

**Submission
No 29**

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

Name: Miss Jenny Hughes

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Protection of the Environment Operations Amendment (Clean Air) Bill 2021 (Clean Air Bill).

Dear Sir,

I have been a registered nurse for 23 years, mostly working in the public health system. As you are aware this is a world class health system and one we should be proud of. However it takes a lot of money to keep our hospitals running- something the government feels EVERY SINGLE DAY. We are constantly asked by the hospital CEO for any idea on how we can save money because they are so desperate. We could start with cleaner air.

On a pod cast featuring Proff Vicki Kotsiriles last week it was stated air pollution has contributed to more than 3000 premature deaths per year in Australia nearly three times that of deaths from MVA's . This does not take into account the emotional toll of losing a baby, the cost should they require hospitalization from a D and C should the body not fully expel the fetus and placenta fully and time off work. and or counselling.

the tiny particles from burning fossil fuels or combustion of fossil fuels is associated with 2216 deaths per year in Australia.

We have 14500 instances of children experiencing asthma symptoms associated with coal fired power stations.

However it is not just coal that causes issues. Pollution from cars and wood fires is also a massive issue affecting peoples health. The UK has pledged to ban the sale of all petrol, diesel and hybrid cars by 2030. Australia is way behind with only 0.2% of it's vehicles being electric, and I can see why when most electric cars prices are out of the average person's budget.

Australia has one of the lowest rates of electric car ownership in the OECD

There is abundant evidence that fine particle exposure can cause adverse health effects and increased risk of death.

There is no lower threshold for these effects.

- Nitrogen dioxide is strongly associated with childhood asthma and impaired lung development, which can lead to lifelong adverse health effects and premature death.
- Long term exposure to sulfur dioxide, even at low concentrations, has been associated with cardio respiratory mortality.

One thing that has never added up for me is air pollution costs the economy. Premature death attributed to ambient air pollution in Australia has been estimated at up to AUD \$24 billion per year. The health cost to the Australian economy from coal fired power stations alone is \$2.4 billion dollars annually. This all comes out of our medicare budget, yet in the other hand, we are handing out tax brakes and handout to fossil fuel companies to continue to do this? Why would this happen when safer cleaner options are available?

Technologies to reduce pollution from coal fired power station emissions are well established and should be standard practice

- Various forms of technology exist to reduce emissions from coal fired power stations such as:

o wet scrubbers, or flue gas desulfurisation which can remove up to 99% of sulfur pollution and also remove mercury; and

o selective catalytic reduction methods which can be added to power stations to reduce over 90% of oxides of nitrogen from emissions.

- Emissions limits that apply to the NSW coal fired power stations must be reduced to force the power stations to install these best practice pollution reduction technologies.

No coal fired power station should be exempt from the standards proposed in the Clean Air Bill

- Under current legislation, some NSW power stations, such as Vales Point, are given

an exemption from tougher air pollution emissions limits that would otherwise apply to them under the Protection of the Environment Operations Act (Clean Air) Regulation 2010 (Clean Air Regulation).

This means some station operators do not have to substantially improve pollution control technology as the power station gets older, which is what certain provisions in the Clean Air Regulation are intended to achieve.

Thank you for considering my submission .

kind regards

Jenny Hughes