

## Victorian Air Quality Strategy

I thank you for the opportunity to contribute to such an important public health policy.

I believe there are some crucial omissions from the proposed Air Quality Strategy. Victoria has the opportunity to lead the world in establishing a strategy that will result in significant improvements in air quality, but to do so it must have the courage and commitment to tackle some of the major causative factors of air pollution.

I live in Melbourne's inner west, which has been identified as one of the areas in Australia with the most polluted air.

I would suggest incorporating these initiatives.

1. **Imposing and enforcing stricter standards for diesel emissions from freight trucks.** Truck manufacturers have been steadily improving engine efficiency, resulting in lower output of carcinogenic diesel particulates, so the Government should be searching for incentives to encourage truck owners and operators to take older, heavier polluting trucks off the roads and replace them with newer less-polluting ones, and imposing financial penalties for the continued operation of those older trucks.
2. **A move towards electric or hybrid-powered buses.** A clean air strategy should include an aim to progressively replace more of Victoria's diesel-engine bus fleet, particularly the vehicles servicing the Melbourne metropolitan area, with electric or hybrid vehicles.
3. **A serious and stronger commitment to removing heavy goods vehicles, including container trucks, from residential streets in Melbourne's inner west.** The construction of the West Gate Tunnel will make a significant improvement, but data in the project's Environmental Effects Statement makes very clear that both Williamstown Rd and Millers Rd will end up with a greatly increased number of trucks daily. It is unacceptable that the imposition of truck bans on some streets (Francis St, Somerville Rd, Buckley St) -- although commendable in itself -- will result in a *doubling* of truck numbers on Williamstown Rd, so it will carry exactly the number of heavy trucks using Francis St, Yarraville today.<sup>1</sup> Millers Rd will be worse. Williamstown Rd, between Somerville Rd and Geelong St, is an almost entirely residential area along its length on both sides of the road, with Edwardian-era family homes just metres from passing traffic and a growing number of new medium-density blocks under construction or already approved. Evidence presented at the EES by Clare Walter, Professor Louis Irving and Professor David Ball from the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre and the Lung Foundation Australia showed conclusively that diesel pollution causes lung cancer, asthma and sperm cell mutations. The Maribyrnong Truck Action Group and Maribyrnong City Council have both presented detailed proposals on alternative routes for trucks moving

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<sup>1</sup> Environmental Effect Statement TIA Technical Report A, p.116, 345

between the port and western suburbs container parks that would take them well clear of residential areas. To be effective, an Air Quality Strategy must encourage the government to actively pursue such alternative routes, which will include a ban on trucks on Williamstown Rd.

4. **Air filtration must be added to the ventilation system of the West Gate Tunnel.** One of the stated purposes of the tunnel is to remove trucks and their associated pollution from residential streets. It makes no sense to allow the tunnel to be built with a ventilation system that simply collects that pollution then disperses it back into those same residential areas. Victoria has an unprecedented opportunity to adopt world's best practice, use cutting-edge technology and create a tunnel solution that significantly reduces air pollution in the city. The Maribyrnong Truck Action Group submission to the West Gate Tunnel EES provides compelling reasons, on the basis of public health, why this should take place.
5. **A stronger, more determined focus on moving more of the freight burden to and from the Port of Melbourne, from road transport to rail.** Melbourne, compared with other major ports in the world, is badly lagging on the use of rail freight to and from the port and far too reliant on road transport but could, with effort, become a world leader. It must be part of a Clean Air Strategy to reduce the number of freight trucks on port routes when this is so clearly achievable.

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