

**Submission
No 66**

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

Name: Ms Kathryn Hines

Date Received: 16 February 2020

I live on the Central Coast and am writing to urge the government to take urgent action to stop the water and ecosystem contamination that is occurring from leaching coal ash dumps and power station discharge.

I am not a scientific or medical expert but I understand how vital it is that we listen to what the relevant scientific and medical experts tell us about the effects of such contamination on human health as well as the effects on the health of the environment, and that action is taken in line with their recommendations.

It is unacceptable that neither Vales Point nor Eraring ash dumps have dam liners to prevent leaching into, and contamination of, groundwater. How did authorities this let happen?

It is also a matter of great concern that a large number of heavy metals – including arsenic, cadmium, selenium, and lead – exceed environmental trigger points for groundwater concentration at Vales Point and Eraring.

It is shocking that government regulations are so inadequate, and that the coal companies are not being held accountable for the poisoning of our water and land. It is the government's responsibility to listen to the experts and to regulate and enforce measures that protect and maintain a healthy environment.

The inquiry into the remediation of sites containing coal ash repositories must ensure that:

- the advice from the relevant expert scientists is listened to and acted on in full.

- regulations are put in place to ensure that the maximum concentration limits of heavy metals for water discharge are in line with the ANZECC (2000) guidelines.

- the NSW government commit to thorough decontamination of the Vales Point and Eraring power station sites and to, over time, return the coal ash sites to wetlands habitat. This would provide an opportunity to create new jobs in environmental remediation work.

- the NSW government carry out a feasibility study into the environmentally responsible reuse of coal ash. Eg for making building and manufacturing products which are in high demand. This is also an opportunity to create new jobs.

I look forward to hearing the outcomes of this inquiry,

Yours sincerely,
Kathryn Hines