



Residents for Responsible Mining

* Frequently Asked Questions from Residents

1. What is bauxite mining?

Bauxite mining is a large scale, long term, bulk extraction and freight operation. Millions of tonnes of bauxite are required to supply a refinery. It involves clearing of vegetation, removal of top soil and mining of the top 12 metres of the land. After mining, the land is re-contoured resulting in an irrevocable and permanent change to the landscape profile and vegetation.

Bauxite mining is corrosive to large swathes of landscape and has potentially serious impacts on down-slope salinity. Huge amounts of water are required in bauxite mining for dust suppression, crushing and processing.

Examples of bauxite mining operations in WA are Alcoa (near Wagerup and Pinjarra) and Worsley Alumina (near Boddington and Collie). Both these companies conduct long term mining from large deposits in State Forest and transport their bauxite using their own infrastructure (e.g. conveyors and dedicated haul roads/rail spurs) not local roads.

2. What are the impacts of Bauxite Resource Limited's (BRL) Stage 1?

Stage 1 (at 130,000 tonnes over 4 months) is over 30 times larger than a normal Shire quarry (approx 12,000 tonnes pa). Proposed Stage 2 at 3 million tonnes pa is **250 times** larger than a normal Shire quarry.

The impacts of Stage 1 have been extensive. Some of these are listed below:

- Dust and noise emissions 6 days/week, 12 hours/day from the mine and Mooliabeenee siding, increased dust or mud on roads and vegetation, dust impacting on neighbouring properties.
- Road trains operating 6 days/week, 12 hours/day at rates between 1 every 3 to 5 minutes at peak loading on local roads and school bus routes.
- Significant impact on the amenity of properties and tourism businesses affected at the siding, along the haul route and adjacent to the mine.
- Extremely dangerous road conditions caused by the frequency and size of road-trains not intended for local roads, and the design and location of the haul route from Great Northern Highway to the siding, which is unacceptable to Main Roads which preferred Stephens Rd to be used.
- Visible impacts on fauna and flora from haul operations, unauthorised clearing at the Siding and unknown impacts on the environment.
- Major damage to Mooliabeenee Road caused by BRL road trains and heavy loads exceeding road capacity (with no funds available to repair it).
- Additional impacts on Bindoon town and the Shire from trucking of bauxite ore from the mine to Kwinana using Great Northern Highway.
- Sale of the property 200 metres from Mooliabeenee siding to BRL due to the unrelenting dust and noise from the new industrial loading facility next door, and the plans to expand the facility.

- A resident has commenced Supreme Court legal action to protect the water aquifer supplying his property in Wells Glover Road from use by BRL for industrial purposes.
- Loss of residential and tourism amenity through noise, dust and increased traffic and loss of agricultural value due to increased risk of land salinity, crop losses etc. with resultant drop in land/business values.

3. Do I have to agree to BRL coming onto my land to mine?

- BRL can get a Permit to enter your land to “peg” for a mining tenement and to take rock samples, but they cannot disturb the surface of the land
- If BRL holds a granted Exploration Licence or Mining Lease under the Mining Act which covers your land, the Licence/Lease will:
 - **Exclude** all land which was first granted by the Crown before 1 January 1899; and
 - For land was granted after 1 January 1899, the Licence/Lease will **exclude** the surface and top 30 metres of the land unless BRL has a signed Compensation Agreement with the landowner giving them rights to explore the top 30 metres.
- Our Town Planning Scheme (TPS) regulates what can and cannot occur on our land and the TPS does not permit mining under any zoning. Therefore, as part of the grant of a Mining Lease under the Mining Act, the Minister for Mines must take into account our TPS.
- This will occur after the processes of an environmental assessment by the EPA and the normal Mining Lease application procedures. As part of this process there will need to be a detailed review of planning principles to decide if mining should be permitted in the Shire, and if so where and how.
- Therefore it is open to residents to refuse to sign an agreement with BRL unless and until the processes are completed and we know if and where mining can take place in our Shire.

4. Why should we be concerned?

- BRL has avoided due process by not following the normal rules and procedures to undertake a large scale mining project on private land in our Shire. They have provided no information, no consultation, avoided the EPA, DEC and Main Roads assessing their full plans, breached their licence conditions and undertakings.
- BRL resisted enquiries from government authorities during Stage 1 and the figures just don't add up. BRL says it will have mined and trucked 130,000 tonnes of bauxite in 4 months (by the end of January 2010), which has involved trucking to Mooliabeenee siding and direct to Kwinana. If this is correct, it means the increased quantities in Stage 2 would require 1 road-train every 35 seconds. **Either Stage 1 has involved more bauxite than 130,000 tonnes or BRL has underestimated its trucking and infrastructure needs.**
- BRL says they have “16,800km² of tenements and tenement applications” along the Darling Ranges mostly on private land. In fact, they hold only 4 granted Exploration Licences which give them no rights to explore or mine the top 30 metres of private land without the written agreement of landowners. Bauxite is contained within the top 12 metres of the land so in fact BRL hold **no rights to mine bauxite anywhere on their “tenements”**.
- BRL has refused to disclose where Stages 3, 4, 5 (and beyond) of mining are proposed whilst they try to buy up land in the Shire. However it is known that BRL

wants to mine 163 Wells Glover Road and Lot 7 Great Northern Highway which are on top of the Bindoon Escarpment to the west of Bindoon Hill.

- The BRL Board finds itself in a difficult position since the Shire rejected the Stage 2 mining proposal on 25th November, having raised \$57 million of new capital from shareholders in September 2009 although they had no Shire approval and no environmental approval for the Stage 2 project. For this reason the BRL Board needs to fast-track a mine development and urgently remove all obstacles in its way.
- Road safety has been significantly reduced on Mooliabeenee Road and residents have experienced or witnessed “near misses” with trucks on Bindoon Hill.
- BRL plans to mine all along the Darling Scarp – from “Moora to Manjimup”. What is happening in Bindoon is the thin end of the wedge

5. Will BRL provide employment?

BRL is already employing some people and is making noise about future employment. Of course jobs are important but wages for a few should not come at the cost of other many residents’ livelihoods and jobs in agriculture and tourism, or at the cost of irrevocable damage to our beautiful environment and peaceful amenity. Therefore our Shire will only benefit from jobs created from a carefully planned, properly assessed mining project.

6. What does Residents for Responsible Mining (R4RM) stand for?

Over the next few months as the environmental and mining lease processes unfold R4RM will be working to:

- **Uphold our TPS** and ensure all residents have a say about where and how mining operations are allowed in our Shire
- **Make sure due process is applied to BRL’s mining plans** just as they are to any other large-scale long-term bulk mining project in WA. This must involve proper consultation with residents, disclosure of detailed plans by BRL, full environmental and planning assessments in respect of all proposed mine sites, haul routes and rail facilities. These should include assessment of impacts on natural vegetation, fauna, crops, vineyards, orchards, down-slope salinity, water catchments, residential amenity, visual amenity of the escarpment and the risks of dieback spread
- **Make sure that if mining takes place in Chittering**, it will be on the basis of:
 - No impact on residential amenity and tourism businesses
 - No impact on agricultural land and production
 - No impact on agricultural water resources or water catchments
 - No impact on our visual amenity – especially the Bindoon escarpment
 - Minimal impact on our flora, fauna and natural environment
 - BRL providing its own transport infrastructure
 - Proper location of train loading infrastructure, haul routes and conveyors away from residences, crops and native vegetation
 - No adverse impact on local roads and road safety
 - Independent environmental benchmarking and substantial environmental bonds