

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

Name: Name suppressed

Date received: 29/08/2014

Partially Confidential

26th 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 Environment
Protection Authority

Further to 1. [b][v] of the inquiry's terms of reference , I would like to make the following comments about regulation of passenger ships at the White Bay Cruise terminal at Balmain:

Thank you for this opportunity to engage the local community.

I fully endorse a Parliamentary Inquiry into regulation of Cruise ships visiting the White Bay Terminal.

However I am also anxious that this Inquiry is not used as an excuse to delay immediate action to protect the local community during this coming cruise season.

We are already aware of the serious health impacts of the pollution that affected many residents last summer.

Emissions from bunker fuel have been classified as Group I Carcinogens by the WHO.

These fumes penetrate our homes. They are poisonous.
They are known to cause cancer, heart and respiratory diseases.
The situation is having a devastating affect on my health.

My first symptom is a foggy headache. This progresses to sore, weepy eyes, sore swollen throat and oesophagus, blocked sinuses, sneezing, persistent deep, dry

cough, palpitations, high blood pressure, loss of appetite, loss of sleep and extreme fatigue.

Some of these symptoms may last for several days.

I have visited my doctor many times over the last cruise season.

My blood pressure was abnormally high on occasions. After a BP reading at the gym one morning I was sent straight to Balmain Hospital. My blood pressure medication was increased.

I sometimes wake with palpitations.

A chest X-ray for my irritable cough showed no significant changes but the cough persisted on and off. I could not talk without coughing but I did not have a cold.

My sinuses were inflamed when I visited the ENT specialist.

My ears were blocked but it there was minimal wax.

My eyes were watery and sore but there was no obvious infection.

I lost weight as I had no appetite. My throat sometimes burned and my oesophagus felt swollen.

I felt perpetually exhausted but could not sleep.

It became apparent over a period of time that these symptoms were coinciding with visits from the cruise ships.

I have also noticed that trees and shrubs in our street are suffering. The foliage has suddenly diminished in size and colour. Growth is stunted and some plants are dying unexpectedly.

Our house inside, and out, is covered in a black greasy film.

I would like to know why a ship, burning bunker fuel to generate enough power to service accommodation and facilities for up to 3000 or more people, is allowed to berth in a densely populated inner city residential area of Sydney.

Would a similar sized power house, using bunker fuel, gain approval to be built on the wharf where it is berthed?

I have lived near the White Bay Terminal for many years. I am familiar with the ships that have berthed there since it opened.

The topography of this area is such that the smoke stacks line up with our homes [many over a century old], senior's housing, primary schools, play fields and the local hospital. There are many young families living in this area.

Air pollution and noise have always been a problem but nothing to match the pollution from the huge cruise ships. They generate power for at least 9 hours a day and sometimes overnight, with a scheduled increase in visits.

Some companies have already begun fitting 'whale tails' to their funnels to protect their passengers from the fumes. I am concerned that if these ships should berth at WBCT the fumes could be diverted directly towards our residents.

The Cruise Terminal was moved here from Barangaroo, in haste, despite many community objections.

The DECCW [now EPA] advised, in 2010, that the use of low sulphur fuel and provision of shore power for cruise ships be included in the planning approval for the White Bay Cruise Terminal.

Why was this advice ignored by the outgoing Government in 2011?

Why did the incoming government not rectify the situation?

Why were our complaints ignored at the many community meetings held with authorities, prior to approval?

We have already suffered one hot summer cruise season with many residents feeling ill. We cannot open up the house for ventilation or entertain outside. We cannot face another even busier one.

We hear that the various Government agencies are working towards a solution. However, I understand that the outcome of this Inquiry will not be announced until February 2015.

We plead with the authorities to introduce interim measures now, to protect this vulnerable community before the coming cruise season.

Regulations should be put in place to control air quality and cruise ship emissions in this densely populated, inner city, residential area. This should include co-ordinated Emergency Accident Management Plans with residents.

These regulations should be closely monitored, and harsh penalties applied for any breaches.

What is the role of the EPA in the government, if it is not able to protect the taxpayers and families from well-documented health risks?

I am very stressed by this debilitating situation and would find it difficult to speak at the Inquiry.

Yours sincerely,