



**Residents for Responsible Mining**

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**Review of Bauxite Resources Workshops  
held on 9<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> February 2011 and  
Summary of Residents' Feedback**

**Review of BRL Workshops**

**Limited public access**

The Workshops were advertised in local and State newspapers as public workshops. They were organised by BRL and attended by its Social Impact consultants Sinclair + Nayton as well as several specialist technical consultants. The CEO and some senior BRL executives attended the Workshops (except for the R4RM Workshop)

3 public Workshops were advertised – 2 were held in Bindoon (9<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> February) and 1 was held in Perth (17<sup>th</sup> February).

Registration by attendees was required by 7<sup>th</sup> February.

An additional Workshop in Bindoon (16<sup>th</sup> February) was organised for R4RM by direct arrangement.

It transpired that the public workshops were limited in number to 20 people each. This stretched to 25 people however several would-be participants were told that registrations were “full” and there was no room. They turned up anyway. This means that BRL made only 50 registered places available for Chittering residents to attend the “public” Workshops in Bindoon. The final public Workshop on 26<sup>th</sup> February was moved to the Bindoon Town Hall at the last minute possibly to accommodate more people, however it is doubtful this was effective because all published information required registration before 7<sup>th</sup> February.

R4RM was asked to limit its workshop to 10 people if possible. We invited only 20 people from our list and 15 were able to attend. We encouraged others on our list to attend the public Workshops.

BRL's CEO Scott Donaldson claims that “250 people” attended the Workshops – typically they do not say how many of the 250 are Chittering residents. The figure is misleading and must include BRL's own consultants and staff at each Workshop. We estimate a maximum of 120 members of the public attended the 4 Workshops in Perth and Bindoon.

**No questions and answers**

At the beginning of each Workshop many people wished to ask some general questions about the project and the process, having received and read the Scoping Survey material distributed to all residents. BRL was reluctant to allow these questions and insisted that the strict format of the meeting was kept to. Questions were pushed to the end of the Workshop when many people had already left due to time – see Workshop Feedback below.

**Impact of mining proposal impossible to assess**



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Many questions we attempted to ask related to the lack of detail in BRL's mining proposal. The proposal contains no information or options around where they will mine, the size of the bauxite orebodies, how much low grade material they will mine, trucking routes, stockpile locations and volumes. **It is the strong view of the mining experts in our group that it is not possible to assess a proposal so lacking in basic detail.**

The answers to all substantive technical questions will depend on the size of orebodies, product, location, equipment layout, transport layout and a long list of variables.

With no concept plan it follows, for example, that the estimate of water use at 150ML per year at a mining rate of 2mtpa lacks any credibility. In reply to this at the Workshops, BRL executives said at different times:

- "150ML is the upper limit for water usage"
- "If we have to reduce the tonnage we will"
- "we know what we'd like to do but we need the EPA process to find out what we're allowed to do"

With the lack of any kind of plan it becomes impossible for residents to comment on the environmental studies that are proposed – the studies are descriptions of 'standards' and 'guidelines' and modelling on which residents are not qualified to comment. The studies are 'at large' and do not relate to any specific mining proposal.

#### Misleading presentation on regulatory approvals

Each Workshop began with a short BRL presentation of the process for "regulatory approvals".

The information presented was misleading because it suggests that if environmental approval is obtained, approval to mine bauxite under the Mining Act will be given automatically. The "process" diagram did not refer to the fact that the land is Minerals to Owner land, nor did it refer to the need to either re-zone the land under TPS6 to permit mining under an Extractive Industry Licence, or apply to bring the land under the Mining Act under S37 in order to get a Mining Lease. BRL fails to mention either process in which residents have significant rights.

#### No recording of Workshops

The proceedings of each Workshop were not independently recorded or minuted. No electronic record was displayed as the dialogue unfolded to enable attendees to follow the discussion. Except for notes kept by R4RM we believe there is no record of the discussions. This does not comply with accepted standards for open and transparent public consultation.

Some R4RM attendees at the public Workshops kept notes of proceedings. Some provided their feedback to R4RM convenors by telephone.

