

**Submission
No 171**

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

Name: Ms Margot Maasakkers

Date received: 29/08/2014

29 August 2014

The Hon Robert Brown MLC
Chair, General Purpose Standing Committee No 5 Legislative Council
NSW Parliament, Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

cc: Jamie Parker MP, Member for Balmain

Dear Chair

RE: Submission to Inquiry into the performance of the NSW Environmental Protection Authority

Further to 1(b)(v) of the Inquiry's terms of reference, I would like to make the following comments about the regulation, or lack of it, of cruise passenger ships, at the White Bay Cruise Ship Terminal at Balmain.

I live in Jane Street Balmain, which is near the White Bay Cruise Terminal. I note that ships also berth at the dock opposite the end of our Street below Birrung Park. I am writing in support of our community and to voice my concern regarding the pollution being emitted by the cruise ships, and other ships, at White Bay and the resulting health impacts.

The Balmain peninsula is one of the most densely populated areas in Sydney. There are many young families that now live in this area which is evident by the five primary schools and numerous preschools and daycare centres. Two of the primary schools are located less than 400m from the diesel smoke stacks of the cruise ships at White Bay Terminal. Also, sport and activities are undertaken at Birrung Park, less than 50 metres from the diesel smoke stacks of the cruise ships at the second terminal. When a ship is docked the smell of the diesel fumes is heavy in the air and is laden with heavy metals and chemicals.

It has been brought to my attention that the ships that dock at White Bay do not comply with the World Health Organisation's recommended controls for emissions as follows:

- 1. Cruise Ships in Sydney Harbour are allowed to burn fuel with sulphur content up to 3.5%.**
This is 35 times higher than allowed in Europe (at 0.1% in port) and in North America (at not more than 1%, within 200 nautical miles of the east or west coastlines, reducing to 0.1% by January 2015).
- 2. Shore-to-ship power has not been provided**
Whilst apparently there is a requirement to allow for shore power at the Terminal in the future, there is no requirement to actually provide it.
- 3. Emissions monitoring criteria is inadequate and unsafe**
I understand that only two of the several dangerous toxins in diesel emissions are monitored – sulphur dioxide and PM10. It is also understood that the criteria against which sulphur dioxide is being monitored is totally inadequate with the 24 hour allowable limit 11.4 times higher than the World Health Organisation's recommendation.
- 4. There are no penalties for breaches of planning conditions**
Who is looking after the community?

This lack of regulation has resulted in our community experiencing a range of health symptoms and exposure to serious known health risks, all of which could easily be avoided if the protective measures, which were adopted long ago in the Northern Hemisphere, were implemented here.

The EPA (then known as the Department of Environment and Climate Change - DECCW) made a submission along with other government departments and members of the public on the adequacy of the Sydney Ports Environmental Assessment Report. Amongst other things, the submission stated:

- “DECCW considers that the adverse air quality impacts of the proposed CPT operations could be significantly reduced through the use of 0.5 per cent sulphur fuel”
- “DECCW still considers that adoption of shore-to-ship power would be the most effective and innovative way to satisfy Action for Air objectives of reducing air pollutants”

Despite these concerns the Director General of Planning signed off on what has proved to be woefully inadequate environmental controls a few days before ships began arriving on 15 April 2013.

Had the recommendations been adopted, the community would not be suffering air pollution to the extent it is today. The EPA’s role is to protect the NSW environment and community.

I join our community in requesting that -

- **urgent interim measures are applied so that we do not have another summer inhaling these emissions and risking our future health**
- **the government implement the EPA recommendations to protect the health of the community.**

Yours sincerely

/M Masasakkers