

**Submission
No 63**

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

Name: Mr Neil Wynn

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I am a resident of Mannering Park I have grown up in the shadows of a toxic coal fired power station Vales Point.

My family has been on Lake Macquarie since the late 1800's my father bought land in Mannering Park in the 1930's.

I have watch the environmental vandalism from this coal fired power station all my life hiding under government legislation to protect themselves.

I grew up exploring Wyee Creek watching the toxic coal spills into this creek so thick you could not paddle through it , the massive fish kills that followed the then electricity commission in the 80's ripping gaping big holes between Mannering hole and Wyee creek to try and flush the toxic coal ash out and today this legacy of man made land disturbance causes creek bank erosion and trees falling into the creek.

The current toxic coal ash dam was originally part of the Mannering wetlands and in times of floods water could make its way back to Colongra wetlands at Lake Munmorah , these wetlands were used by local residents prior to town water connection during droughts to collect water from the "Blue Lakes" commonly referred to by locals and what we know today at Aboriginal Billabongs. My father would tell stories of how the area was teeming with wildlife.

During the mid 80's I recall many times going to the ash dam with my father to the power station dump sites which has no fences or gates to collect timber for different projects of my fathers , it was common knowledge if you wanted timber or odds and ends you could easily get it from one of two dump sites located next to the coal ash I recall one day visiting the site which was closest to Vales Road (not the other near construction road) and finding many drums of oil being half buried , I have had recent discussions with locals who were teens at the time telling stories that they would light fires and roll these drums on the fire and watch them explode.

I had raised this issue with Vales Point power station a number of years ago when still under government ownership but they tended to think back then they were the law and could do what they wanted and just dismissed my concerns about leaching from this dump site. I was told the dump site opposite Construction Road "was now under the ash dam" and could not be investigated.

Recently the power station cleaned their massive water tanks on Vales Road , these were constructed for fresh water storage for the power station coming from the old Madi dams in there days , today these I believe have been converted into settling tanks from the power station inlet/outlet so now settle salt water and the waste that comes from the outlet before entering Lake Macquarie , I watched these tanks being emptied of black putrid muck pumped into tankers, I watched them turning into the ash dam where I presume were dumped with all the other toxic waste they have delivered here over the years. Licences to dump toxic waste into unlined dams which has now been exposed has contaminating our marine environment.

Recent media reports of mudcrabs contaminated from cadmium and other heavy metals which have been caught near the Vales Point ash dam sites.

This power station and local mines do not have a proud history of power generation or mining in this region , government asleep at the wheel letting these industries hide behind legislation that does not protect the general public.

I would like to invite anyone in this inquiry to come to this area , let me show you the damage to this area , let me onsite to the coal ash dams and show you were they are hiding these contaminated dumps.

Two weeks ago we lost another local identity who was a power station worker , did not drink or smoke , exercised every day , was diagnosed with cancer just prior to Christmas and Im told full of cancer , there seems to be a large amount of cancer in the region , including a number of brain tumours.

Every afternoon when the sun is setting I watch the brown plume of toxic smoke from the stacks of Vales and Eraring.

I do not believe this enquiry will result in any changes , when you have someone buy a power station for \$1 million , makes \$100 million going by media reports today and is seeking \$11 million of government grants and looks like has obtained it and is a donor to government you have no chance in doing anything.

Neil Wynn