

## You Strike A Women, You Strike a Rock!

**9 August 2008** – 112 protesters congregated at the Engen Administration gate to mark their grievances after experiencing year of polluted air and a no-go attitude from Refinery management. Celebrating Woman's Day with a difference woman from Wentworth, Merebank and the Bluff converged to unite their voice in demanding a free twenty four hour mobile asthma clinic to be operational in the affected area's within 60 days.

52% of the children at Settlers Primary School are affected with Asthma. This is a Guinness World record. So many people have breathing problems and it is really unfair that they must suffer environmental injustice! We need this clinic! We deserve this clinic! Engen must pay" explains Tilly Stuart of the Austerville Clinic Committee.

The protesters sang songs and presented their placards baring slogans such as 'Killing us softly with their Smell', 'No Engen, No Cry!' and 'Engen lie, We die!'. As women in the community, social roles include homemaking and tending to children. In south Durban these roles are greatly influenced by the health effects as well the horrid pungency of the refinery. Some of the woman hung washing which was spilt with oil to signify 'Engen's Dirty Washing' and just how the dirty air often stains clothes that hang on the lines of ordinary people.



A memorandum was handed over by the Refinery manager, Mr. Willem Oosthuizen by the South Durban Community Environmental Alliance Administrator, Miss Jo-Ann Ogle. "We came here to demand a five year maintenance plan showing how Engen will be dealing with their aging infrastructure, the characterization and advertisement of all chemicals escaping over Engen's fence-line as well as the scrapping of the Community Liaison Forum. This forum may appear to assist the community but it does not. It does not deal with the real issues at hand. Those community members on this forum are mere puppets.

"We demand that Engen open direct communication with affected people and organizations" says Miss Ogle.

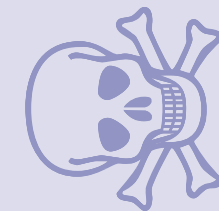
Community women now await a response from Engen. If they do not get the Asthma clinic that will tend to their children, they will exercise their legal rights and take this matter up in another forum.

"How many more children must die? Engen continues to make huge profit whilst we must face their fumes on a daily basis. The refinery manager lives where the air is clean. If we could move, maybe

we would, but this is our home and we see our lives as more important than making petrol" says Catherine Gordeen of the Wentworth Development Forum, a lifelong neighbor of the refinery.



## Engen Refinery Incidents & Accidents from 1994 – 2007



### Incident or Accident

30 November 1994	Men fight for his life. Horror gas explosion.
06 January 2001	Engen refinery spills 1000 liters of oil into Bacalla Canal – claiming rain as the reason.
09 January 2001	Fire in the bitumen blending. On the same day 6000 liters of solvent spilled from a faulty valve on a road tanker.
28 May 2001	Engen worker T. Van der Schryff killed and another (E. Mbaba) seriously injured by Hydrofluoric Acid. No action taken.
26 October 2001	Engen reports underground pipe leak resulting in 25,000 liters of diesel being lost.
23 November 2001	Engen 1000 liters of Oil spilled into the Bacalla Canal.
5 May 2002	Settlers School students taken ill after toxic emissions. Reference to Engen excessive flaring (Sunday Tribune Herald).
12 May 2002	Merebank community complaints of suffocating plume gases from Engen refinery as pilot flare fails on start up of refinery releasing raw VOC's.
17 May 2002	Pupils from Settlers fall ill after Toxic Emissions.
13 October 2002	Explosion at the Engen refinery – toxic chemical released. A roof cause analysis reports was not released.
24 December 2002	Some 20,000 liters of Marine gas oil and unstacked petrol spilled into the canal linking Engen petroleum to Durban Harbour on Tuesday 24/12/02 at 5am.
08 January 2003	Residents complained of a Diesel smell from the canal. 60 residents needed medical treatment for asthma, wheezing and lame legs. City health failed to provide adequate doctors.
10 January 2003	A tanker that was loaded up with Asphalt and Bitumen at Engen leaked on the road causing at least one accident. Police were called in. Workers were seen covering the spill with sand.
17 February 2003	The Engen refinery released toxic chemicals from the stacks in to the air.
28 February 2003	The flare was from the gas system. This was due to an upset in the crude unit. The flare was for approximately 3 hours intermittently. The quantity of gas released of approximately 1000kg. The gas would have contained Hydrogen, Methane, Ethane, Propane and some Butane.
26 March 2003	An Engen petrol tanker crash yesterday. It turned ports of the South Coast 1/2 into a frightening no-go area when flames leapt meters into the air and set fire to a whole section. See P.1 of the Sunday Tribune April 27, 2003.
23 June 2003	Engen was flaring. Black smoke emitted from the stack on to the community.
26 June 2003	Yesterday afternoon a large international truck (No. plate csm081's) was seen spilling diesel while travelling through the Treasure Beach area. Diesel was spilt all the way up Neisa Rd and Ballerina Terrace towards
07 August 2003	Moaine Drive. The truck then entered Engen premises.
03 November 2003	Engen refinery released gas into the air. Impacted on the residents.
12 May 2004	Wednesday, at 6am residents of Merebank were gassed out by Engen yet again with Hydrogen Sulphide. Residents' complaints were logged at eThekweni Emergency Services and at the South Durban Community Environmental Alliance offices.
7 October 2004	Thursday, Engen Refinery gassed out communities for two hours. Immediately after this there was a loud bang, which could be heard for kilometers. A fire in sub station resulted in a power outage at the Engen Refinery at 9h25 this morning. This resulted in a fire and the plant had to be shutdown.
18 January 2005	At about 20:45 a fire occurred at the Engen Refinery in South Durban. The fire occurred at one of Engen's solvent tanks.
May 2005	The explosion rocked houses in Merebank and Wentworth. The sirens sounded twice which meant there was something serious happening on the plant.
August 2005	During the period of 7 March 2005 to the 9 April 2005 an investigation undertaken by the SDOEA highlighted that the eThekweni Health Dept.'s monitoring station at Settlers School recorded 64 exceedences of the 10 minute WHO guideline related to Engen operations. This translates to Engen violating the permit condition during this period on 29 occasions.
17 May 2007	During July & August 2005 another investigation by the SDOEA highlighted another 10 exceedences of the 10 minute WHO guideline related to Engen operations. This translates to Engen violating the permit condition in total on 39 occasions.
9 June 2007	Worker burned to death – Engen Storage Tanks – Island View.
03 July 2007	On Saturday the 9 of June 2007 - A worker was allegedly electrocuted at Engen Refinery in South Durban. Another worker is injured and in hospital the injured contractor works was stabilised on the site and airlifted to St Augustine hospital other work was taken to hospital and treated.
19 November 2007	On Tuesday the 3 of July 2007 at 06:30 a fire broke out at the Engen Refinery this morning. The hydrocarbon fire that broke out on the Alkylation unit in the refinery this morning has been extinguished. The fire occurred during the start up of the refinery at this stage it is not known what caused the fire.
	On Monday the 19 of November 2007 a fire broke out at one of Engen's storage tanks at approximately 19:00 during the course of the evening Emissions from the fire would have dispersed towards the nearby residential area burning for five consecutive days with devastating health and chemical effects.