

centralwest environment council

Adam Carlon
NEPC Executive Officer
National Environment Protection Council
Department of Environment and Energy

Central West Environment Council
870 Ophir Road
Orange NSW 2800

Re: Review of Australia's national air pollution standards

Dear Mr. Carlon,

I am lodging this submission on behalf of the Central West Environment Council (CWEC). CWEC is an umbrella organisation representing environmental groups within the Central West of New South Wales. We would like to thank you for the opportunity to provide input into this review as air quality and air pollution standards have been an ongoing concern for a number of our districts, especially during winter, when the level of particle pollution is increased due to the use of wood-fired heaters.

The health issues of pollution from sulphur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide and ozone are well documented. It is time that the current Australian standards for their management and control are reviewed and conditions put in place that both improve our currently substandard thresholds and place Australia more in step with international standards and those of best practice.

The Central West Environment Council requests that the National Environment Protection Council make the 24 hour standard for sulphur dioxide a compliance standard of eight parts per billion (8 ppb) in line with the World Health Organisation standard. The current Australian standard of 80 ppb is obviously well out of step with recommended best practice, as is the Government's proposed recommended standard of 20 ppb.

CWEC also supports the annual average for a compliance standard of 9 ppb for nitrogen dioxide. Evidence exists to demonstrate that concentrations above this level cause significant health problems.

For meaningful action to take place in the monitoring of air quality, it is important to measure the quality of the air we breathe. This should lead to appropriate action at community level to alleviate problems associated with the common sources of emissions. CWEC requests that there be an expansion of air pollution monitors. Orange currently has an air pollution monitor, but it is of little use to neighbouring districts that have different air quality issues. Our air quality monitoring device

provides real time information about local air quality. These publicly available data need to be expanded to a national program.

Australia's current regulatory air pollution scheme needs to be replaced by a National Clean Air Act. We need a national set of laws to control air pollution and a national regulatory body to enforce and monitor compliance. Air pollution knows no state boundaries. It affects us nationally and needs to be perceived as a national responsibility.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cilla Kinross". The signature is written in black ink on a white background.

Cilla Kinross
President
Central West Environment Council NSW.
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