

EXPERIENCES OF LIVING NEAR A COAL STOCKPILE

- **Ear plugs** 24/7 – Lessens the ringing in ears. You will often find coal dust on plugs –inside and outside. Ear plugs do not help with Low Frequency Noise.
- **Eye wash** and Sustane **Drops** (eg Sustane)
- **Eye protection** as much as possible. I find I have black specks in my vision which are NOT the same as 'black spot'.
- You will be told that the Hairs in your nose will prevent coal particles from entering your body. What about your mouth, your eyes, and your ears.
- Be prepared for lack of sleep.
- Noise testing is not accurate. Miraculously Noise testing will always done for an hour when the site Employees are is on dinner break.
A man parked suspiciously in our town was asked what he was doing there.
He answered he was there to test for noise but couldn't start until 10.30. For that hour the site was quiet.
- **Protective clothes** – If asked for you will be told that these are not necessary,
However:
There is a 98 page document on health and protection for mine employees who work their shift and then go home to their clean air.
- You will be in it **24/7** with no protection.
Mine employees have health checks every **12 months**.
If you try to get health checks at first you will be told 'it is **not necessary**'.
If you persist you will be told '**no**, orders from Canberra'.
Any testing that is done, may be inadequate or not helpful. Most medical practitioners do not have experience in environmental health impacts'.
- **Strange odours** – could be burning coal – highly toxic. This will be denied by the mining company and Government employees have explained away as dew (even when smoke is seen coming from the stock

pile at 3pm). However at the same time there was a whole night of trains and approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ km of coal was sent to port urgently.

- DO NOT buy **white clothes** at all as they will be grey after the first wash and wear.
- BUY ALL **drinking water** – use for washing eyes as well.
- Everything in your house will be **gritty**.
- **Dust** with a damp to wet cloth very lightly – coal WILL scratch furniture
- You will be tempted to dust all the time but only dust once a week – less upsetting that way.
- **Cover** furniture with **plastic** sheets as coal will penetrate any cloth. Painting sheets are good as you can still see what is underneath.
- **Wash** clothes only when winds have been blowing in the opposite direction for some time – remember the winds change so can be blowing coal back to you
- Clothes will feel **scratchy** on the skin. This can be from washing in tank water or hanging on the line.
- Closed **windows** with curtains pulled across at all times 24/7. This will lessen the amount of dust in your house. A lot of the dust will penetrate even closed **sliding** windows however the larger particles will remain on the window sills. Preferably buy flour length curtains.
- Cover electrical equipment at all times ie Computers, Printers, sewing machines washing machines etc. Coal will penetrate. Replacement or repair costs for these are the sole responsibility of the victims. Government and Mining companies do not want to know about it.
- Cleaning and painting costs are your responsibility.
- - Be prepared to remain **indoors** for weeks at a time
 - When indoors only do **non-exertive** jobs – wash-up, iron, sew
 - Try to breathe **as little air** as possible

However: I am starting to believe that all of these procedures will not stop the coal from effecting one's health. The only conclusion I can come to is, that I did not start these precautions early enough. As no studies have been made I cannot verify this.

- When visiting other people – wash your clothes separately - especially if there are children in the house – it will take two to three washes for coal particles to leave your clothes – if at all.

- **Don't** bring children, elderly, anyone with lung or heart problems to visit for holidays.

A weekend here with unfavourable winds has been known bring about an asthma attack for someone who suffers from the illness.

- Be prepared for your cars paint to be ruined in no time – coal also sticks to the car paint. – Car paint jobs are the sole responsibility of the victims.
- Houses will move with blasting – repair costs are the sole responsibility of the victims.
- All medical is paid for by the victims - that's providing you can get the right medical assessments done. Unlike Mine Employees who have 12 monthly health checks.
- If you wish testing on Dust, Noise, Tanks etc – cost is your responsibility but difficult or impossible to do and costs thousands of dollars. I rang a few companies and was told 'they test for mines so couldn't test against them'.
 - It is advisable not to bother having air tests conducted at our own expense as testing procedures are inadequate and it will only be wasting your money.
- Before the mine commences go to a Doctor well away from your district and have the following tests:
 - Heavy metal blood tests
 - Pet scan
 - Lung scan
 - Brain scan
 - Kidney, liver, and heart tests

Note: Be sure to not say you live near coal.

HEALTH

Burning Eyes

Burning Tongue

Throat

Itchy burning skin

Panting Breathing with the least amount of exertion – if you continue with your cask you will black out

Headaches

Lack of concentration

Ringing in ears - worse at rest

Ringing in brain - worse at rest

Strange sensations in brain in sleep or near sleep

You will wake often at around 3am with nausea – upon rising you will be unsteady when walking – This sensation is not one where you feel like you are going to pass out.

High Blood pressure

Jaw problems – caused from stressful sleep from noise

Asthma type symptoms

Diabetes

Getting Health care from Doctors is a real problem so I wrote to State and Fed Governments and ask if Doctors in mining areas can be briefed about health problems for the victims. I also asked for regular medical checks for the victims of mining. The next time I went to my Doctor in Oakey for a heavy metals blood test I was told that regular checks cannot be done - 'orders from Canberra'.

