

**Good afternoon... NAME IS GARY BLASCHKE OAM**

I HAVE LIVED IN LAKE MUNMORAH FOR OVER ELEVEN YEARS.

I SPEAK AS A MEMBER OF THE COAL-ASH COMMUNITY ALLIANCE INC. AND ONE OF THE MANY INDIVIDUAL RESIDENTS WHO HAVE BEEN CONCERNED ABOUT THE CUMULATIVE IMPACTS OF COAL ASH ON OUR LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND ENVIRONMENT FOR OVER FIFTY YEARS. (TIMING... b)

I REALISE THIS INQUIRY IS NOT LIMITED TO LOOKING ONLY AT THE REUSE OF COAL-ASH STORED IN THE DAMS ALONE,

- ISSUES SUCH AS TIMING OF GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE,
- ECONOMIC AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES,
- ADEQUACY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF REGULATIONS,
- THE STATES LIABILITY,
- REMEDIATION AND COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH IMPACTS
- AND OTHER RELATED MATTERS.

YET, THE SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES HAVE BEEN DRAMATICALLY LET DOWN, IF WE ONLY LOOK INSIDE THE CURTILAGE OF THE DAMS AND NOT LOOK AT THE EXTERNALITIES OF THE COAL ASH DAMS THEMSELVES AND THE CONTINUAL REPLENISHMENT BY THE POWER STATIONS.

**(RISKS & LIABILITIES... f)**

**AIR POLLUTION, TOXIC HEAVY METAL SPILLS OR OVERFLOWS INTO OUR LAKES, MINE SUBSIDENCE, PFAS CONTAMINATION, HUMAN HEALTH ISSUES.**

**ADDED WITH THE PROPOSED INCREASE OF A FURTHER 40,500 NEW HOMES IN THE NORTHERN CENTRAL COAST & A FURTHER 13,700 HOMES IN LOWER LAKE MACQUARIE, A FURTHER 135,250 MORE PEOPLE IN A RELATIVE SMALL AREA. EVEN THOUGH THESE TWO DAMS ALONE WILL CONTINUE TO GROW AT THE TUNE OF NEARLY 2 MILLION TONNES PER YEAR, EVEN WITH THE DOUBLING OF THE REUSE OF THE COAL ASH. (f & g)**

THIS DOES NOT INCLUDE THE PROPOSAL OF A FURTHER \$180 MILLION WORTH OF MINERAL EXTRACTIONS PER ANNUM, WITHOUT DISCLOSURE, OVER THE NEXT TWELVE YEARS IN THE SAME REGION OF THESE EXISTING ASH DAMS. (g)

AS YOU MOST PROBABLY ARE AWARE, WE HAVE OVER 60 MILLION TONNES OF STORED COAL-ASH BETWEEN VALES POINT AND ERARING POWER STATIONS, STORED IN FIFTY YEAR OLD, UNLINED EARTH DAMS.

**VALES POINT ADDS AN ADDITIONAL 0.55 Mt PER ANNUM WITH ERARING ADDING A FURTHER 1.34 Mt PER ANNUM. (g)**

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2.

WHERE THE DECOMMISSIONED LAKE MUNMORAH POWER STATION COAL ASH IS... IS ANYONE'S GUESS?

**HISTORICAL EVIDENCE** HAS 8000 TONNES BEING DUMPED INTO THE OCEAN EACH WEEK OFF WYBUNG HEAD UNDER THE ELECTRICITY COMMISSIONS GUIDANCE. (*OAK FLATS TO BUDGEWOI- HISTORICAL DOCUMENT*). (g)

AUSTRALIA HAS 20 POWER STATIONS AND THEREFORE POTENTIALLY 20 COAL ASH DAMS. FIVE ARE FOUND IN N.S.W., COLLECTIVELY THEY PRODUCE APPROXIMATELY 12 MILLION TONNES PER ANNUM. (f & g)

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA HAS 737 POWER STATIONS THAT PRODUCE 130 MILLION TONNES OF COAL ASH PER ANNUM.

THEREFORE WE IN AUSTRALIA HAVE 2.7% THE NUMBER OF POWER STATIONS THAN AMERICA, YET PRODUCE 9.30% (NEARLY 10%) OF THE AMOUNT OF COAL ASH PER ANNUM.

