INQUIRY INTO PERFORMANCE OF THE NSW ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AUTHORITY

Name: Mr Kevin Davies

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Dear Sir/Madam,

I attended a presentation by Dr. Ian Wright from the University of Western Sydney on the state of health of the Wollangambe River (17/08/2014) . I was shocked to learn that his research has shown that the Clarence Colliery, by discharging polluted waste water into the Wollangambe River, is in clear breach of it's operating license conditions as set out by the EPA. In this case, the EPA has failed to monitor and enforce its own license conditions. This is an unacceptable situation. It raises the question as to how many license breaches go undetected by the EPA. It also demonstrated that the coal industry cannot be trusted to self-monitor, and therefore, New South Wales needs an independent Environment Protection Authority that puts the interests of the community and natural environment first.

Most importantly, it must be adequately resourced so that it can effectively meet its objectives and enforce compliance with conditions of licence or approval, defend regulatory policies and actions through law 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.

The EPA has an important role to play in protecting, restoring and enhancing the quality of the environment in New South Wales. However a number of recent incidents highlight the EPA's failure to regulate or prosecute polluters and stop environmental breaches. Following these incidents there is strong public perception that the EPA has been captured by industry, and does 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 putting the environment and healthy communities ahead of polluters.

Yours sincerely,
Kevin Davies