



16 November 2006

Legislative Council General Purpose Standing Committee No 2

Final Report: Health impacts of air pollution in the Sydney basin

The Chair of General Purpose Standing Committee No 2, the Hon Robyn Parker MLC, has announced that the Committee's Report into the health impacts of air pollution in the Sydney basin has been tabled today.

"Sydney is a beautiful place to live, but the physical features that make it beautiful also help make our air pollution the worst in Australia. Air pollution is more than irritating – it's life threatening, and contributes to 600-1,400 deaths per year in Sydney alone." Ms Parker said.

"Despite evidence that air pollution has improved over the last 30 years, these improvements are offset by Sydney's growing population, particularly in the southwest and western areas of Sydney - the air pollution 'hot-spots'. An increasing reliance on private motor vehicles, made worse by inadequate public transport infrastructure, is also a major challenge." Ms Parker explained.

"A lack of coordination between government agencies is hindering the response to the air pollution challenge. The Committee makes clear recommendations that will strengthen the role of the NSW Department of Environment and Conservation in strategic planning decisions, to ensure that future urban developments do not make air quality worse in those 'hot-spot' areas."

"The NSW Government's closure of air quality monitoring stations and the cessation of air toxics monitoring is unacceptable, and the Committee has recommended that monitoring stations be reinstated, and monitoring of air toxics recommence. The public are entitled to be aware of the quality of the air they breathe, and at present, they are being denied this vital information."

"Air pollution within Sydney's road tunnels is also of grave concern, and the continual refusal by the Road and Traffic Authority to install health advisory signs at the entrance of the M5 East and other tunnels is unfathomable. The Committee has recommended that the RTA use existing Variable Message Signs to advise motorists to take precautions against air pollution in road tunnels. The Committee has also recommended that the NSW Government take responsibility for meeting future air quality standards in relation to existing road tunnels."

The membership of General Purpose Standing Committee 2 is: the Hon Robyn Parker MLC (Liberal Party), the Hon Tony Catanzariti MLC (Australian Labor Party), Hon Melinda Pavey MLC (The Nationals), Ms Sylvia Hale MLC (The Greens), Hon Henry Tsang MLC (Australian Labor Party), the Hon Christine Robertson MLC (Australian Labor Party) and the Hon Dr Arthur Chesterfield-Evans MLC (Australian Democrats). For comment, please contact the Committee Chair, the Hon Robyn Parker MLC on (02) 9230 2433. The report is on the Committee's website www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/gpsc2. A hard copy of the report can be obtained by phoning (02) 9230 3544.

**For comment please contact the Hon Robyn Parker MLC,
Committee Chair, on (02) 9230 2433**