

**Media Statement**

**20 October, 2017**

**EPA urges tighter environmental controls in Collie  
Report 1607**

The Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) has released its report on an inquiry into a proposal to change environmental conditions for the Bluewaters power station near Collie.

The Bluewaters Power Station Phase I and Phase II proposals, to construct and operate a sub-critical coal-fired base-load power generating facility 4 km northeast of Collie, were each assessed in 2005.

In February 2013, Bluewaters Power Pty Ltd reported that routine stack testing, when extrapolated to an annual load, showed chromium emissions were well above those allowed under its environmental conditions.

Comprehensive investigations and testing requested by the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER), and subsequent monitoring, showed that the original data did not reflect feasible annual emissions and had resulted from inaccurate monitoring, a consequence of incorrectly located monitoring ports.

Bluewaters Power subsequently moved the monitoring ports, updated the continuous emissions monitoring equipment and addressed pollution-control equipment maintenance. It also undertook an eight-month monitoring program that produced accurate and reliable results. Results from 'worst-case scenario' analysis showed that emissions were in fact less than 5 per cent of health criteria recommended by the Department of Health.

An independent peer review was also commissioned by the EPA to advise on the ambient health criteria and the risk posed by predicted ground-level concentrations of metals. The review concluded that the criteria were appropriate for the protection of human health from exposure to arsenic, cadmium, chromium III, chromium VI and mercury, and results indicated there was no cause for concerns of adverse health effects from exposure.

EPA Chairman Dr Tom Hatton said the inquiry into air emissions from the Bluewaters Power Station had brought to the EPA's attention the need for consistent standards and limits across all types of air emissions for all power stations in the Collie airshed.

The EPA called for consistent regulation of Collie power stations to ensure greater transparency and drive continuous improvement in air quality.

The EPA is seeking the following outcomes in the Collie airshed:

- Integrated airshed management
- Benchmarking of emissions sources

- Best-practice regulation of the airshed
- Ongoing commitments to improve air quality, and
- Publicly available information on ambient air quality.

Other recommendations included updating licences to include consistent pollutant targets and limits.

“Consistent with the *EP Act* principles of waste minimisation and intergenerational equity, it is reasonable for polluters in this industry to meet similar expectations for emissions limits, benchmarking, monitoring and reporting,” Dr Hatton said.

He also recommended regional ambient monitoring to address community concern.

“This should be designed in consultation with the community and with reporting with sufficient frequency and transparency to give those living in the airshed confidence that the cumulative impacts of emissions are being managed in accordance with expectations and contemporary standards for human health.”

Regarding the proposed changes to Bluewaters Power’s environmental conditions, the EPA said the monitoring, management and control of metal emissions for Bluewaters Power Station Phase I and II could be more appropriately regulated under Part V of the *EP Act*. However, these conditions should remain in the Ministerial Statements until a full suite of emissions limits are added to the licence under Part V of the *EP Act*.

EPA Report 1607 is available at [www.epa.wa.gov.au](http://www.epa.wa.gov.au)

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