At all of the Workshops, the majority of attendees were hostile to BRL's approach to the environmental assessment of its "mining proposal". Issues that raised the most concern and anger were:

- the persistent lack of information about ore bodies, proposed mine pits, processing sites, transport routes, water sources etc (18 months after BRL applied for a Stage 2 EIL for a 5 - 9mt bauxite operation, to commence in March 2010)



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- the understanding that BRL is using the PER process to “pick our brains”, “do their feasibility for them” and work out what it can “get away with”
- the CEO’s acknowledgement that the repeated promise of jobs was misleading – there would be very few jobs
- BRL’s confirmation that no monitoring was done, or data collected to assess the impacts of the Stage 1 trial in relation to groundwater, surface water, dieback, land salinity, noise or dust emissions
- the lack of credibility in the water use estimate and BRL’s failure to disclose the source of water for operations
- the pollution, congestion and dangerous road conditions from 80,000+ pa additional road trains
- its plan to investigate the harvesting of local surface water for mining operations
- the plan to use extensive “modelling” to assess impacts of an undefined mining project when the topography, weather conditions, proximity to residences and proximity to agricultural and tourism businesses is anything but ‘standard’ for large scale open cut mining
- the fact the community’s agricultural and tourism economy will be paralysed by continuing uncertainty for another 2 years whilst BRL tries to wear down opposition to its proposals

### **Summary of Residents’ Feedback**

R4RM collated feedback from notes taken at the Workshops, and from emails and conversations with many residents who attended different Workshops.

#### **General**

“The structure of it was like a classroom, sit down and do as you’re told, tick the boxes and go home.”



“There is no control on the number of the feedback forms issued and to whom. Comment was made by facilitator that if they only got back 5% of forms that would be ok as they would only look at the comments NOT the numbers returned.”



“Lee Martin (Deputy Chair of the BCCC) was sitting with a group of gentlemen from Murchison Drilling in quite a forward table in front of me. They didn’t have any documents in their hands they just sat there with a blank table. They weren’t there for the process and they had obviously been encouraged to come by Lee Martin. They abused me when I was asking questions. One of them turned around and said “why don’t you fucking shut up”.”





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## **Lack of information + misleading information**

“BRL provided no presentation or information about where the mine(s) will be, or water sources. “



“Prior to the meeting tables had been set up with a specialist consultant at each table, so that the participants could freely move around to ask specific questions of them for the first hour. This didn’t prove very effective as the consultants mostly indicated they needed to set up modelling processes before any firm comments could be given. “



“Peter Senini, Exploration manager for BRL couldn’t say where the mining areas are. Asked what the “BRL Resource Buffer” shown on the map means – Senini said they will only mine “pods” not the whole area, but couldn’t indicate where the pods are.”



“I was appalled at the lack of information and answers to questions.”



“Many people at the meeting were very unhappy with the lack of answers, especially about water and traffic – and the misinformation about employment.”



“The Workshop was full of consultants who knew nothing – it was the same old bullshit.”



“There are no answers, no truths – they just pick our brains for information.”



“We raised the Focus Groups from last August and that we had received no feedback as promised – the CEO didn’t know anything about them.”



Resident: How is the “footprint” defined? (Workshop material contains numerous references to the “footprint” which is not defined anywhere)

BRL: It varies depending on the context



“We are being served up vague, evasive information when BRL clearly has access to key information about resources which they could and should be showing residents.”





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“BRL was asked to explain what the yellow areas on the map indicated – called “BRL Resource Buffer” on the map and “Lateritic Footprint” in the text

BRL: the bauxite could be anywhere in that area, which also would support transport etc.

Resident: what is shown on the map as a “buffer” is not a “buffer”

BRL: I agreed the terminology is confused.”



## **Water**

Water consultant said to a concerned resident “What’s your interest in this”?



Resident: will you be taking surface water?

Water consultant: It is one of the options we are considering



Resident: What was learned and what data was collected on groundwater during the Stage 1 trial?

BRL: no response. Confirmed there was no groundwater monitoring during Stage 1



Resident (practising geologist): the water quantity (150ML pa) isn’t even in the ballpark. Based on the facts provided by the proponent, the number has no credibility – it should be at least 400ML



BRL: each pit will be a maximum 10Ha. There will be one pit at a time. 150ML pa is the upper limit. If we have to reduce the tonnage we will – it is up to 2mtpa



“Resident: asked how much water would be needed and where would it come from?

