

# Amsa gets notice of flouting emissions licencing standards

**Ann Crotty**

**ARCELORMITTAL** South Africa's (Amsa's) wide-ranging troubles got a little worse this week when the Gauteng Department of Agriculture and Rural Development issued a notice instructing the company to cease operation of certain units at its Vanderbijlpark plant as they contravened air emission licencing standards.

Amsa, which reported a 75 percent slump in profit for the six months to March, has 30 days to convince the department otherwise or it will be forced to close the units.

In an announcement yesterday, Amsa said it believed the notice "is defective both in terms of administrative justice as well as factually". It said the company was complying with the condi-

tions contained in the air emission licence and it "intends to object to the notice and will issue an application to suspend the notice pending the finalisation of the objection to the contents of the notice. The company is confident that it will successfully challenge the notice."

The closure notice followed an inspection by the Environmental Management Inspectorate (EMI). After the initial inspection, the EMI issued a notice of non-compliance and asked it to respond within 14 days. It appears that the EMI was not satisfied with the response and decided to issue a closure notice. Amsa has 30 days to respond.

This is not the first environmental-related non-compliance action taken against Amsa. A few years ago the Green Scorpions took action against its waste

site at Vereeniging. Caroline Ntaopane, a spokeswoman for the Vaal Environmental Justice Alliance, said the government was under pressure to take action as the Vaal Triangle was a priority area. She said Amsa was a challenging company to deal with and seemed unwilling to engage with communities.

"For 13 years we have been trying to get access to Amsa's 'Masterplan', which contains details of the strategies it plans to implement in order to rehabilitate the area, but... it has so far resisted all our efforts."

Amsa said it took environmental obligations seriously and had "invested in a number of environmental projects to improve its compliance".

Shares closed 0.7 percent up at R36.04. This compares with its 12-month high of R69.50.