

21<sup>st</sup> September 2012

Chairman and all Board Members

**EPA Board**

GPO Box 1550  
Hobart  
TASMANIA 7001

Dear Board Member,

**Air Pollution in Tasmania –‘Backyard Burning’ on blocks over 2000 square meters.**

The EPA have determined that on block sizes of 2000 square meters or greater, councils have the responsibility to administer backyard burning.

The EPA does not deal with these complaints and maintain the correct people to deal with are ‘your local council’.

This has been conveyed to me verbally and in writing on several occasions.

I took the EPA’s advice and advised the West Tamar Council, in my case, that my health has been affected by smoke from backyard burning and asked them to investigate it.

It has come as a surprise to me to learn that WTC after all these years has received legal advice regarding their capacity to deal with backyard burning under the current environmental legislation.

WTC will not have anything to do with smoke pollution from backyard burning no matter what it does to people’s health.

I have been advised WTC have communicated their legal advice to the Local Government Association (LGAT) so I would imagine this has now become Local Government ‘policy’ across the state.

The fact of the matter is, nobody in Tasmania is dealing with this worrying source of environmental pollution, and as a result innocent people are not allowed to enjoy their property; they are being forced to stay indoors; the amenity is being affected; people are being forced onto prescription life-saving medications, and the burners know they can keep burning and causing smoke nuisance whenever they choose. This is a serious matter.

This leaves every Tasmanian in a very bad position when it comes to having to endure deliberate environmental pollution and especially those like myself who fit into the sizeable category of vulnerable groups, i.e. those with cardio pulmonary, cardio vascular, lung diseases such as asthma, COPD, cancer, and so on, plus the young and the elderly.

It must be noted that these groups of people do not miraculously get better when the smoke stops. Wood smoke exposure can end up shortening lives. This is well documented.

I believe our Environmental Act, Policies, or Regulations are being breached whilst this situation is allowed to continue.

According to WTC they are in discussion with the EPA in relation to this matter, however, they maintain, "...we have not yet been able to determine an appropriate way forward..." I have always believed we had good environmental laws/regulations enacted in this state. Surely, something as serious as deliberate, toxic air pollution should not be 'up for discussion'.

- i) Can the EPA please determine for me who actually is responsible for administering backyard burning on blocks on or over 2000 square meters in this state?
- ii) If it is found there is a problem with the legislation, can the EPA please advise me what this is, and can urgent interim measures please be put in place to make sure I do not have to suffer other people's pernicious air pollution whilst new legislation is being sorted out?
- iii) If it is found the EPA is the responsible body, can people please be advised accordingly, and immediate measures taken to make sure I do not have to suffer other land owner's pernicious air pollution?

Would the EPA Board kindly look into this problem for me at your earliest convenience please as land owners on properties over 2000 square meters are storing, trying to burn, or planning to burn wet green smoky waste and I have not recovered from the last episode.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

Clive M. Stott