

**INQUIRY INTO PERFORMANCE OF THE NSW
ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AUTHORITY**

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially Confidential

Submission on the Performance of the environmental Protection Authority

An effective EPA should be a fearless and independent environmental watchdog that puts the natural environment and the community first.

The EPA should be sufficiently resourced to enforce compliance of licensing and approval, defend regulatory policies, and actions through law and prosecute offenders.

Licence conditions must be clear and enforceable and the EPA should adopt measurable targets which are based on the best available science, developed in consultation with the best experts independently of those being regulated.

The EPA should routinely report on performance of its programs in terms of these targets.

The EPA should reinstate the role of community and local council representatives on the EPA Board.

The quality and effectiveness of community engagement should be monitored and reported on by the EPA. The community consultative committees should effectively contribute to policy and decisions on pollution control.

The EPA should improve transparency and accountability. Professional reports on every non-compliance should be available on-line. The EPA should work with local communities to ensure best practice transparency.

The EPA should engage stakeholders, including community and environmental groups, and should regularly evaluate its community engagement.

The EPA should expand its public register to provide for publication of all relevant details of its licensing process.

The community no longer trusts the EPA. The EPA must put the environment and healthy communities ahead of polluters.

The EPA's performance is dismal in protecting, restoring and enhancing the quality of the environment in NSW while maintaining sustainable development. Fines imposed for polluters and non-compliance have been minimal and ineffective e.g. Orica pollution events and the illegal logging at Royal Camp, NSW. The EPA concealed the extent and impact of coal dust pollution in the Hunter. It did not put the environment ahead of the polluter. The EPA's refusal to investigate complaints about forestry practices in Royal Camp Forest, NSW, demonstrated unprofessionalism. The EPA failed to act with appropriate legal force on the contamination event on groundwater in the Pilliga by Santos Coal.

The regulation of pollution in NSW needs improvement. Compliance and enforcement need to be improved. Fines for non-compliance and pollution need to be greatly increased to be effective. A public register of all non-compliance and pollution events needs to be provided. The environment and healthy communities need to be put ahead of polluters.