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Submission to project SSD 14_6666 - Former Hydro Aluminium Smelter, Kurri Kurri - Demolition and Remediation

The Australian Workers' Union – New South Wales Branch (**AWU**) is a branch of The Australian Workers' Union, an organisation registered under the Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act 2009.

The Australian Workers' Union has approximately 120,000 members throughout Australia and has coverage of a wide range of industries including: gas, steel, aluminium, glass, civil construction, metalliferous mining, oil refining, agricultural, aviation, cement and concrete products, nurseries, alpine resorts, asphalt, wine, aquaculture, seafood processing, sugar, quarrying, pharmaceutical, hair and beauty and laundry workers.

A significant proportion of our members within the Hunter region have been, and continue to be, employed in the aluminium industry. The AWU was the primary trade union at the Hydro Aluminium smelter in Kurri Kurri. The AWU also represents its members that work in the recycling of aluminium smelting waste.

The AWU always champions jobs and job opportunities for the region. Broadly, the AWU supports the development of the former smelter as an industrial park. However the AWU is of the strong view that any approval **must** clearly deal with a proper process for the recycling of spent pot lining (**SPL**) in the manner consistent with that outlined below.

Recycling of SPL

We are concerned by the proposal to carve out the recycling of SPL from the project approval.

An imperative part of the project is that all recyclable SPL that is currently present at the site is recycled. It should also be clearly expressed that *recyclable SPL* means *all SPL that is not in the existing capped stockpile*.

In order to properly consider the application and to ensure that all recyclable SPL is recycled, the exact amount of recyclable SPL that currently exists at the site must be known.

At 1.2 of the EIS, Hydro refers to the 31 August 2015 notification to the Department of Planning and Environment that the SPL would be transported to an off-site facility for recycling. This commitment is welcomed and of utmost importance to the AWU and the broader community. However, as we understand it, no SPL has yet been transported to a licensed recycling facility for recycling. Indeed clause 1.2 indicates that Hydro's plans for the recycling of SPL have not significantly progressed. The AWU is acutely aware of that this highly hazardous legacy waste

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should be recycled and not merely stored at another location indefinitely or for substantial periods of time.

We note that Australian operations are leaders in treating SPL, following stringent WHS and environmental requirements. Further, a key component of Hydro's corporate social responsibility and a feature of the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal is to ensure that this hazardous waste is treated and recycled in Australia.

We consider that the recycling of SPL must form part of any project approval rather than being managed through a separate process. The project is described as a 'Development Application for the completion of demolition and remediation of the former aluminium smelter at Hart Road, Loxford NSW'. A fundamental part of this remediation is the recycling of SPL. Moreover, tens of thousands of tonnes of recyclable SPL will continue to be on the site during works should the project be approved. Alternatively, we consider that it must be a clear condition of the Project that all recyclable SPL must be treated and recycled at a licensed recycling facility, and that this occurs in Australia.

In addition, we consider that the following actions should be implemented:

1. An independent and impartial party must audit the amount of recyclable SPL that currently exists at the site as a priority and before this application is progressed; and
2. That there is an independent and impartial third party that is responsible for monitoring the SPL on site and ensuring that all recyclable SPL is recycled (and not, for example, placed in the new containment cell).

Safety related to the new containment cell

We have already seen the potential for leaching from the current capped stockpile. In order to best ensure the safety of workers and the public at the redeveloped industrial park, the AWU is of the view that:

- There must be a detailed plan dealing with the ongoing monitoring of the new containment cell; and
- That there are adequate funds available to deal with and remediate any failures of the containment cell.

Yours faithfully,



Tony Callinan
AWU NSW Branch Assistant Secretary