Agner Sorensen

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Re: The impacts of air quality in Australia
Senate Inquiry
Close date 8 March 2013

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs

Committee Secretary

Human beings are designed to cope with air quality being poor. Throughout ages in the world, the world has had many dust storms, and generally populations do not suffer greatly in terms high number of people seeking treatments.

Not so long ago Sydney had dust blow in from central NSW. The dust brought visibility to less than 200 meters. This occurred twice within a week. Now a year or two has passed not many people are attending doctors with adverse affects. This shows large number of people had inhaled small dust particulates, yet few if any were affected. During these dust storms many people along the East Coast of Australia were out and about in the dust laden air. Showing a vast population suffered no great ill effects.

Underground Miners who have worked in Underground mines many years in high airborne micro dust atmospheres do not suffer any greater dust problems than the whole community. Underground Coal Miners have X-Rays and lung capacity checks at set appointed health examinations. These miners do not have lung or other respiratory problems above the statistical rates of the population. The Coal Board of NSW was quoted in The Herald some years ago that miners did not have greater lung problems that the population. The Dusts found in a Coal mine are coal dusts, rock dust from the floor of travelling roads, Limestone dust used to keep coal dust in a safe level. There is acid water in mines so there is an amount of sulphur in the air, as well. The Coal Board should be contacted on their statistical recordings, about health affects due to underground mining, on people working in Underground mines. This will show dusts are not a great health hazard on people.

In 1973 I worked at a Dairy Farm in Singleton NSW. I visited a Doctor, about itches. The Doctor said Singleton was the worst area for allergies. The Doctor put down the source of Allergies was from the Lucerne that was grown around the district. This was before the mining industry was huge in the Singleton area. The Doctor said the Aborigines would not live in the area but would pass through the area. So Aborigines who date back before mining avoided the area.

My Brother-in-laws mother some years back had a major Asthma attack and was put in Hospital. After two weeks she was given permission to go home for she was ok. On the night before going home whilst in an air-conditioned hospital she suffered a fatal Asthma attack. This show Asthmatics even being in a place where there is filtered air, can be struck down.

I understand much research has been done on Asthma over more than Fifty years, yet to find out all the answers about Asthma there is still much more to be done. This showing that conclusive answers of Asthma have not been found yet.

Allergies exist. The term Hay fever has been around for some 200 years. Many people suffer from Hay fever. Cold and flu over the counter perpetrations usually have some part of it to treat the condition of Hay fever, for the makers of Cold and Flu preparation recognise that some people who think they have a cold actually are suffering from allergies.

Allergies normally come from microscopic organisms', as well as pollens. People who have allergies can be tested for a number of things that produce allergies. Doctors do have to say to a number of people "you have an allergy, but we do not know the source of your allergy, it could be from any plant source that is carried in the wind"

The Upper Hunter has much dried grasses. From these much airborne plant dust occurs that give allergies. Many micro organisms also live in the drier grasses. These things need to be investigated before blaming mining dusts on health problems in the upper hunter.

It is known allergenic bring on Asthma. Micro Organisms and grass particulates are the cause of allergenic, not the dusts from dirt, and rock in mining.

People who say they move to the coast from the upper Hunter find there is less respiratory aliments, are correct for they are moving away from a high level of organic dust and micro organism area, of the upper Hunter.

Once again the Aborigines avoided the Upper Hunter before mining for it was not a good place for them.

Investigations on plant and micro organisms that live in the direr plant life in the upper Hunter needs be done, for these are responsible for allergies and triggering asthma. This allergenic are the greater part of poor air quality that affect health of the Upper Hunter.

Yours sincerely
Agner Sorensen