

**Submission
No 53**

**INQUIRY INTO COSTS FOR REMEDIATION OF SITES
CONTAINING COAL ASH REPOSITORIES**

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Submission to the
Inquiry into the Costs for Remediation of Sites containing Coal Ash Repositories

I have been a resident of Lake Macquarie for 19 years. I enjoy the recreational opportunities the lake offers – I use the cycle paths and bush walks around the lake and go canoeing on the lake. I knew of the 2 power stations near the lake, but only recent became aware of the 2 enormous coal ash dumps that are hidden from general view.

The Eraring dump contains 34 million tonnes of coal ash, and Vales Point 26 million tonnes. The coal ash has been laid on ground with no barrier to prevent leaching from the site and is retained by a dam wall in each case (25m above sea level at Eraring, 21m at Vales Point). These dumps represents an ongoing pollution threat to the lake through leaching into ground water or into streams, which will remain for decades into the future unless there is action on removal and remediation. There is the possibility of catastrophic breaching of a dam wall as a result of mine subsidence, earthquake or sustained heavy rainfall.

It is obvious that the NSW Government via the EPA has in the past failed its duty of care for the health and safety to the citizens of Lake Macquarie
Currently all information relating to monitoring of these sites is shrouded in secrecy.

My plea is for urgent action on the following fronts

- The coal ash must be removed and transported to a suitable new site in land. The site should be prepared to current international standards to prevent leaching and the coal ash covered.
- The land now covered in coal ash should be remediated. (It is possible the sites may be suitable for future solar farms using existing power transmission infrastructure)
- Coal Ash has potential economic use (replacement of cement in concrete is one example) Other countries have found commercial uses for coal ash (eg - Japan uses 97%) There is a need for an organisation to be set up and given the responsibility to research, develop and commercialise new uses for coal ash. It is essential this organisation is independent of existing competitors, and that has the funds required to do the job properly. The funding should come from a levy on the electricity generated by the power stations.
- The results of all monitoring of coal ash sites must be publicly available
- The Myuna Recreation Centre needs to be reinstated.

Peter O'Shannessy