

Senate Committee Inquiry into the Impacts of Air Quality on Health. Submission by Stop Brisbane Coal Trains (SBCT).

To the Senate Committee Members,

Stop Brisbane Coal Trains has been campaigning since mid July 2012 – raising awareness about Coal Trains travelling along the West Moreton Rail Corridor – from mines West of Toowoomba through to the Port of Brisbane. Our concerns are both Local (Air and Noise Pollution) and Global (Coal Exports and Climate Change).

These trains, which comprise 2 locomotives and 41 wagons, carry around 3 thousand tonnes of coal per train. Which equates to around 1 million tonnes of coal per month being hauled through the high population density areas of Toowoomba, Ipswich and the Queensland capital, Brisbane.

All loads are uncovered, thus allowing fugitive coal dust emissions along the entire route. These emissions comprise wind-borne fine particulates that have the potential to adversely, and severely, effect public health.

In addition to this problem posed by trains, there are also serious Air Quality issues associated with loading and storage of coal, along this corridor. That is from Pit-to-port. At present, 'Best Practice' procedure is a foreign concept. The Port of Brisbane Coal terminal and the New Acland coal pile at Jondaryan (both owned and operated by New Hope Corporation) are testament to this Industry neglect. Dust at both these locales is, as Bob Dylan once wrote, 'Blowin' in the wind'.

This campaign has uncovered one overriding theme. That of lax - bordering on useless - Air Quality Standards.

And a Government and Industry both happy to flout them, as cover for inaction. Basically the Qld State Government and the Coal Industry (the latter under the umbrella of the Queensland Resources Council), can write their own script as far as monitoring regulations go.

'Will we or wont we monitor for PM2.5s today?'

The standards are so nebulous, we believe any monitoring – based on current standards - will come up smelling fresh as a daisy.

Indeed the Queensland Resources Council has only recently announced a new wave of this so-called 'Monitoring', along the West Moreton rail corridor. (see ref. 2). This is code for doing nothing. The QRC have a history of delay and deception to maintain the status quo. They know the monitoring is win-win.

They had previously tried to pull the wool over Brisbane via the now infamous 'Tennyson' Air monitoring test conducted last October (in the suburb of Tennyson in Brisbane) in response to community pressure. It was a 'Claytons' one site affair that was quickly debunked for what it was - brainless.

We contend there is a culture of wanton neglect in Queensland and a failure of a Duty of Care. Of profits before people. There simply should not be industrial-size trains careening through the centre of a capital city carting uncovered coal payloads, in these volumes. Period.

Air Quality standards need tightening, to be legislated and need teeth. Furthermore they need to be policed forcefully, and by Government. Not the Industry. SBCT believes that Industry self-regulation is a complete misnomer in Queensland. We have discussed this and stated our concerns (in no uncertain terms) with the State Environment Minister, Andrew Powell.

Given this history, on the part of both the Government and the Industry in this matter, SBCT has resolved to campaign for physical dust proof covers on all coal trains travelling on the West Moreton Rail line. We reckon the veneering process (polymer coating of the coal profile in wagons) is dubious and hard to police.

In summary, SBCT believes there is an urgent need to bolster National Air Standard requirements and establish Best Practice Rules and Regulations governing the entire coal Pit-to-Port Coal process via legislation.

Regards

John «GreetingLine»

Stop Brisbane Coal Trains

www.facebook.com/stopbrisbanecoaltrains

Brisbane Coal Trains: facts n figures:

Approximately one million tonnes of coal is hauled through the streets of the Queensland capital each month to the Port of Brisbane, from where it is exported overseas. Each coal train has 2 locomotives and 41 wagons and carries 3000 tonnes of coal. Wagons are uncovered. There are currently about 100 trains trips per week (double that amount to account for the round trip). The coal is loaded out of 3 mines on the Darling Downs, west of Toowoomba. New Acland at Jondaryan (owned by New Hope Corporation); Wilkie Creek west of Dalby, (owned by Peabody Resources, American) and Cameby Downs west of Chinchilla (owned by Yancoal, Chinese Government). Haulage and trains are provided by QR National. Queensland Rail supply and program tracks. Queensland Bulk Handling (a subsidiary of New Hope) does the exporting. Port of Brisbane is essentially owned by the Queensland Government.

Suburban Brisbane Stations affected: *Gailes, Wacol, Darra, Oxley, Corinda, Tennyson, Yeerongpilly, Yeronga, Fairfield, Dutton Park, Buranda, Coorparoo, Norman Park, Morningside, Cannon Hill, Mururrie, Hemmant, Lindum*

References.

1.

March 2 Queensland Times - Dust Already Flying On Coal Train Monitoring

<http://www.qt.com.au/news/dust-already-flying-on-coal-train-monitoring/1776217/>

2. New 'Monitoring' proposed by QRC.

[Western-Metropolitan Rail Systems Coal Dust Monitoring Program](#) - Overview by Environmental Monitoring and Assessment Sciences Branch, Queensland Department of Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts.
February 2013

3.

Monday March 4, ABC 612 Interview.(a) SBCT's John Gordon (b) Qld Environment Minister, Andrew Powell.

<http://blogs.abc.net.au/queensland/2013/03/call-for-coal-train-covers.html>