

To whom it may concern,

My name's Matilda Melis and I have become concerned about my air quality, more specifically particle pollutants PM 2.5 and AQI in the air on multiple days, the health risks of this and the impact that deforestation, more notably clear-fell logging burns and logging have on the air that I and many Victorians breathe.

This concern came about amongst some research I did on some days where I experienced a strong smoke smell. This inspired me to go to the EPA Victoria website, where I looked at the AirWatch table. I found on [April 21st 2018](#), in the East, between 9 and 10am that the AQI and particles as PM2.5 was generally on average listed in red as poor, with the AQI being primarily in the hundreds and PM2.5 being in the mid 20's to mid 30's. I additionally found on [May 1st 2018](#) between 9 and 10am that the AQI mainly in the East was noted to be very poor, ranging from 155 to 575. The highest AQI I found was between 5 and 6am stated at 901 in Mooroolbark, with it missing particles as PM2.5 in the table.

With this, I found that these two occasions where AQI and PM2.5 was higher and more harmful than other days, was also when clear-fell logging burns were commencing and overlapping with planned burns and burnt areas of the Central Highlands and surrounding being logging areas/ coupes.

Given the air quality and particles on these days for example, this can have major health risks for us and those living in regional communities close to where the planned burns and logging burns are occurring. Therefore, clear-fell logging may cover much less ground than fuel reduction burns, yet they burn far more biomass per hectare, which results in more smoke and pollution that people are breathing in.

The health risks for more sensitive people, such as the elderly, younger people, asthma sufferers, pregnant women and ill people are quite large as PM2.5 particles are small enough to be breathed deep into the lungs, with them being the result from the burning of organic materials like wood and other materials. With planned burns and clear fell logging causing such hazardous rates of air quality, this cannot continue in our future.

This is why I propose my solutions as apart of my health and I'm sure many Victorians as well as the safety of our climate and everything that our forests provide for us. I hold much admiration for forests as they inspire and calm me, giving me a lot of perspective in their beauty. More importantly, given that our native ash forests are the most carbon rich forests in the world and that Victoria's logging reputation is not good, I firmly believe that we should eliminate the problem that is industrial clear-fell logging of native forest.

In contrast, with the elimination of the above factors being out of the question, I strongly believe that government should aim to and go forward with dramatically reducing or eliminating peoples exposure to air pollution as it is proven to effect peoples overall health and wellbeing, have more public awareness of these issues, what we can do to help our health as well as what government can do also.

Additionally, I strongly suggest that government stop funding or approving facilities like Vic Forests that operate through deforestation, old growth and clear-fell logging. This can include, strengthening the laws (Environment Protection Act 1970) around the protection of our native, carbon dense forests, the animals that inhabit it and the ecosystems that are formed over great time amongst it.

I also believe that the EPA should increase monitoring when fuel reduction and industrial logging coupe burns are lit, have more public visibility to do with it and therefore treating logging burn biomass and its consequential pollution as any other significant and harmful form of pollution, acting accordingly to it.

Firmly informing the industry and corporations that source raw materials from native forest that logging does not ensure a sustainable, clean or bright future. We need to progress from traditional ways of polluting the earth to create energy for profitable gain.

EPA and government look into alternatives that ensure a better future for Victoria's air and water, as well as quality of life in considering this. This could be through logging by single-tree selection systems, tougher regulations and reduction in the use of paper. Consideration of alternative pulp for paper manufacture, as well as alternative methods

of timber ply manufacture. This should coincide with the increased use of plantation timber and significantly reduced use of native forest timber.

I firmly think that the Great Forest National Park of the Central Highlands and Emerald Link of East Gippsland proposals be adopted to not only improve our air quality but also our water, protection of our native forests and carbon emission reduction.

I am a big believer in a more sustainable future for Victoria, as I would enjoy for future generations to see and experience what I have in these precious forests. Victoria's air quality is of utmost importance and having post- logging burns as a result of clear fell logging is something that can be drastically improved. This will give me and many other Victorian's more quality of life and wellbeing, knowing that the air we're breathing is clean, that the timber we use is sourced sustainably and ethically, and that our forests have a brighter future for me to enjoy along with Victorian's alike.

Kind Regards,

Matilda Melis