WE CAN ONLY CONCLUDE THAT BOTH THE U.S.A. AND AUSTRALIA HAVE LEARNT NOTHING ABOUT THE DANGERS OR RE-USE PROCESSES OVER THE PAST FIVE DECADES. NEITHER **HAVE ADEQUATE WORLD STANDARDS, REGULATIONS OR SUBSTANTIAL OR SUSTAINABLE CLEAN UP PLANS.** (d)

UNLESS WE, ... **MEANING THE INDUSTRY AND GOVERNMENT,** CAN COME UP WITH FURTHER ANSWERS FOR THE REUSE OF COAL ASH, WE HAVE THE POTENTIAL OF **OVER 89 MILLION TONNES BEING STORED** OVER THE FOLLOWING 12 YEARS OF OPERATIONS FOR **ERARING AND VALES POINT ALONE.** (f)

LETS NOT FORGET THAT OF THE LEGAL BURYING OF ASBESTOS AT ERARING AND **THE ILLEGAL DUMPING OF ASBESTOS** INTO THE CLEAN FILL CAPPING AT THE VALES POINT DAM WITH NO ANSWERS FROM [REDACTED] OF THE EPA OR SUNSET INTERNATIONAL, SINCE 15 DEC. 2018 TO THE ORIGIN OF THE ASBESTOS, TRANSPORTATION, QUANTITY OR REHABILITATION PROCESSES OTHER THAN A CALL FROM [REDACTED] WHO INFORMED ME **"THE SITE HAD BEEN IDENTIFIED AND MARKED".** (f)

*SIMPLY THAT OF WHICH IS NOT GOOD ENOUGH*

RECOGNISED AS A REMEDIATION PROCESS BY BOTH JUSTIN FLOOD (EXECUTIVE MANAGER SUSTAINABILITY) FROM DELTA IN THEIR SUBMISSION AND I QUOTE... "A **PROGRESSIVE CAP AND COVER APPROACH,**

PLUS THAT OF JAMES GRIFFIN MP. PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY FOR ENVIRONMENT AND VETERANS WHO IN 2019 ALSO STATED IN A LETTER TO ME THROUGH YASMIN CATLEY MP (SWANSEA),

3.

***I QUOTE... "THE ASH DAMS AS THOSE AT ERARING AND VALES POINT POWER STATIONS ARE PROGRESSIVELY COVERED WITH CLEAN SOILS AND REVEGETATED TO REHABILITATE THESE AREAS AND MITIGATE ENVIRONMENTAL RISK". UNQUOTE.***

***I SUGGEST THAT BOTH GENTLEMEN ARE OUT OF THEIR DEPTH AND SO MISINFORMED ON WHAT EXACTLY CONSTITUTES REMEDIATION AND NOT JUST CAPPING OR SWEEPING IT UNDER THE CARPET.***

- ***WHO WILL PICK UP THE MULTI BILLION DOLLAR REHABILITATION BILL FOR THESE ASH DAMS?***

***CERTAINLY, NOT SUNSET INTERNATIONAL P/L., EFFECTIVELY PULLING OFF THE DEAL OF A CENTURY AND LEAVING MOST OF THE REHABILITATION FOR THE NSW GOVERNMENT, UNDER ITS CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT.***

***WHO EXACTLY SIGNED OFF ON THIS, I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW, AS I WISH HE WAS MY FINANCIAL ADVISOR ?***

***\$1 MILLION PURCHASE PRICE AND A FEW YEARS LATER VALUED AT \$740 MILLION***

***BURNING COAL DOES BRING IN REVENUE AND GENERATE POWER, YET AT WHAT ONGOING COST TO THE HEALTH OF THE REGIONAL COMMUNITIES AND OUR ENVIRONMENT?***

***QUEENSLAND MP JIM PEARCE, "A FORMER COAL MINER"... RECENTLY ANNOUNCED THAT...***

***I QUOTE,***

***" HE WAS CONCERNED THAT, AT THIS TIME IN THE HISTORY OF COAL MINING IN QUEENSLAND, I AM UNABLE WITH CONFIDENCE TO POINT TO ANY MINING THAT DESERVES THE RIGHT TO MINE". UNQUOTE.***

