

Draft letter circulated by NSW branch of the PHAA

November 2019

[insert member name]

Parliament of NSW

Parliament House, 6 Macquarie Street, Sydney, NSW 2000.

07/11/19

Dear [insert member name]

I write to you as a concerned constituent who is also a member of the Public Health Association of Australia.

On November 12th the NSW Parliament debates changes to NSW Planning laws removing the requirement to consider 'downstream' harm from carbon emissions. Simultaneously, parliament is reviewing the Independent Planning Commission's (IPC) role in approving contentious state-significant infrastructure projects. Both moves compromise the stated objectives of land use planning, policy and regulation transparency. The reforms are fundamentally undemocratic, and abrogate the government's responsibility to protect the environment for other uses such as agriculture and future generations

Proposed changes to the legislation, Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979 and State Environmental Planning Policy (Mining, Petroleum Production and Extractive Industries) 2007, risk compromising the necessary purpose of approving and setting conditions for development projects based on a balance of economic, health, social, and environmental impacts.

The IPC was established in response to persistent concerns about political corruption. Changes reducing independence of decision makers are likely to re-open pro-development corruption perceptions.

Further, the 1485 million tonnes of NSW coal mined since 2010 has contributed about 3 per cent of global emissions from coal. This, and any future emissions, will contribute to Australia's climate disruption.

The public health impacts of climate disruption are already being felt across NSW, nationally and globally as a result of natural disasters including more frequent and intense drought, critical water shortages, bushfires and heat waves.

Against this background, I am gravely concerned about the actions of this government that appear to preference the coal industry over and above the public interest and health. Furthermore, they are doing this at a time where there is a global reduction in the market for thermal coal.

I therefore ask you to oppose the proposed Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Territorial Limits) Bill 2019. I also ask you to remind the Parliament about the risks of changing the roles and functions of IPC and the importance of such commissions for democracy in NSW and in maintaining the trust of your constituents.

Sincerely,

[Title and Name]