

Greens Senate Enquiry into health impacts of air pollution. Submission by Rhonda and Peter Selmanovic

We have a 960 acre property adjacent to the Anglo Coal Boundary Hill Mining Operation. Our property has been in our family for 32 years, and the mine has been operating for 31 years approx. During that 31 years, we have put up with the usual inconveniences that comes with being neighbours to an open cut coal mine. Initially the mine pit was approx 3.5 km to the north-east of our house, and we noticed fume events after blasting (odour and dust), and when the wind was blowing towards our property we experienced dust pollution from the dragline and dumptrucks. During the early years of the mining operation, we queried the health risks of the dust and gas fumes because we noticed that our family members often felt ill and had headaches after blasting. The mining company did not appear to take our concerns very seriously in those early years.

In late Dec 2012, Anglo Coal opened a new box cut located approx 2km to the east north east of our house. Where our homestead lies is in a natural "saddle" in the landscape, and the mine is in a higher, upstream location. Because of the nature of the landscape, we continuously suffer dust and fumes, being "channelled" towards our house. In the last 2 months the concentration of air pollution from this new mining area has been very noticeably higher than in the past. We have noticed that our overall health and wellbeing has deteriorated incredibly during the last 2 months. Several years ago Anglo Coal installed a "dust" monitor which consists of a glass jar with a funnel in the top. This "monitor" is located a kilometre away from our house, and approx 3km from the mine site. We have asked for the results of the "dust monitoring" for our own records, and have never received them. We wrote a letter to request a more effective dust monitor to be placed at our house, but nothing has come of it. We feel that mines need to be fully accountable to communities nearby that are affected by air pollution from their operation. At all levels of government, mines need to be more strictly regulated, and better monitoring standards need to be enforced.



(above) Our house is visible to the left of the “dust monitor”, and the mine is visible in the background to the right.



(above) coal dust from the loadout plant at Boundary Hill, as seen from house yard



(above) dust haze from Boundary Hill is clearly visible from our paddock



(above) This is one night's accumulation of dust on our pool table on the front verandah.



(above) Fume event from the blast in early Feb 2013.



(above) Dust haze clearly visible from the paddock in front of our house.