***HE GOES ON TO STATE THAT HE REPORTEDLY MADE THIS STATEMENT DUE TO LESS THAN ENTHUSIASTIC MINE REHABILITATION EFFORTS, SIGHTING AS AN EXAMPLE OF RIO TINTO WALKING AWAY FROM MINES THAT WERE ONLY 20% REHABILITATED.***

***THESE COAL ASH DAMS MAY NOT BE COAL MINES, YET THEY ARE INTRICATELY LINKED, WHILST WORLD'S BEST PRACTICES SHOULD BE PURSUED FOR ALTERNATIVE SAFE USES OF COAL ASH, SUCH AS GREEN CONCRETE, GEOPOLYMER, ECOCORE PROCESSES AND MUCH MORE.***

***IT IS NOT THE COMMUNITY'S RESPONSIBILITY TO COME UP WITH THE ANSWERS. IT IS THE INDUSTRY ITSELF AND N.S.W. GOVERNMENT THAT HAVE ALLOWED THE PROBLEM TO ESCALATE. (f)***

5.

- WE HAVE **PRE-SCHOOLERS** AT CHAIN VALLEY BAY BEING DIAGNOSED WITH **BRAIN CANCER**.
- TWO TEENAGERS HAVE PASSED AWAY FROM **SPINAL TUMOURS** AND I HAVE TAKEN ANONYMOUS PHONE CALLS FROM PEOPLE WITHIN MANNERING PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL ON THE NUMBER OF KIDS WITH CANCER.

***IT IS NOW A PERSONAL ISSUE FOR ME AND MY FAMILY, AS I TOO HAVE JUST RECENTLY BEEN DIAGNOSED WITH LOW GRADE B CELL LYMPHOMA FOUND IN MY SKIN AND CANCER OF THE LIVER, POSSIBLY PROSTATE. YET I DON'T SMOKE OR DRINK ALCOHOL, YET LIVE WITHIN THE CLOSE PROXIMITY OF THE POWER STATIONS AND ASH DAMS.***

**I'M NOT SUGGESTING** THAT ALL THIS IS DUE TO COAL ASH STORAGE, YET UNLESS WE ARE ALLOWED A INDEPENDENT **HUMAN HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL AUDIT ON THE REGION**, I CAN CONFIDENTLY ASSUME THAT THESE INCIDENCES ARE SOMEHOW IMPLICATED TO COAL BURNING AND OR COAL ASH STORAGE THAT IS NOWHERE NEAR **WORLDS BEST PRACTICE** AND IS SELF REGULATED.

**THE NSW RESOURCES REGULATOR "COMPLIANCE PRIORITIES"** TALK OF THEIR PURPOSE BEING TO INCREASE TRANSPARENCY, COMMUNITY AND INDUSTRY CONFIDENCE IN OUR REGULATORY ACTIVITIES. **(d)**

**THEIR OBJECTIVES, VISION AND MISSIONS ARE:**

- ENSURE SAFE, SUSTAINABLE AND INNOVATIVE MINING INDUSTRY & EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES IN NSW.
- PROMOTE CONFIDENCE IN HOW THE INDUSTRY IS REGULATED.
- MAKE REGULATION TRANSPARENT.
- ENGAGE WITH AND EDUCATE BOTH INDUSTRY AND THE COMMUNITY ABOUT BEST PRACTICE.

***WELL, I CAN CONFIDENTLY SAY THEY HAVE FAILED...***

**JUSTIN FLOOD DELTA'S EXECUTIVE MANAGER OF SUSTAINABILITY**, QUOTES IN HIS PREAMBLE THAT ... ***"THE FINAL FORM OF THE ASH EMPLACEMENT WILL NOT LEAVE A NEGATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL LEGACY"***, **(d)**

YET HE GOES ON TO STATE ... ***"THAT THE PROPOSED RENEWABLE PROJECTS FOR THE ASH DAMS WILL PROVIDE SUFFICIENT REVENUE TO SUPPORT ONGOING ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING"***.

**CERTAINLY NOT AN ANSWER TO OUR REUSE DILEMMA AND AN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT THAT MONITORING WILL BE NEEDED, WELL INTO THE FUTURE.**

6.

