

**Submission
No 146**

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

Name: Mr Jamie Parker MP

Date received: 29/08/2014



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

28 August 2014

Dear Chair,

Re: Submission to the *Inquiry into the Performance of the NSW Environmental Protection Authority*.

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission. Further to 1. (b) (v) of the Inquiry's terms of reference, my comments are in relation to the regulation of cruise ships at the White Bay Cruise Terminal in Balmain.

This is an issue of importance to my electorate and my office has received copies of the numerous submissions made to this Inquiry by local residents. I too wish to draw the Committee's attention to the serious environmental and health concerns, as well as the negative impacts on quality of life for Balmain residents as a result of the operation of the Terminal.

Since it was first announced five years ago, I have actively supported the local community in their campaign against the ill-founded proposal to install the international cruise ship terminal at White Bay. As Mayor of Leichhardt Council, I fought the former Labor Government's flawed and unpopular decision – in sharp contrast to the enthusiastic support for the move shown by the then-local MP.

Not only Leichhardt Council, but the City of Sydney, North Sydney Council, Woollahra Council - all harbourside councils - the Barangaroo Action Group, the Friends of Barangaroo, the National Trust, the peak lobby group of the tourism and transport industry the Tourism and Transport Forum, and users of the facility said, "We don't want it there." In fact, Anne Sherry, the Chief Executive of Carnival Cruises was quoted in the *Sydney Morning Herald* as saying:

The move away from Barangaroo was always a political, government decision. We flagged from the beginning we wanted to stay at Barangaroo.

Health Concerns and Quality of Life

The residents of the White Bay area have represented to me their serious and justified concerns about their health as a result of emissions from ships docked at the Cruise Ship Terminal. The Terminal is located on a densely populated peninsula that is home to many families with young children as well as elderly residents.

Two primary schools and a daycare centre are located in an area less than 400 metres from the exhaust funnels of the docking ships. The children who attend these facilities are at risk of exposure to exhaust fumes, both inside the buildings and in the playground.

My office has received a significant number of complaints regarding the health effects of fuel exhaust from ships docking at the Terminal. Residents in the area have reported suffering headaches, sinus problems, sore throats, eye irritation, coughing and lung irritation as a result of the persistent exhaust fumes while ships are docked at the Terminal. The diesel exhaust from the ships is noticeable many streets away, and it frequently pervades the homes of residents in streets adjacent to the Terminal. This raises health concerns for affected residents both now and into the future.

Residents have reported being unwilling to open windows, particularly in summer, as a result of the exhaust fumes. They are understandably frustrated and angry at the inconvenience and degradation of their quality of life.

Carcinogenic Chemicals and Inadequate Emissions Monitoring

The health impacts of diesel pollution are well recognised around the world. In fact a number of countries in North America and Europe have adopted stringent emissions standards to protect people's health and the environment—standards that represent best practices and should be in place here in Sydney. I have concerns about the EPA's standards and Sydney Ports' commitment to environmental and health standards.

The monitoring of emissions from cruise ships by the EPA has so far not included monitoring of potentially carcinogenic chemicals that are present in diesel exhaust such as Benzene, Toluene, Formaldehyde, Nitrogen Oxides, nor does it monitor several forms of particulate matter emitted such as PM2.5. Benzene, for example, has no recommended safe level for exposure. Research indicates these carcinogens, once inhaled, can remain dormant in the body and pose health risks long into the future.

The EPA's monitoring of the White Bay Cruise Ship Terminal does not conform to the World Health Organisation's recommended controls for diesel emissions. The EPA monitors only two dangerous chemical emissions: Sulfur Dioxide and PM10. Even then, the EPA permits Sulfur Dioxide emissions over a 24 hour period at a rate 11.4 times higher than World Health Organisation recommendations.

A key part of the problem is that cruise ships at the White Bay Terminal are permitted to burn fuel with a sulfur content of 3.5%—35 times higher than standards recently adopted in Europe and North America that limit sulfur content for ships in port to 0.1%. The EPA has previously recommended that a reduction to 0.5% sulfur fuel could have a significant impact on the air quality of residential areas near the Terminal.

Shore-to-Ship Power Must Be Provided

A key part of the solution should be the installation of shore-to-ship power facilities that allow ships to plug into the local power grid and switch off their engines while moored. More than 100 ports around the world use shore-to-ship power to limit engine emissions. Many of the cruise ships docking at White Bay are equipped to make use of shore power.

Shore power facilities were also recommended for the White Bay site when the facility was approved, but so far Sydney Ports has not acted to install shore power facilities. The EPA endorsed shore power as a highly effective measure to meet Action for Air objectives, yet the installation was not made mandatory in the development of the site. This must now be made compulsory.

Excessive Noise

Residents in the White Bay area report excessive noise and vibrations from cruise ship engines running at the Terminal at all hours of the day and night. They also report that noisy ship maintenance is taking place at the White Bay site. At a community meeting on March 16, 2014 residents reported that they are frequently disturbed by generators running, ship horns, music and onboard PA announcements.

More stringent penalties for infringements

Cruise ship operators have repeatedly ignored warnings that have been issued over excessive noise pollution, and it is likely they will continue to do so as long as there are inadequate penalties. The residents of the area report that noise guidelines are regularly breached. I encourage the Committee to recommend that the penalties for noise pollution are stricter and enforced, so that they act as an effective deterrent for breaches in the future.


Thank you for considering my submission and those of my constituents. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have questions or would like further information.

Recommendations

I urge the Committee to:

- ensure EPA monitoring of diesel emissions conforms to international standards. In particular that the sulfur fuel burn be reduced to 0.5%
- make mandatory the provision of shore-to-ship power
- increase and enforce penalties for noise pollution infringements.

Yours sincerely,



Jamie Parker MP
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