

# CMCOAG

## Canning Melville Community Odour Action Group

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**\*\*MEDIA RELEASE\*\***

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*For immediate release*

### COMMUNITIES TAKE ACTION ON AIR QUALITY

*Community Environment Groups launch  
AIR CARE AUSTRALIA –  
An initiative of the Australian National Bucket Brigade*

Residents living in the shadow of Australian industries are moving to test air quality themselves. Rising community concerns regarding the ongoing adverse impact on the environment and community health from industrial pollution within Australia has led to the formation of community-based group AIR CARE AUSTRALIA- an initiative of the *Australian National Bucket Brigade*.

In 2006, residents concerned about toxic emissions from the Shell Refinery in Geelong, Victoria and the Alcoa plant at Yarloop, Western Australia, recruited US environmentalist **Denny Larson, executive director of *Global Community Monitor*, to assist residents to monitor their local air quality.**

Denny and program director Ruth Breech are back in Australia to facilitate the “*National Bucket Brigade Training*” in West Perth, organised by WA’s *Yarloop Bucket Brigade*, a project of the Community Alliance for Positive Solutions Inc (CAPS).

The training involved teaching communities from all over Australia to use the low-cost testing process **Denny pioneered with environmental activist Erin Brockovich and lawyer Ed Masry.** This process, known as the Bucket, has been approved by the US EPA, and all Bucket Brigade members are trained in quality control and quality assurance.

The “Bucket Brigade” allows community residents to undertake their own testing of air quality and to have the samples analysed by a US laboratory, used by the world’s Bucket Brigade community and not linked to industry. Once armed with the results of their testing, the communities are equipped to take measures to hold the polluters accountable.

The “National Bucket Brigade Training” involved community participants from all over Australia, including Kwinana Progress Group, Midland Frogs, Alliance for a Clean Environment, Townsville Bucket Brigade, Locals for Esperance and Development, **Canning Melville Community Odour Action Group**, Geelong

Community for Good Life, and Community Alliance for Positive Solutions Inc. (CAPS, Yarloop).

In line with the principles of “Community Right to Know”, community members recognise the need for broader community participation in the monitoring of our air quality - which must be funded by government.

***“For too long, governments around the world have undertaken air monitoring in the wrong place, at the wrong time and with the wrong equipment. Grassroots community participation aims to stop this practice,”*** Mr Larson said.

***“Communities need to have confidence in the results of air quality testing in order to determine if their health is being affected. The best way to do this is for local communities to be the driving force behind programs monitoring air quality”*** he said.

AIR CARE AUSTRALIA, will spearhead a collaborative effort between Australian communities, industries and government that allows for the protection of the environment and public health, preserves and improves the quality of life of citizens, and allows truly sustainable development<sup>1</sup> by Australian industry.

In line with the principles of *Community Right to Know*, AIR CARE AUSTRALIA recognise that participatory democracy must be the driving force behind any community air monitoring program and must be funded by government.

AIR CARE AUSTRALIA will work constructively with all stakeholders in order to:

- Prevent the impact and exposure to pollution in Australian communities
- Establish a national Community Engagement Process including a National Education Program for air quality and monitoring
- Establish an open and transparent process regarding all monitoring results
- Establish a new community endorsed standard for air monitoring methods
- Establish new community endorsed air quality standards for health and environment protection
- Ensure that air monitoring programs involve the use of an independent laboratory with results being provided by the laboratory directly to communities
- Work collaboratively in an open and transparent process with communities and environment groups to identify and resolve pollution concerns

For further information please contact: Cam Auxer (Yarloop) at 08 9733 5011 or Sue McLean (Geelong) 0410 940 299 or Jane Bremmer (Perth) after 10am) 0432041397.

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<sup>1</sup> As defined by Brundtland Commission, 1987 “To meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”