*I ASK, WHY JUST ONGOING MONITORING AND NOT A WORLD'S BEST CLEAN UP PLAN?*

*ESPECIALLY IF THEIR REHABILITATION AND PLANTINGS HAVE BEEN SUCH A GREAT SUCCESS OVER THE PAST DECADE, OR THERE IS SIMPLY SOME DOUBT?*

**IN CONCLUSION...**

**I SUGGEST TO THIS COMMITTEE**, THAT IF THE PROCESS OF PROGRESSIVELY CAPPING THE ASH DAMS WITH NO MORE THAN 650mm OF **SUSPECT CLEAN FILL** AND CONTINUING TO ADD A FURTHER **23 MILLION TONNES** TO THE ALREADY **60 MILLION TONNES** OVER THE PROJECTED LIFESPAN OF BOTH ERARING AND VALES POINT POWER STATIONS ALONE AND THEN UNEQUIVOCALLY SEEN BY BOTH DELTA AND THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, JAMES GRIFFIN MP AS "**REHABILITATION**",

***THEN WE HAVE MANY REAL AND MAJOR PROBLEMS FOR THE NSW GOVERNMENT IN THE FUTURE, MAYBE ANOTHER ERIN BROCKOVITCH ISSUE?***

THE INDUSTRY, N.S.W. GOVERNMENT AND THE E.P.A. HAVE LET DOWN THE MANY COMMUNITIES SURROUNDING THE POWER STATIONS AND THEIR ASH DAMS FOR DECADES.

**I PUT TO THIS COMMITTEE...**

- THAT NEW COMMUNITY CONSULTATION COMMITTEES BE FORMED TO ENCOMPASS AT LEAST 50% OF BOTH VALES POINT AND ERARING REGIONAL RESIDENTS TO OVERSEE THE REUSE OF THE COAL ASH.
- THAT OTHER CCC's BE FORMED FOR THE BALANCE OF POWER STATION ASH DAMS THROUGHOUT N.S.W.
- THAT ALL NEW CCC's MEET ON A REGULAR BASIS TO DISCUSS ONGOING ISSUES THAT ARISE.
- **THAT COAL ASH BE LISTED AS A HAZARDOUS WASTE UNDER THE ACT.**
- THAT A SERIOUS COAL ASH LEVY BE APPROVED TO THE TUNE OF THAT AS THE SAME AS THE COMMUNITY IS CHARGED WHEN ATTENDING THEIR LOCAL LANDFILL.

MY SUGGESTION IS SOME \$200 PER TONNE, TO GO BACK INTO A FUND FOR REGIONAL COMMUNITY USAGE.

7.

- THAT BOTH SUNSET INTERNATIONAL PTY LTD AND ORIGIN ENERGY & OTHERS EACH CONTRIBUTE OR DONATE \$100,000 PER ANNUM TO ALLOW ANY NEW CCC's TO EMPLOY THEIR OWN SCIENTISTS AND EXPERTS, TO ALLOW THEM TO CARRYOUT INDEPENDENT TESTS AND READ & COMPREHEND SUPPLIED DOCUMENTS.

AS IT IS APPARENT THE COMMUNITY HAS ONCE AGAIN BEEN LET DOWN BY THE PROCESS THAT CURRENTLY EXISTS.

THIS WOULD BE SEEN BY ALL AS A GESTURE OF GOOD WILL AND TRANSPARENCY AND AS PER THE ORICA CLC PRECEDENT AT BOTANY, FOR THE REHABILITATION OF THE SECOND LARGEST GROUNDWATER TOXIC PLUME OF ETHYLENE DICHLORIDE.

- I CAN ONLY HOPE THAT THE SUBMISSIONS SUPPLIED BY BOTH COMMUNITY AND LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS ARE TAKEN SERIOUSLY, COMPREHENDED AND ACTED UPON BY THIS COMMITTEE.
- IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT THE SAFE RE-USE OF THE COAL ASH STORED IN N.S.W., BE ACCELERATED.
- THAT ALL ASH DAM SITES BE REHABILITATED TO THEIR NATURAL STATE AND RESERVED AS BIODIVERSITY CORRIDORS FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS AT THE COST OF THOSE WHO BENEFITED FINANCIALLY AND CREATED THE PROBLEMS IN THE FIRST PLACE.

**I THANK THIS COMMITTEE FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO ADDRESS THE ISSUES THAT VERY FEW RESIDENTS EITHER UNDERSTAND OR KNOW OF WITHIN THE REGION IN WHICH THEY CHOOSE TO LIVE AND RAISE THEIR FAMILIES.**