



The People's Clean Air Action Plan for Victoria

Summary



Environmental
Justice Australia

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

Every day Environment Minister Lily D'Ambrosio 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 Victoria 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.



Wendy Farmer,
President of Voices of
the Valley said:

"The Latrobe Valley community bears the brunt of pollution from the state's coal-fired power stations and the health impacts that come with it. No one's postcode should determine how clean their air is."

"The government owes it to us to adopt the recommendations in *The People's Clean Air Action Plan* to protect our health."

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

Victoria'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 Victorian 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.

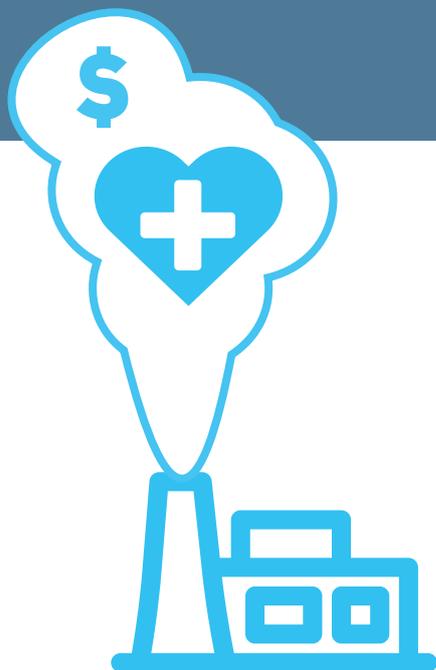


Dr Suzanne Deed –
Gippsland GP and
psychotherapist said:

"There is no safe level of air pollution. Our governments should be doing everything they can to reduce toxic emissions to as close to zero as possible.

"Over the years, I've seen many people in Gippsland presenting with serious health issues caused by air pollution from the coal-fired power stations – kids with severe asthma symptoms, adults with lung cancer who have never smoked a cigarette, heart disease, the list goes on.

"It frustrates me that the government could so easily reduce sources of pollution like this that are so detrimental to community health and at a staggering cost to the taxpayer.



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 Victorian 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 Victoria.

The Victorian 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 Victoria 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.



Bronya Lipski, Lawyer from Environmental Justice Australia who grew up in Victoria's Latrobe Valley said:

"Environmental Minister, Lily D'Ambrosio has dropped the ball on air pollution. She has been sitting on an opportunity to tighten pollution limits for coal-fired power stations for four years while people in places like the Latrobe Valley have been breathing toxic air.

"Despite numerous pollution breaches by coal-fired power stations and multiple reports outlining the health and economic costs of toxic air pollution, coal-fired power stations in the Latrobe Valley still receive preferential treatment from state and federal governments to pollute our air, profiting at the expense of people's health.

"I grew up in the Latrobe Valley where generations of my family members worked in the Yallourn and Hazelwood power stations and where we were also exposed to the toxic pollution they pumped out.

"My sister was often so sick she had to be on multiple courses of steroids, antibiotics and asthma medication. I was even taught how to get my sister onto a nebuliser if she had a bad asthma attack and couldn't breathe.

"We have the ability to reduce toxic pollution in the air we breathe, we just need the Victorian government to do its job and implement the measures needed to reduce toxic emissions to as close to zero as possible."

"The Victorian community can't wait any longer while the government drags their feet. Where the government has failed, the people have stepped in. It's time the Victorian government puts people before polluters and urgently adopts the recommendations in *The People's Clean Air Action Plans*."



Telephone: 03 8341 3100/1300 336 842

Facsimile: 03 8341 3111

Email: admin@envirojustice.org.au

Website: www.envirojustice.org.au

Post: PO Box 12123, A'Beckett Street VIC 8006
Address: Level 3, 60 Leicester Street, Carlton

This is a summary of the People's Clean Air Action Plan for Victoria. For more information and the full plan, head to 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

The coalition of groups who contributed to The People's Clean Air Action Plan are: Environmental Justice Australia, Asthma Australia, Lung Foundation Australia, Doctors for the Environment Australia, Healthy Futures, Environment Victoria, Communities for Clean Air, Maribyrnong Truck Action Group, Voices of the Valley.