AIR TESTING

- All testing done by the Mining Company are sent to the Government as a rolling average carried from year to year 'once per year'. The average seldom changes. Averaging is poor statistical practice and does not show the extreme peaks in emissions we are having to put up with.
- All testing is ordered and paid for by the mining company and conducted by their paid consultants. There is a lack of independence.
- If there are 5 x PM¹⁰ results over 50mg/m³ in one year the Government Environmental Department will 'speak to the mining company about it'. This should be tested each day.

- Testing monitors – are strategically placed - bring about a satisfactory reading for the mining company. These are positioned away from the nearest sensitive receptors and do not reflect the real dust conditions.

PM¹⁰ is tested 3 times per year usually when the winds blow away from the town.

The only reading in for PM¹⁰ when the wind blew over our town was in November 2009.

The reading was 71 – the allowable amount is 50.

I might add PM¹⁰ was not tested during that month the following year. It was ordered in December 2010, however could not be done because the 2011 flood rains had commenced.

Keep in mind the rolling average is sent to government so they did not know about this 71 reading until I informed them. They wrote and said as it was only one (and not the allowable 5 in one year) it couldn't be counted.

My point was – as it's the only one we have had where the wind blew over the town, why not?

There is no testing for PM^{2.5} or PM¹

There is no smaller particles tested even though these are recognised by the World Health organisation as injurious to health – there are no safe limits.

NSW towns receive there tests.

Ambient Air

Bottle with Funnel

- Particles are only caught in these bottles when **air is still**.
(Hence 1% coal in bottle and 35% coal inside a closed up house.)
 - Individual minerals are not tested
 - Water never mentioned in surrounding conditions as the readings would not be accurate (See tank water)
 - Always insects
 - Always grass from mowing. Even if lawn hasn't been mowed in months
 -
-

TEOM monitor placed out of bulk dust area.

The TEOM monitor was explained to me in the following way:

These monitors test for everything in the air. Similar to Air Ambient 'funnel bottles'. A pm^{10} monitor is placed beside the TEOM for a week and an average of these readings is compiled.

This pm^{10} average is subtracted from the monthly TEOM monitors' average reading each month. The result is the ambient air reading.

I have never been able to understand how this can be an adequate result of the particles of air that enters our bodies.

Tank Water

- Coal reacts differently when wet – it magnetizes other minerals to it in water except lead and arsenic
- The friction of Coal rubbing against coal forms lead particles which float in air. Coal at the Export Facility Site is continually moved (24/7) to supposedly to prevent combustion.
- When testing tank water sludge extracted then rest tested
- Lead is always blamed on roof even if your roof doesn't contain lead. It is also blamed on the Warrego Highway however I have many years beside busier roads than this and never been affected as I am here.
- I wanted my tank on the opposite side to the road tested and my request was refused. Excuse 'tank too large'. The tank on the side of the Warrego Highway was tested and the trains blamed for the high reading.

House Dust

- Independent dust monitoring is always taken with dry cloth
- Independent dust monitoring is never taken where there is obvious coal dust

There is always an alternative excuse for any readings of coal. ie Warrego Highway

I have lived for many years on busy roads and never become ill like I have since moving here.

SUMMARY

The residents of coal towns feel that our rights and requests are ignored. We know the company is exceeding emissions levels and testing is flawed in the favour of the company. Despite our numerous efforts nothing changes. We are the unfortunate victims of a company seeking more profits at our expense. We feel abandoned and ignored by all levels of government. This issue is raising concern that communities like Jondaryan are being subject to human rights violations. This should not happen in a prosperous democracy like Australia.

Now after all of this you may wonder how we cope living in Jondaryan:

- You will never really get used to any part of it.
- You will fight and try to change the way things are done.
- You will try to learn to live with your new lifestyle.
- When I look at the town residents who are so accepting of it all I think 'will I be like that in ten years' time – withdrawn, silent, living grim lives in shut up houses, no joy in gardening or being outdoors.
- At different times you go through all the emotions:
Depression
Hopelessness
Anger

Once I emailed the Labor Government:

DUST DUST DUST – WE'VE HAD ENOUGH

Last year when I couldn't breathe I emailed the new LNP Government:

YOU'RE KILLING US WE CAN'T BREATHE.

What good did it do?

The Labor and Liberal Governments no doubt had a good laugh.

I felt much better for trying to shame them to act, but they did nothing.

The result: Mr Seeney made three visits to the mine and allowed Stage 3 to be set in motion.

I try to remember that although I appear to be unimportant to the Governments and Mining Companies I am important to my family. I will try to look after myself for their sakes. I will not stop trying for a healthier future for myself and my town.

For the sake of my health my Doctor has recently told me to leave this place. At present market value, and if I can get someone to buy my home, I will probably get \$90 000 which is a loss of approximately \$200 000. My son has told me 'to take it and get out'. If this company doesn't get Stage 3 we will still have the export coal facility in our town for another 4 years. I hate to think what my health will be like by then.

I might add that I do not drink tank water and have locked myself indoors for months on end while the easterly winds blow and the still air happens and still my health is getting worse. Even though I read that if you stay indoors you will be okay I cannot believe it any longer.

I have just been away on another health revival and upon my return found coal in the house in spite of all the recent rains. Even the rain does not stop the coal.

Thank you for your consideration. I hope you will take my grave concerns seriously. I am willing to provide further information if needed, and I hope you or your advisors will visit out area and judge first hand.

Kindest regards

Glennis Hammond

PS Perhaps it is time to look after our own.

When will the victims of mining be given the same consideration and privileges as illegal immigrants.