



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

# **COAL ASH A VALUABLE RESOURCE WITH GREATER REUSE OPPORTUNITIES TO BE SUPPORTED**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
22 MARCH 2021**

A NSW Upper House committee inquiring into the costs of remediation of sites containing coal ash repositories in New South Wales today tabled its report, urging the government to establish a coal ash reuse taskforce to lead development of a strategy to achieve at least 80 per cent reuse of coal ash produced in New South Wales.

The Chair of the Committee, the Hon Daniel Mookhey MLC, said: "In New South Wales alone, some 5.5 million tonnes of coal ash is produced annually. This inquiry has demonstrated that coal ash is a valuable resource with widespread support across the spectrum of stakeholders for its greater reuse".

Mr Mookhey continued: "With greater opportunities for the reuse of coal ash, industry development and job creation will follow, as well as a reduction in environmental harm and the development of a circular economy. The committee therefore recommended that circular economy principles be promoted when dealing with coal ash waste and reuse, and that feasibility studies and pilot projects to assess and demonstrate commercial viability of new industries that boost the reuse of coal ash are supported".

During the inquiry, it became clear that the prospective or quantum government liability for the remediation of contamination of sites containing coal ash dams is unknown with no estimates currently provided by NSW Treasury.

Mr Mookhey said: "Given that we do not know how much the government may be liable for the remediation of contaminated sites, the committee has recommended that NSW Treasury immediately publish the baseline environmental studies conducted for each operating power station to improve transparency in terms of the NSW Government's liabilities for remediation at these sites".

The report also makes recommendations to provide publicly accessible information in relation to community health and environmental impacts of coal ash dams and surrounding power stations, and improve transparency of the two regulators of coal ash dams – the NSW Environment Protection Authority and Dams Safety NSW.

-ENDS-

*For further information please contact Committee Chair, Hon Daniel Mookhey MLC, on 9230 2736*