

19 February 2013

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Public Affairs
P.O. Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600



The Impact on Health of Air Quality in Australia

Dear Committee Secretary,

I write to you on behalf of “On the Nose Community Group Inc” (YOTN) – a community group located in West Yarraville, Victoria formed in 2005 to improve the air quality in our homes where odours and dust have been increasing problem. At the time, we believed that if industries in the Brooklyn Industrial Precinct complied with their Environment Protection Authority (EPA) license and Local Council planning permits, foul odours from offending operations would be remedied quickly and our group could then concentrate on other air polluting issues such as dust and noise.

Unfortunately, it took seven years to achieve odour improvements in our area with one company relocating away from the area and others installing bio filters to manage the foul odours from their operations.

The Brooklyn and Tottenham Industrial area is an older industrial area with some industries using practices belonging to the 19th Century. The area is just nine kilometers from the centre of Melbourne and is home to one of the largest abattoirs in the southern hemisphere, rendering plants, an oil seed extraction plant, tanneries, landfills, several demolition building material recycling centers and many container parks and other businesses which operate on unsealed premises.

In early 2009, a Brooklyn Community Representative Group (BCRG) was established comprising YOTN, Brooklyn Resident Action Group (BRAG), EPA Victoria, Maribyrnong, Hobsons Bay and Brimbank City Councils, other State Government bodies and local industries to work cooperatively to address the totally unacceptable air quality in our homes. However, despite all the best efforts of State

and Local Government bodies to engage with local industries to change their business practices, air quality in the area remains a major problem – particularly dust.

EPA Victoria acknowledges that dust is a major issue for residents and installed air quality measurement equipment in Brooklyn and West Yarraville in September 2009. The results of PM₁₀ dust monitoring for 2009/10, 2010/11, 2011/12 and 2012/13 to date, are shown attached.

World Health Standards and National Health Standards state PM₁₀ dust should not exceed 50 parts per cubic metre on more than 5 days per year.

The graphs attached show that the surrounding residential area has exceeded the Standard on 40 days during the first year of monitoring in 2009/10 – 8 times the World and National Standard and approximately 20 times greater than the results for the rest of Melbourne. Monitoring for this year, 2012/13, would indicate that similar results to 2009/10 will occur despite the best efforts of State and Local government bodies to address the source of the dust.

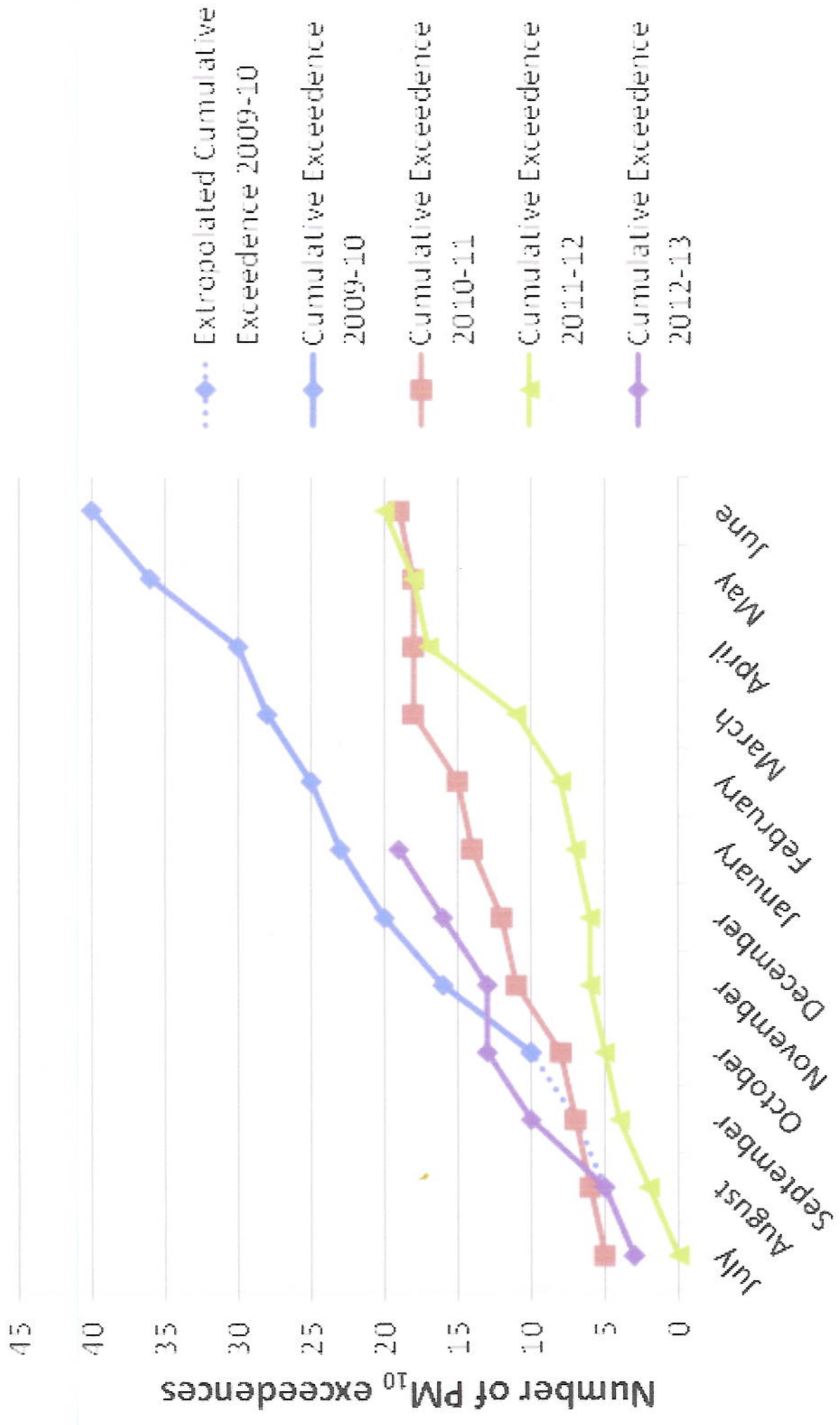
In addition to the adverse affects on physical health, poor air quality on the mental health of residents should not be under estimated. Issues such as lack of pride in oneself and the area in which they live can contribute to depression, anxiety, low self esteem, gambling, substance abuse including prescription and illicit drug use with suicidal tendencies, and crime. The western suburbs of Melbourne are a clear example of these phenomena.

