

Weekly Media and Public Briefing 15th Mar 2012

No	Question	Answer
1	The new regulation (Waste) seems to be less strict than the previous regulation.	No, it is actually stricter. AELB is controlling anything above 1 Bq/g
2	What is the difference between check source and NORM?	A check source uses artificial and man-made radioactive material while naturally occurring radioactive material (NORM) exists in nature and we cannot do anything about it.
3	Since we already have natural background in Gebeng, will there be additional radiation to the people and environment with residue from Lynas?	No, it will be the same as the natural background level. You will receive higher dose of radiation when you travel by plane due to cosmic radiation which is natural and something we cannot control.
4	Is the level of radiation in Lynas plant higher?	Just because AELB requires Lynas to be licensed, it does not mean that the radiation level would be hazardous or that they will produce radioactive wastes. AELB licenses it so that we can ensure the safety of the workers, people and environment. There will be radiation from Lynas but we will make sure that the level will be as low as reasonably achievable and within safe limits.
5	People in Gebeng will not have a choice as to whether they want to receive the additional radiation in their daily life.	In controlling radiation, there are three principles which are Shielding, Time and Distance. So AELB will make sure that people are living at a safe distance from the plant, public will not be allowed to spend time in the plant area to reduce the radiation exposure and the area will be properly shielded.
6	How far is the distance?	About 2 km, same as with the oil and gas

		industry.
7	Will the residue be buried locally?	No, Lynas claims that there will be no residue produced. All the residues will be recycled, reutilized, commercialized into items that can be sold for example, concrete and roads, etc. As an authority, AELB has requested Lynas for a PDF in case the above plan does not work and the PDF must be located away from populated areas.
8	Will we only find that out after the operation?	This is the reason why AELB has the TOL- to assess if their claim is correct.
9	The TOL has been issued and given to Lynas, so can they start operating anytime?	No, the TOL has not been issued and they cannot operate yet.
10	Are people prohibited from going into the plant?	Not prohibited, however entrance is controlled as for any such industry.
11	Is it correct that the buffer zone in Australia is 70 km?	There is no such law. There is a plan to build a plant similar to Lynas in Whyalla, the third most populated area in South Australia. We will contact the authority there to compare notes.
13	Is there any example that has shown that the recycling plan does actually work?	Yes, for example we extract Lithium to make high performance battery from sand. The residue, which is the sand, is recycled to be used in the semiconductor industry. So, there is no waste.
14	Does the sand contain radioactive material?	Yes, it does contain naturally occurring radioactive material just like the residues in Lynas.
15	What is NORM?	It is naturally occurring radioactive material that exists since the formation of earth. It is present for example, in the soil, rock, fertilizer, food,

		building and everywhere.
16	How does the radioactivity in the residue from tin mining compare with residue from Lynas?	Residue from Lynas will be 6 Bq/g and Monazite, which is the residue from Tin mining is 284 Bq/g.
17	How reliable is the information given by Lynas?	The Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organization (ANSTO) did the research and provided the results to AELB. We will verify this once the ore concentrates are here.
18	Will it be too late?	It will only be too late for Lynas because if they do not comply with our standards, we will close them down.
19	How will you convince people that believe the authority in Malaysia is incompetent?	Malaysia is No. 1 in rubber glove industry and to produce surgical gloves, radiation is involved to sterilize the gloves. The exposure from the radiation is so high; you could die within 1 minute of exposure. AELB has been controlling this to ensure the safety of the workers, people and environment.
20	So will Malaysia government buy products from Lynas to build roads?	If they are able to produce them to meet safety standards. Don't just limit it to Malaysian government, even Australian or Singaporean government can buy it.
21	There are claims that a lot of Thorium will be generated and the concentration of the residue will go up.	Concentration of thorium will not go up even though the amount of residue will.
22	Will the residue be scattered all around Malaysia?	If it is deemed to be within safe levels and no longer subject to AELB regulatory control or if it is exempted, then it is allowed.
23	With the condition that Lynas must bring down the radioactivity level?	Safety is first. It should be as low as reasonably achievable. However, we cannot expect for it to go below the natural background radioactivity

		because that is not realistic.
24	When will the TOL be given to Lynas?	There is an appeal to the MOSTI Minister by Tan Boon Teet and 5 others and there is also a request for a judicial review scheduled to be heard on 20 th March.
25	Where is the location of the PDF?	The location must first undergo an RIA, it has to be far from people, possibly an ex-mining area, there is no further use for it, and is not a tourist spot.
26	Is there no plan for the waste to be sent back to Australia?	The TOL condition states that Lynas is responsible for the residue generated during TOL period, including if necessary, to return it to its original source.
27	Is Lynas residue radioactive waste?	No, it is not radioactive waste. For example, in the UK, if it is a very low level radioactive waste, the waste can be dumped in a municipal dump. According to IAEA standards, very low level radioactive waste does not need to be controlled. Waste containing NORM and radioactive waste are two different things.
28	What if the residue cannot be commercialized?	That is the use of the PDF. If there is no suggestion for the location of the PDF, it will be returned to its original source.
29	How long can they store the residue if it cannot be commercialized?	The standard for TOL is 18 months but for Lynas, we have pre-conditioned it to be 10 months.
30	People no longer trust the authority because of ARE.	ARE was set up using 70's technology and in that time, there was no international standard, no Act 304, no AELB. When AELB was established, we were the ones who closed them down.

31	Any assurance if natural disaster struck like in Fukushima?	None of the deaths in Fukushima were caused by radioactivity.
32	Will any leakage harm the people and environment?	If there is any leakage, AELB will be the first to be there to ensure the safety of the people.