It all sort of rolled back to essentially being fudged again. They said they thought 150ML was the amount of water they needed because that’s what had been advised to them by the Water Department. “





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“BRL eventually repeated the undertaking that they won’t take groundwater from Chittering, however, it doesn’t mean to say its not going to come from deep water in the Shire of Gingin. “

✱

“BRL said they would take no groundwater from the Chittering Shire but there is no answer on where the water’s coming from. Most people think its Gingin because it can’t come far.”

✱

## **Employment**

“The CEO was questioned about the truth on jobs. He admitted there will be very few jobs.”

✱

“We asked about the real position on jobs at 2mtpa for 5 years – the CEO said there will be few jobs, and they won’t be paying Pilbara rates, there will be minimal jobs.”

✱

“At close of lengthy discussion, CEO accepted that promises of jobs were made when they shouldn’t have been made.”

✱

“The CEO admitted that there would only be a handful of jobs.”

✱

## **Traffic**

Consultant: MRWA may say No to heavy haulage which means the company could look at a lower tonnage with lots of small trucks which have a right to use the route without approval

✱

Resident: Calculated for 2mtpa of product it would require 80,000 road trains per year. For 80,000 trucks it would 1 x 50t truck every 2 minutes minimum, 10 hours per day, 5 days per week and then there are water and service trucks

Consultant: acknowledged he hadn’t considered water trucks

✱

## **Dust**



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“Consultant confirmed that he had NO DATA on dust collected from Stage 1”



Resident: Asked about BRL’s equipment selection – it’s relevant to the dust calculations so what is it?

Dust Consultant: When the plan and equipment is known we can adjust the model based on the plan.



Resident: Asked about wind monitoring?

Dust consultant: data would be sourced from nearby recorded sources (Gingin airport). We will decide what gaps in the desktop data have to be filled with actual monitoring

(Audience laughter)

Resident: Has he ever been on Bindoon Hill and experienced the wind levels?

Dust consultant: No



Dust consultant: we rely on BRL for information on where the houses are in the area (Audience laughter)



Resident: how far does bauxite dust travel?

Dust consultant: “I can’t tell because we haven’t done any modelling of it.”

Resident: I’ve done some modelling, during Stage 1 out at Mooliabeenee Siding. During Stage 1 my modelling showed that an asthmatic child’s asthma got worse, that my solar panels got covered in bauxite dust reducing their effectiveness and dust covered my organic vineyard – that was my modelling and I live about 700 metres from the siding.



## **Dieback**

Resident: Asked about dieback monitoring during Stage 1.

Consultant: Doesn’t know what happened re dieback during Stage 1.



Consultant: There is a lot of dieback on Great Northern Highway – especially in Banksias and Xantherias. There is dieback south of Bindoon on GN Hwy. There is a different type of dieback at Dewar’s Pool Road (old quarry site)



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Resident: asked about the dieback risks to Agriculture and commented that at the dieback conference held in June 2010 it was noted that there are now 24 types of dieback. Many of these mutate to attack other species including agricultural crops such as citrus. Referred to Dr Paul Vogel's statement on radio that dieback is now a major threat to agriculture.

Consultant: There are other species of plant and dieback and we can ask for these to be studied.



### **Statements by BRL's CEO**

"We know what we'd like to do but we really need to get the feedback from the EPA process to know what we are allowed to do."



Resident: Could the CEO explain what benefits flow to the people of Bindoon?

The CEO could not explain and he got himself into a terrible knot.



"The CEO was asked what will be the benefits to Bindoon? CEO replied that BRL will pay its rates."



Resident: When you did your Stage 1 trial you didn't have any EPA approvals and didn't you monitor what was going on in the first stage?

CEO : no we weren't required to



"Resident: you've missed out a whole segment of the approvals process which is from Minerals to Owner you have to either go into Section 37 of the Mining Act or you have to go to the Town Planning Scheme.

It completely nonplussed the CEO. He said "I'm not a lawyer" and seemed almost like he was in a different room."



"The CEO gave as an example of benefits how the school enrolments might increase. A resident/teacher got very angry and she said, well the enrolments have been increasing every year and you are such a wealthy company you should have done all of that research before you came to talk to us"





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## **Economic Impacts**

Resident: If my property is a peaceful rural place with an organic vineyard one day, and then 6 months later there is mining on one of the neighbouring properties which creates a lot of noise, trucks past my gate and dust on my grapes will the value of my property increase or decrease?

(Audience laughter).

Consultant: admitted it would decrease.