

9th April 2021

Parliament of Victoria

Submission - Inquiry into Health Impacts of Air Pollution in Victoria

Brooklyn Victoria is a suburb recognised as one of twelve national pollution hot spots¹ located a mere nine kilometres from Melbourne CBD (Addendum 1). Our family has resided here for 64 years. As a resident I have avidly campaigned to draw attention to the appalling level of pollution which has plagued our community for decades, a consequence of inappropriate planning and inadequate regulations and policing.

Despite engaging in community forums over several years, efforts to date by local and State Government authorities in forcing polluting industries to be accountable and socially conscious has resulted in little if any net progress. Of particular concern is the PM10 particulate pollution, a recognised carcinogen. Air monitoring was finally undertaken in 2009 at the insistence of our community, proving multiple and persisting breaches of WHO standards. Air monitoring at Brooklyn continues to this day, further complicated by the commencement of the West Gate Tunnel Project, adding further to health concerns involving PM2.5 and PM1.0 pollution.

In many ways our legislative framework and relating process has proven to be a hindrance instead of a tool, continually and gainfully exploited by offenders. I have reached the point where I struggle to justify the level of energy and input required to carry on the fight to demand my community's basic right to clean air.

I strongly support a report submitted to the Victorian Parliament in March 2020² – "Air Pollution in Melbourne's Inner West – taking direct action to reduce our community's exposure". This comprehensive report was formulated by the Inner West Air Quality Community Reference Group, Chaired by Patsy Toop OAM, and tables several recommendations for consideration by Parliament.

Brooklyn forms part of the inner western suburbs of Melbourne, which has endured an inequitable and unjust proportion of exposure to pollution over many years. This has resulted in poor outcomes for the health and wellbeing of our community as borne out by the reports referenced in this submission.

The committee's terms of reference are an important and compelling basis for drawing attention to what is not currently working, and exploring avenues for legislative change and restorative justice for our community, with the primary objective of reducing and/or eliminating pollution. This submission addresses the following terms of reference:

- a) state-wide practical, real-time, cost-effective mitigation strategies;**
- b) ensuring that Victorian air quality continues to track towards meeting or exceeding current international best practice standards and is enforced;**
- c) strengthening commitments across all Victorian Government portfolios to reduce air pollution and minimise the impact on health;**

Recommendations:

Reference - "Air Pollution in Melbourne's Inner West" published March 2020

- I. Implement all recommendations as listed in the report, with particular focus on recommendations 6.1 - 6.7 relating to industrial emissions.
- II. Where possible, all recommendations to be reclassified to "priority" level, thereby upgrading short, medium and long-term timeframes.

Sincerely

Carmen Largaiolli



Brooklyn Community Representative Group (BCRG) – participant 2008 to current
Brooklyn Residents Action Group (BRAG) – member 2006 to 2013

¹ Clearing the Air – Why Australia urgently needs effective national air pollution laws - Environmental Justice Australia May 2014, p16.
<https://www.envirojustice.org.au/clearing-the-air-why-australia-urgently-needs-effective-national-air-pollution-laws/>

² Air Pollution in Melbourne's Inner West - Inner West Air Quality Community Reference Group – March 2020.
<https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/sustainability/inner-west-air-quality-reference-group>

Addendum 1: Brooklyn Aerial March 2020

