

Chapter 1

The impacts on health of air quality in Australia

Terms of Reference

1.1 On 28 November 2012 the Senate referred the following matter to the Senate Community Affairs Committee for inquiry and report:

The impacts on health of air quality in Australia, including:

- (a) particulate matter, its sources and effects;
- (b) those populations most at risk and the causes that put those populations at risk;
- (c) the standards, monitoring and regulation of air quality at all levels of government; and
- (d) any other related matters.

1.2 The reporting date for the inquiry was set by the Senate for 16 May 2013. On 18 June 2013 the Senate granted an extension of time to report until 12 August 2013.

Conduct of the inquiry

1.3 The committee invited submissions from Commonwealth and State and Territory governments and interested organisations. The committee received public submissions from 162 organisations and individuals (listed at Appendix 1).

1.4 The committee held three public hearings over the course of the inquiry. The hearings were held in:

- Newcastle – 16 April 2013;
- Canberra – 17 May 2013; and
- Brisbane – 11 June 2013.

1.5 A list of witnesses who appeared before the committee is set out in Appendix 2.

1.6 Submissions, additional information, the Hansard transcript of evidence and responses to questions on notice can be accessed through the committee's website at: http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate_Committees?url=clac_ctte/index.htm

1.7 References in this report are to individual submissions as received by the committee, not to a bound volume.

Structure of the report

1.8 This report is comprised of 6 Chapters:

- Chapter 2 provides a summary of the sources of air pollution and its impact on human health;
- Chapter 3 discusses current air quality standards and monitoring;

- Chapters 4 through 6 consider the issues of emissions from coal, diesel, and wood smoke respectively.

1.9 As the structure cited above makes clear, this report confines itself to the issues that were most prominent in the evidence provided to the committee. There are other air quality issues, such as indoor air quality, other pollutants, road transport and urban planning, that are not discussed in great detail in this report but may require further attention in the future.