



# The People's Clean Air Action Plan for NSW

Summary



Environmental  
Justice Australia

## The people of NSW have been waiting too long for the Berejiklian government to combat toxic air pollution and protect their health.

Every day Environment Minister Matt Kean delays action on air pollution is another day communities suffer health impacts from air pollution – like asthma, heart attack, and premature death.

The overwhelming industrial source of air pollution in Australia and NSW is coal-fired power stations. Coal-fired power stations disproportionately impact the communities living near them, making it one of the most significant environmental justice issues in Australia.

Yet, the NSW government lets coal-fired power stations pump out toxic pollution and make record profits at the expense of the community's health.

NSW's air pollution standards do not adequately protect health and lag significantly behind other regions, including the USA, the EU and China, where most coal-fired power stations are required to install basic pollution controls that cut toxic pollutants by more than 85 percent.

The NSW government needs to act on the worst sources of toxic air pollution now. That means reducing pollution from major sources – coal-fired power stations, vehicle emissions and wood heaters.



**Bob Vickers**  
Hunter Valley  
General Practitioner

*"I see patients presenting with serious health issues caused by air pollution from the nearby coal-fired power station, particularly kids with asthma, adults with respiratory diseases and heart disease, and pregnancy complications."*

"I'm sick and tired of seeing patients with preventable diseases caused by toxic air pollution while the calls for governments and power companies to act are continually ignored.

"Improving the health of people living near coal-fired power stations and coal mines should be a priority. I am extremely frustrated to see how our governments took immediate action regarding the Covid-19 pandemic, yet they continue to do nothing on the public health threat of toxic air pollution that kills almost 5,000 Australians every year.

"Our governments could so easily reduce pollution from coal-fired power stations and coal mines but instead they let let these companies make record profits while we breathe in toxic air."



Every year, approximately **2600-4800 people in Australia die** as a result of exposure to toxic air pollution, at an annual **health cost of \$24 billion**.

The most recent analysis of health impacts caused by coal-fired power stations in Australia found that they contribute to 845 babies being born with **low birth-weight**, 14,434 children with **asthma**, and 785 **premature deaths** each year, at a cost of **\$2.4 billion dollars to the economy**.

Some of **our most vulnerable people** are hardest hit by air pollution – low-income communities, the elderly, people with chronic diseases, children, pregnant women and unborn babies.

## Where the government has failed, the people have stepped in.

In collaboration with community, health and environment groups, and international pollution experts, we've developed a list of actions for the NSW government to reduce pollution and protect public health, called *The People's Clean Air Action Plan*.

*The People's Clean Air Action Plan* provides the government with a list of actions that will reduce air pollution from major sources and deliver clean air and healthy lungs to the people of NSW.

The NSW government must do everything it can to reduce air pollution from major sources like coal-fired power stations to as close to zero to protect public health.

*The People's Clean Air Action Plan* for NSW calls for the state government to reduce the biggest sources of air pollution by:

Increasing air quality monitoring and access to information about air pollution

Reducing coal-fired power station pollution with **best practice control standards**

**Reducing vehicle pollution**, with a focus on vehicle pollution hotspots

**Phasing out** wood-burning heaters

Legislating health-based ambient air quality standards.



**Sue Wynn**  
NSW Central Coast  
Secretary of  
Manning Park  
Progress

"I have lived right on the doorstep of Vales Point Power coal-fired station for 43 years. I am a non-smoker, seldom drink alcohol, take no illicit drugs, eat very healthily, am slim and extremely fit for my 68 years, regularly cycling 20 – 35 km a day or swimming among other strenuous physical activities.

"Yet, I continue to confound my Doctors and specialists as I am suffering the chronic ailments of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disorder and have recently been diagnosed as being at moderate risk of a heart attack due to a 20-50% blockage of all arteries. I now take two medications and will be on these, possibly in increasing doses, for life.

"Whilst there may be other contributing factors, I would say that the toxic gases and particulate pollution I have been exposed to the 43 years I have lived near this coal-fired power station, may have caused, or are, at the very least, exacerbating, my chronic conditions and will thus shorten my life span.

***"I plead with Environment Minister Matt Kean on behalf of all the generations to follow that you rid us of these dangerous pollutants through the Clean Air Strategy promised for over six years. It is your moral obligation and statutory duty to improve the quality of our air and environment when you can.***

"I urge you to adopt this excellent plan that would give you a road map to a cleaner brighter future for all. The hard work has been done for you, let's just get on with it please."





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This is a summary of the People's Clean Air Action Plan for NSW. For more information and the full plan, head to [www.envirojustice.org.au/clean-air-action](http://www.envirojustice.org.au/clean-air-action)

## Get involved



Spread the word about the *People's Clean Air Action Plan*



Write to your Environment Minister and call for the government to adopt the *People's Clean Air Action Plan*



Attend a community meeting join others taking action for the *People's Clean Air Action Plan*

Find out more: [www.envirojustice.org.au/clean-air-action](http://www.envirojustice.org.au/clean-air-action)

The coalition of groups who contributed to The People's Clean Air Action Plan are: Asthma Australia, Lung Foundation Australia, Doctors for the Environment Australia, Healthy Futures, Nature Conservation Council NSW, Communities for Clean Air, Future Sooner