

# Port Hedland Dust Management Taskforce Report to Government

## Public Submission

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Everything is red. Everything is always red. The dust has stained the buildings to the point that the original colour is unrecognisable, some say its dirt but everyone knows its iron ore, the iron or that is left uncovered, spreading everywhere, effecting everyone.

The iron ore dust that is released thanks to BHP Billiton is cancerous, whether you inhale a large amount or a small amount, your lungs are at risk. I have been breathing in their dust for thirteen years. My house is located on the west end of town, directly across from BHP, I have been living in this house for most of my life. I breathe in more of the dusty air than the BHP workers, because apparently it is too dangerous for them to be exposed to the dust for more than twelve hours at a time, whilst I get to bask in the dusty air and they have to live on the other side of town for their safety.

The west end of town is where the problem mainly lies being both across from BHP and close to the port where the iron ore is shipped from. BHP is one of the largest iron ore producers, this combined with the fact that the iron ore is left uncovered means that a lot of the product is lost, this issue not only effects the people who have to deal with the dust, but BHP as well, they are losing product and in turn losing money. There were temporary precautions taken in 2010 that stopped the construction of new housing as well as childcare centres and retirement homes because the dust was hazardous. They wanted to implement a progressive transition for permanent residents west of Acton Street, where only short term residents would be able to live on that side of town. I live between Acton and Taplin Street, an area that is apparently too dangerous for the elderly and infants but perfectly fine for everyone else. My family works west of Acton Street, they are breathing in the dust 24/7, that is twice as much as BHP workers, yet it is perfectly safe for them.

There is a marina project that has just gone through, they tried to use the iron ore problem as a reason against having it in the west end of town, where might I add the boat ramp is situated, that was until they found out that if they draw too much attention to the situation that they would have to relocate everyone in the affected area, this obviously stopped the argument, but it hasn't stopped the questions. It really makes you question the town that you are living in when your safety isn't a priority.

Every weekend I have to go outside and clean up my front veranda, because it is filthy. I sweep up enough iron ore dust that I could start my own company. Sure everyone has to clean up, but I don't exactly enjoy having to clean because the dust is so bad that it turns the soles of my feet black when I set foot outside, and it's not like it stays clean for long either, the next day it is dirty all over again.

There are just things that I want to be able to do without it ending horribly, like wearing white, owning a nice car, breathing clean fresh air, being a kid. Some things you just can't do with dust everywhere because the older you get the more you begin to care about stuff like this and you begin to miss being a kid, when I was a kid I loved to get dirty, but now all I want is to just be able to relax in a clean, extremely hot environment.

I'm not asking to be moved, and I don't want BHP to stop producing iron ore, I just want them to cover it up, to put a cover over it to stop it from spreading everywhere. I want my home to be safe

to live in. Sure it will cost BHP money, but at the moment it is costing people their health, and I find that that's more important.