



Petition

Registration No.	23
Title	Supply of gas to Gove
Presented on	16 October 2013
Presented by	Ms Walker (Member for Nhulunbuy)
Referred to	Chief Minister (Hon Adam Giles MLA)
Date referred	16 October 2013
Response due	19 February 2014
Response received	23 January 2014
Response to be presented	11 February 2014

Petition

To the Honourable The Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory:

We the Undersigned Respectfully Showeth

That the families and businesses of Gove (Nhulunbuy) require certainty with regard to the supply of gas to Gove Alumina Refinery.

Your Petitioners Therefore Humbly Pray That

The Northern Territory Government Acts quickly to supply Pacific Aluminium's Gove Alumina Refinery with sufficient gas in order to keep it operational, ensuring the long-term future of the Gove Region.

And your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

Response

On 29 November 2013, Rio Tinto announced that they are suspending alumina production at its Gove refinery. This announcement came after Rio Tinto determined that the refinery is no longer a viable business in the current market environment. Rio Tinto advises that key factors influencing this decision is the continuing low alumina price, a high exchange rate and substantial after tax losses for the refinery despite efforts to improve refinery performance. Rio Tinto has stated that it will continue its bauxite operations at the plant, keeping approximately 350 jobs.

Rio Tinto states that there is nothing more the Northern Territory Government could have done to help secure a long term future for the refinery.

The Northern Territory Government went straight to action and to date have implemented the following:

- appointed Mr Michael Chiodo as the Gove On-the-Ground Coordinator to ensure the community have a direct Northern Territory Government contact that is easily accessible. Since his appointment immediately after the announcement, Mike has met with over 830 individuals and continues to meet with individuals and business owners in the region;
- established the Community Support Centre in Nhulunbuy where Mr Chiodo is based, which has Northern Territory Government and Rio Tinto staff available to meet with community members;
- set up a government hotline - both the Community Centre and the hotline are in operation from 8am - 5pm Monday to Friday;
- formed a Chief Executive Working Group to coordinate agency efforts to ensure a focus on priority tasks;
- formed an Interagency Working Group to ensure Northern Territory Government initiatives can be promptly progressed;
- established the Gove Community Advisory Committee, which comprises 25 community representatives that will be the voice of the community and report directly to the Gove Taskforce; and
- established the Gove Taskforce, which comprises representatives from the Australian and Northern Territory governments, Rio Tinto, Northern Land Council and three representatives from the Gove Community Advisory Committee.

I commend the residents and businesses of Nhulunbuy for their patience, professionalism and resilience over this very stressful and challenging time and reiterate the Northern Territory Government's commitment to continue to work with Rio Tinto, the Australian Government and the Nhulunbuy community to ensure the economic viability and sustainability of Nhulunbuy and East Arnhem Land.