It is respectfully requested that the Senate Enquiry undertake a detailed study of the air quality resulting from industry practices in the Brooklyn Industrial Precinct which are having a totally unacceptable and significant impact on both the physical and mental health of residents in the western suburbs of Melbourne.

Yours truly,

G. B. Light,
President,
On the Nose Community Group Inc.

Attachment 1: The impact on Health of Air Quality in Australia
 Submission by Yarraville On the Nose Community Group Inc

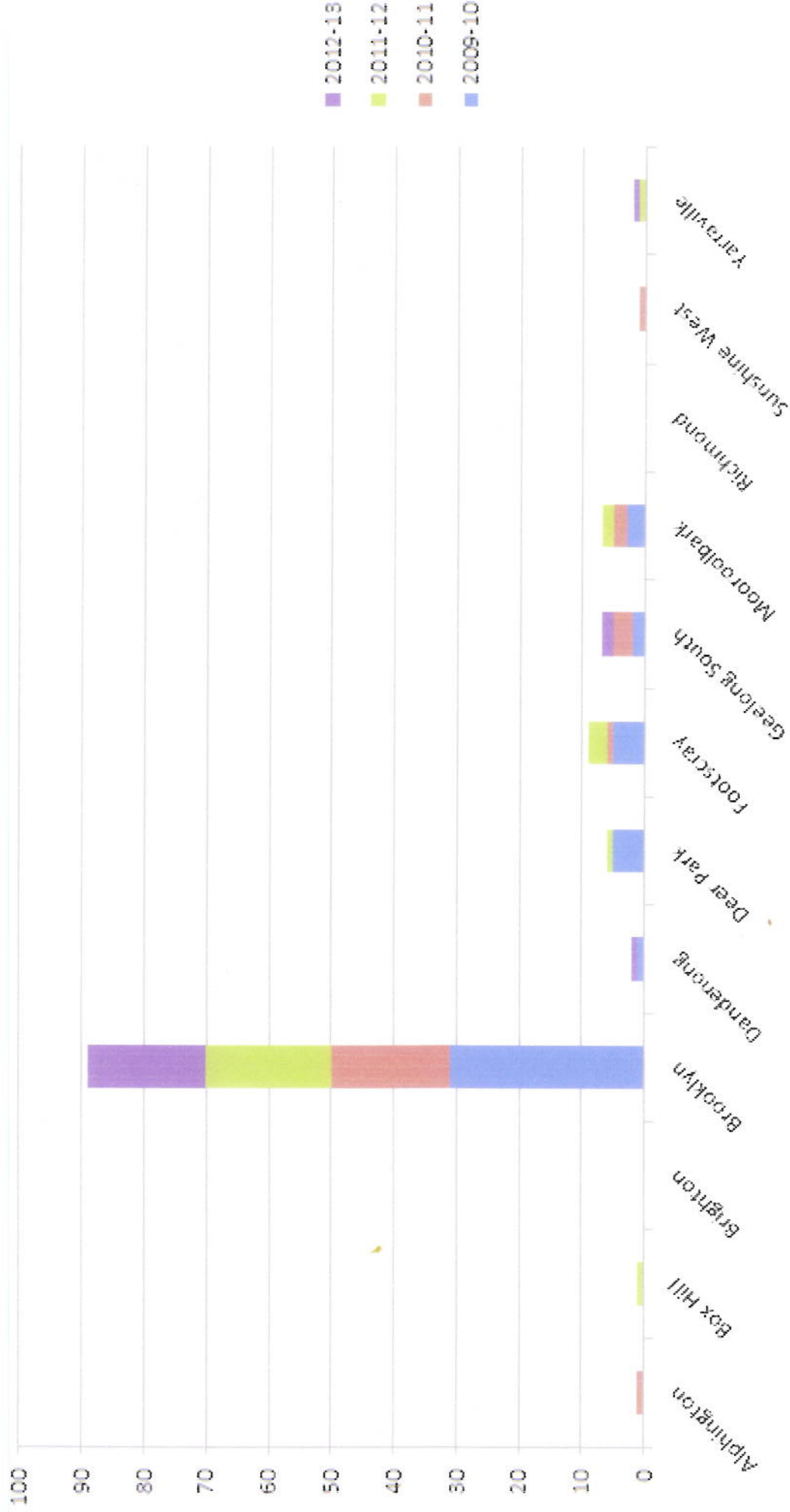


Cumulative Monthly Data Brooklyn Dust Monitoring

Source: EPA Victoria

Attachment 2: The impact on Health of Air Quality in Australia
 Submission by Yarraville On the Nose Community Group Inc

Number of days exceeding the PM₁₀ air quality objective



Cumulative Annual Data Melbourne Dust Monitoring