



PCU038154

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SSD-4986, submission in regards to proposed ammonium nitrate plant on Kooragang Island

I hereby want to put forward my strongest objections to the proposed Incitec Pivot's ammonium nitrate plant on Kooragang Island.

The main reason for my objections is the devastating effect an explosion at the plant would have on the City of Newcastle. The total amount of ammonium nitrate, which is proposed to be stored at the plant, is 12,500 tons and, together with the 9,000 tons stored at the Orica plant, the amount of explosive power is equal to the Hiroshima bomb. If all this went off, Newcastle would disappear from the map. You only have to check the consequences of the Toulouse explosion or the Texas City disaster, the worst industrial accident in US history. In Toulouse, the amount of ammonium nitrate was 300 tons and in Texas City the amount was 2,300 tons. I urge you to read about these events.

The company, in its hazard analysis, has kept some documents outside the public domain:

- Appendix C, Hazard identification
- Appendix D, Consequence analysis
- Appendix E, Frequency analysis
- Appendix F, Risk analysis

Without access to these documents, the hazard analysis cannot be fully assessed and my conclusion is that the company wants to keep this information secret to prevent the public to make informed judgement about the risks involved with the plant.

Ammonium nitrate is the explosive of choice for terrorist all over the world, even in highly developed countries (Oklahoma City, Oslo). It is really very easy to turn this substance into a bomb and there is no way the company can guarantee a 100% security at its plant.

Furthermore, ammonium nitrate can also become unstable if polluted or in case of a fire, with many explosions as a consequence.

The company talks about storing the ammonium nitrate in piles of 500 ton each and makes the assumption that if one of the 500 ton piles explodes, it won't affect the others. However, in the Texas City disaster, the initial explosion caused a nearby ship 200 metres away to catch fire and later explode.

From what was said in a public meeting in Stockton on 19 September, it is apparent that only the closest suburbs to the proposed plant, Stockton and Mayfield, have received any information of Incitec Pivot's plans. As an explosion would affect the whole of Newcastle, it is my view that the company's public consultation has been false and deceptive.

It all comes down to risk management. In our daily life, we accept certain risks, for example: I take the car to work, I fly to see my relatives in Europe, I have participated in the Stockton – Newcastle swim etc. These are risks I have to take to live. However, there is no reason I and all other residents of Newcastle should be exposed to the introduced risks that this plant will generate. There are other locations for it, away from major population centres. And, for that matter, the Orica plant should also be relocated.

So, please, knock this thing on its head, have it relocated to a safe place.



Olof Scholin