

Regulation of Methane and Diesel emissions in NSW

The NSW EPA is well aware of the impacts of Methane and diesel leakage from coal mines and other infrastructure on the Central Coast and especially in Lake Macquarie. It is now time to tighten emission reductions, as they are not only impacting on the coastal environment, it is a human health issue for those who live close to those mines.

I have for many years raised many health issues potentially from mining and burning of coal with very little interest from the EPA. It amazes me that a body calling themselves the "Environment Protection Authority" are not only allowing the escape of methane and other toxic materials into the lakes in which the community recreates, they have turned a blind eye for decades by handing out exemption after exemption.

Standards must be enforced to a level of Worlds Best Practice, and yet then they would not reach a positive level for human health. Methane exposure can directly cause dizziness, fatigue and nausea by displacing oxygen. Indirectly methane contributes to the formation of ground-level ozone a lung irritant that can trigger asthma, worsen respiratory illness like C.O.P.D. and lead to cardiovascular problems and cancer.

The Central Coast and Lake Macquarie regions have already many of these diseases running rampant with some small townships having Head and Neck Cancers reaching 102% above the Australian Average. Lung cancer has reached 90% above the Australian average with Mesothelioma at 83% above. Asthma has reached up to 15.4% of the total population of some coastal suburbs. (Australian Cancer Atlas)

Without a strong EPA and one that has the concern for the welfare of the local communities, we will always have mining companies and others complaining that it is not feasible. Yet everything has a limited lifespan, those being the coal mines which supply the power industry and the power stations themselves. Not knowing exactly how many more years the power stations will operate and not knowing the longevity of the coal mines, the community cannot sustain the impacts on their health for years to come.

The EPA has a duty of care to protect the environment and those who live in the environment, which is being impacted by methane and hydrocarbons being leaked into our air, lakes and on our lands.

Reduction goals need to be set at the highest protection level, as the industry's lifespan is very much limited, yet the population continues to grow.

Gary

