

Air pollution Inquiry>

Organisation Name:
Your position or role:

YOUR SUBMISSION

Submission:

I'm contributing my submission because I care about clean air and community health. I attended the Victorian Clean Air Conference in 2018 and am surprised strong action has not yet been taken to legislate and enforce a sharp reduction in pollution.

I'm an avid nature lover and am in awe of the magnificent native forests we are lucky to have in Victoria, especially in the Central Highlands and East Gippsland. I despair that these forests are being bulldozed and that it is subsidised by the taxpayer, with VicForests often logging illegally, with their only obstacle being community groups taking them to court. The intense burning of high density debris that remains after logging creates unbelievable levels of smoke, releasing masses of carbon into the atmosphere and wreaking havoc on people's health (and contributing to climate change). This has been much studied and reported by ANU [REDACTED]. Often the burns are conducted in Autumn under the cover of 'safety burns'. This practice needs to stop and after the shocking 2019/20 fires the remaining native forest needs to be left intact as a refuge for surviving wildlife and to reduce future fire risk. For human health, climate, threatened species, water security we must stop logging these spectacular forests.

Another massive industrial source of air pollution in Australia and Victoria is coal-fired power stations. Coal-fired power stations disproportionately impact the communities living near them, making it one of the most significant environmental justice issues in Australia. Yet, the Victorian government lets coal-fired power stations pump out toxic pollution and make record profits at the expense of the community's health.

Victoria's air pollution standards do not adequately protect health and lag significantly behind other regions, including the USA, the EU and China, where most coal-fired power stations are required to install basic pollution controls that cut toxic pollutants by more than 85 percent. The Victorian government needs to act on the worst sources of toxic air pollution now. That means reducing pollution from major sources – coal-fired power stations, vehicle emissions and wood heaters. The government must ensure that damaging waste to energy incinerators are not approved or supported as this would create large amounts of pollution. Likewise any plan that involves burning forests for energy would be harmful, regressive and should be declined.

Environment Just Australia reports that every year, approximately 2600-4800 people in Australia die as a result of exposure to toxic air pollution, at an annual health cost of \$24 billion. The most recent analysis of health impacts caused by coal-fired power stations in Australia found that they contribute to 845 babies being born with low birth-weight, 14,434 children with asthma, and 785 premature deaths each year, at a cost of \$2.4 billion dollars to the economy.

Some of our most vulnerable people are hardest hit by air pollution – low-income communities, the elderly, people with chronic diseases, children, pregnant women and unborn babies.

The People's Clean Air Action Plan for Victoria calls for the state government to reduce the biggest sources of air pollution by:

- Increasing air quality monitoring and access to information about air pollution

- Reducing coal-fired power station pollution with best practice control standards
- Reducing vehicle pollution, with a focus on vehicle pollution hotspots
- Phasing out wood-burning heaters
- Legislating health-based ambient air quality standards.

In short please bring forward the transition out of native forest logging to 2022, to avoid industrial level smoke from burning forest 'slash'. Also I strongly encourage you to act on the People's Clean Air Action Plan for Victoria and allow this to guide policy.

Thanks for considering my submission.

FILE ATTACHMENTS

File1:

File2:

File3:

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