

FILE NAME: Colonial Sugar Refinery (CSR)

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DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION: Letter to Dept of Public Health, Perth,
from Kalgoorlie District Hospital RE High Dust Concentration at
Wittenoom & Silicosis Hazard

DISTRICT HOSPITAL

KALGOORLIE

JMcN:MKV.

Date 6th October, 1960

Dr. D. D. Letham,
Physician,
Public Health Department,
57 Murray Street,
PERTH

Dear Dr. Letham,

The Senior Inspector of Mines has kindly given me a copy of his findings at Wittenoom. Briefly the concentration of dust in both the mill and the underground workings is shocking. The amount of dust falling on the lawn outside the mill office would not compare favourably with conditions underground in some gold mines. Silicosis is probably a much greater hazard than we had imagined and this probably explains why all the men who have developed abnormal chest x-rays appear to have a mixture of silicosis and asbestosis.

There was little correlation between the readings of the Midget-Impinger and the Konimeter. The Konimeter generally gave much higher total particle counts and the Impinger higher fibre counts, but the readings were too inconsistent to give a worthwhile comparison. The Inspector suggested that inexperience with the Impinger may have been the cause and he feels that it is a good instrument for use at Wittenoom.

The Senior Inspector of Mines has made many recommendations to the Company and the Mines Department have the power, under the Mining Acts, to see that the dust hazard is eradicated. It remains for us to keep hammering the health aspect to maintain the sense of urgency required.

A preliminary review of the Wittenoom films, shows how urgent the problem is. It is too early to commit myself, but I feel that the general picture is worse than ever.

On completion of the review I think it would be a good idea to send a copy of all the results to the Company for their information.

Yours faithfully,



J. McNulty
CHIEF PHYSICIAN.

