

**Submission  
No 235**

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

**Name:** Mr Des Cleary

**Date received:** 29/08/2014

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Dear Sir/Madam,

To achieve sustainable growth and development, New South Wales needs a fearless and independent Environment Protection Authority that puts the interests of the community and natural environment first. The environmental and social needs of the NSW community, at the strategic as well as the local level, need to be properly considered alongside the need for economic growth. Anything else will result in some short term gain (mostly by developers) at the cost of long term restoration of degraded natural resources and the environment funded by the community. Unsustainable development is not worth the cost.

Most importantly, to ensure the proper consideration of natural resources and the environment in development decisions, the government organisations responsible for them, such as the EPA, must be adequately resourced so that they can effectively meet their mandates objectives, enforce compliance with conditions of licence or approval, defend regulatory policies and actions through laws when required, or prosecute offenders.

Increased growth and industrial development are placing enormous pressure on the air we breathe, the water we drink and the ecosystems which support our well-being and survival - all our natural resources and environments are under increasing stress.

The EPA, and other departments mandated to protect natural resources and the environment, have an important role to play in protecting, restoring and enhancing the quality of the environment and its natural resources in New South Wales. However a number of recent incidents highlight the difficulties an organisation such as the EPA's faces, with failure to regulate or prosecute polluters and stop environmental breaches. Following these incidents there is strong public perception that the EPA and other government departments have been captured by industry, and do not act in the public interest.

We look to this inquiry to address the specific concerns raised by the community and to make recommendations to ensure that the EPA is capable of proactively ensuring that the environment and healthy communities are fully and properly taken into account in all development decisions, especially those being promoted by government, and in compliance with development conditions.

Yours sincerely,  
Des Cleary