kurri smelter (i.e. 180,000 tonnes/annum metal output). This approach was adopted in the absence of ambient fluoride monitoring data reflecting current and future air shed quality (in response to Hydro Aluminium operational curtailment). Accordingly, this assessment is overly conservative. This overly conservative assessment design was discussed throughout AECOM's Environmental Assessment. Hence, it is stressed that Weston Aluminium's contribution to fluoride loads in the local and regional environment are negligible, and that relevant ground-level concentration criteria are not expected to be exceeded in the context of Hydro Aluminium's pending closure.

With regard to recommended conditions of approval (Attachment A of EPA's submission; 'Other Limits'), we note that annual processing of second cut spent potlining and aluminium dross is limited to no more than 25,000 and 15,000 tonnes respectively. As defined in the Environmental Assessment, Weston Aluminium is seeking to maintain the current processing scale of 40,000 tonnes per annum, as a combination of second cut spent potlining and aluminium dross. Accordingly, it is requested that conditions of approval reflect this proposed scale of activity as a combination totaling 40,000 tonnes per annum. As discussed by phone with Karen Marler (13 June 2012), the air emissions performance associated with SPL processing is demonstrably better than that associated with aluminium dross processing, and hence, Weston Aluminium is confident that compliance with existing air emission concentration and load limits can be maintained on an ongoing basis, regardless of input combination.

Weston Aluminium accepts the proposed cyanide concentration limit of 0.5mg/m^3 for Stack 1 (Point 1) at monitoring Special Frequency 1, as defined in Attachment A of EPA's submission.

Environmentally Hazardous Chemicals Act

Weston Aluminium will make an application to the NSW EPA for a licence under the *Environmentally Hazardous Chemicals Act* (1985) for the storage and processing of 2nd cut SPL in accordance with requirements of the *chemical control order in relation to aluminium smelter wastes containing fluoride and/or cyanide* (1986).

Submission 6

Weston Aluminium acknowledges the Cessnock City Council's response and nil objection to the proposed modification.

ATTACHMENT 1