

**INQUIRY INTO PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT
OPERATIONS AMENDMENT (CLEAN AIR) BILL 2021**

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 19 June 2021

Partially
Confidential

The most recent analysis of health impacts caused by coal-fired power stations found that in NSW alone, they contribute to 450 babies being born with low birth-weight, 7,582 asthma symptoms in children and 477 premature deaths. This contributes to a national cost of \$2.4 billion dollars to the economy. How can the NSW government permit coal-fired power stations to continue to harm community health like this?

The Clean Air Bill presents a crucial opportunity for law reform. It proposes to amend the Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997 to stop coal-fired power stations emitting dangerous levels of air pollutants. This could significantly reduce the health impacts of toxic air pollution on communities.

If the Clean Air Bill is enacted it will substantially reduce the amount of nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxide, particle matter and mercury that coal-fired power stations can emit. These are most damaging to our children and young people, mostly in the Hunter Valley region as doctors in this area attest, but also coal mining and burning reduces air quality in the Central Coast of NSW and Sydney suburbs. The elderly are most at risk of dying from poor air quality, an added burden to the risks of the Covid 19 virus and reduced lung function.

The impact of air pollution is tremendously expensive, in the order of billions of dollars according to the Australian Institute of Health & Welfare. We cannot afford to watch air pollution cause illness, death and reduced economic productivity in these times of Coronavirus chaos.

No coal fired power station should be exempt from the standards set out in the Clean Air Bill. NSW citizens are worth more than that.

I urge the government to act to make this bill law as soon as possible.