

Responses to Question on Notice
Nature Conservation Council of NSW
GPSC 5 - Performance of the NSW Environment Protection Authority

Are there any best-model exemplars which you would cite in relation to coalmining activities and transportation?

The Nature Conservation Council of NSW draws the committee's attention to two reports that highlight best practice with respect to the transport of coal by train.

The first report, *Wagon Lids Analysis Environmental Evaluation*, prepared by Connell Hatch for Queensland Rail Limited in March 2008, concludes that one of the main advantages of coal wagon lids is a "99% reduction in coal dust emissions from the top of wagons, the major coal dust emission source" (see page 71).

The second report, *NSW Coal Mining Benchmarking Study: International Best Practice Measures to Prevent and/or Minimise Emissions of Particulate Matter from Coal Mining*, prepared for the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage by Katestone Environmental Pty Ltd in June 2011, identifies the covering of loads as a best practice measure to control emissions of particulate matter from rail corridors (see page 193). The covering of stock piles is also identified as best practice

This report also provides other examples of best practice measures to prevent and/or minimise emissions of particulate matter from coal mining.

Copies of both reports are **enclosed**.

It is also noted that:

- Waratah Coal has begun to cover coal wagons in Queensland after their supplementary environmental impact statement for the project said that the coal wagon covers would not make coal transport less efficient (www.theherald.com.au/story/1558060/covered-wagons-en-route-for-coal/).
- It is proposed to cover wagons, conveyors and stockpiles as part of the operating procedure for a new coal terminal in Bunbury, south of Perth.
- A Senate report on the impacts on health of air quality in Australia recommended that 'states and territories require industry to implement covers on all coal wagon fleets' (Senate, Community Affairs References Committee, Impacts on health of air quality in Australia, August 2013).

Can you think of an industry in Australia which has been badly affected by excessive regulation?

For the purpose of this inquiry, the Nature Conservation Council does not consider there to be a relevant industry that has been badly affected by excessive regulation.

We recognise that there is a need to find the right balance - between both advising and supporting industry, and regulating industry.

It is interesting to note that the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage report, *Who Cares About the Environment in 2012?*, found that:

- “For six of the nine sectors surveyed, the most prevalent belief is that the strictness of environmental regulations is ‘about right’ – recreational and commercial fishing (41%), individuals and households (52%), farming and agriculture (42%), tourism (55%), retailing (47%), and forestry (40%)” (page 41).
- “The most common view about the remaining two sectors is that environmental regulations are too lax – mining (49%), and property development and construction (46%)” (page 41).

It is also noted that a recent CSIRO report on Australian attitudes towards mining found that:

“reducing the legislative and regulatory burden on industry may make it easier to get a mine approved and operating, but may simultaneously erode public confidence in legislative and regulatory power, which may reduce the acceptance of mining more broadly and make it harder to operate a mine efficiently under conditions of increased social conflict” .

(Moffat et al, *Australian attitudes toward mining Citizen Survey – 2014 Results*, CSIRO, September 2014)