

MEDIA RELEASE

RESPONSE TO ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVIST CLAIMS ON AIR QUALITY

Delta Electricity, the operator of the Vales Point Power Station, has strongly rejected the claims by Nature Conservation Council of NSW (NCC) and Better Future, labelling them as factually incorrect and misleading.

Company spokesperson, Steve Gurney, stated that the Vales Point Power Station operates in accordance with strict environmental licence conditions, with diligent oversight by the Environmental Protection Authority.

'This is a collection of anti-coal activists with one objective, to shut down coal fired power stations', Mr Gurney said.

Independent EPA analysis consistently shows that air quality on the Central Coast and Lake Macquarie is very good and amongst the best in New South Wales. It also concludes that 'levels of nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide and carbon monoxide easily meet National Standards'¹. Specifically, monitoring has shown that NO₂ concentrations were either very good or good at all monitoring sites at all times.

The sensationalist claims by these groups have consistently been discredited when tested by reference to independent analysis, air quality data or by scientific peer review². A recent peer review of the report relied on by these groups found that the base data was not referenced in the report and the results were exaggerated, appearing to use total NO₂ concentrations in estimating the number of asthma cases, not just the emissions from power stations. It should be highlighted that the largest contributor of NO₂ is vehicle emissions.

These activists also seek to selectively apply overseas emissions standards from selected countries that have large industrial activity nearby to high density populations. OECD figures³ show that a genuine air quality issue needs to be addressed in those circumstances. The OECD shows that the experience in NSW does not remotely compare to those situations, with Australia and New Zealand having the least health impacts.

'Once again, we see activists misleading the public in a scare campaign to achieve their real agenda of closing power stations' Mr Gurney said.

Delta's Environmental Protection Licence (EPL) was renewed by the EPA in July 2020 after considerable input from the community and other groups. Notably, limits for emissions such as oxides of nitrogen have already been tightened as part of this renewal process. Delta continues to comply with these reduced limits.

Power Stations are licensed and highly regulated, with detailed scrutiny by the EPA. Environmental data as required under Delta's licence is posted on Delta's website monthly for all to see⁴.

¹ <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/-/media/OEH/Corporate-Site/Documents/Air/annual-air-quality-statement-2018-190031.pdf>

² <https://www.energycouncil.com.au/analysis/power-station-particulate-pollution-flawed-claims-re-emerge/>

³ <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/9789264268586-14-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/9789264268586-14-en>

⁴ <https://www.de.com.au/environment/environmental-licences-and-monitoring>

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Air Monitoring Data - NO₂ concentrations (Source: Todoroski Air Sciences)

2018

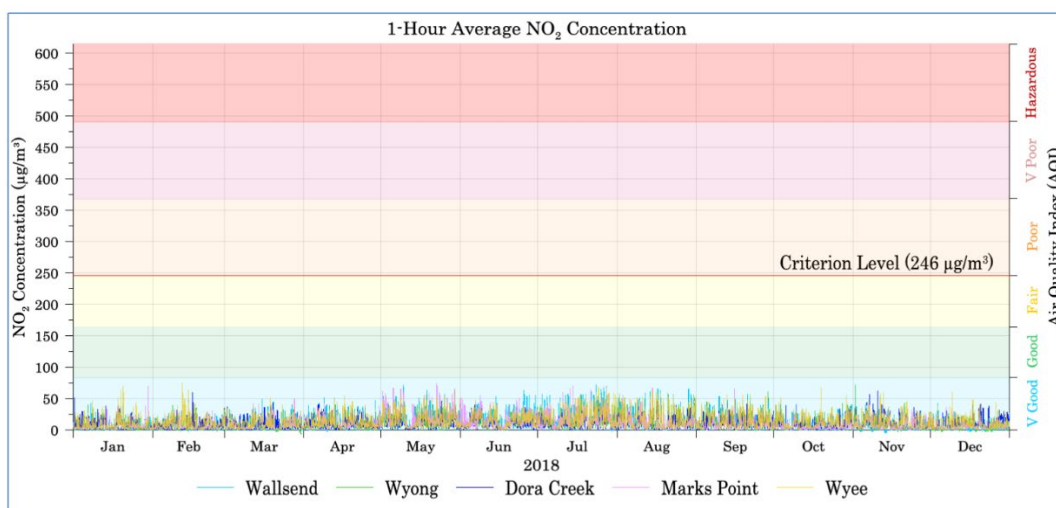


Figure 7-3: Lake Macquarie - Wyong 1-hour average NO₂ levels - 2018

All data recorded at the Lake Macquarie - Wyong monitoring sites were below the 1-hour average NO₂ criterion level of 246µg/m³ in 2018. Measured levels of NO₂ were very good or good at all monitors at all times.

2019

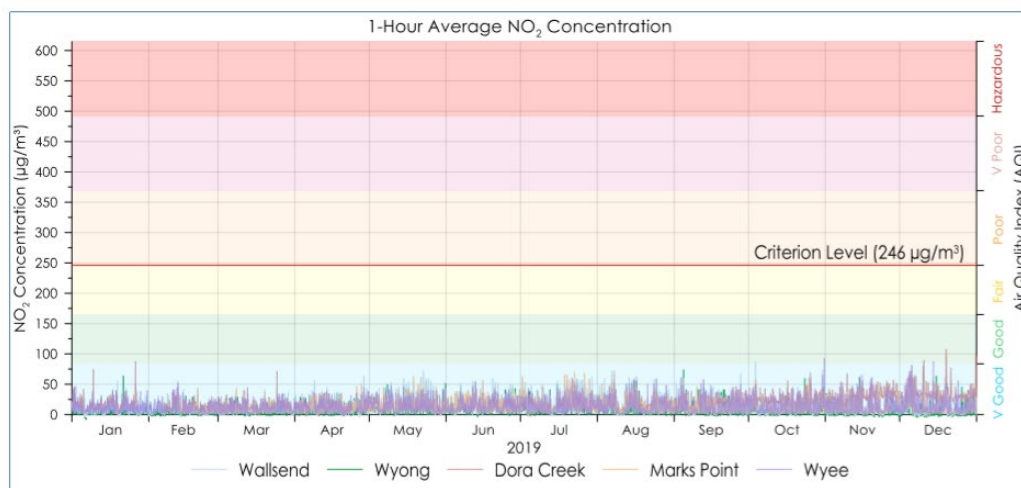
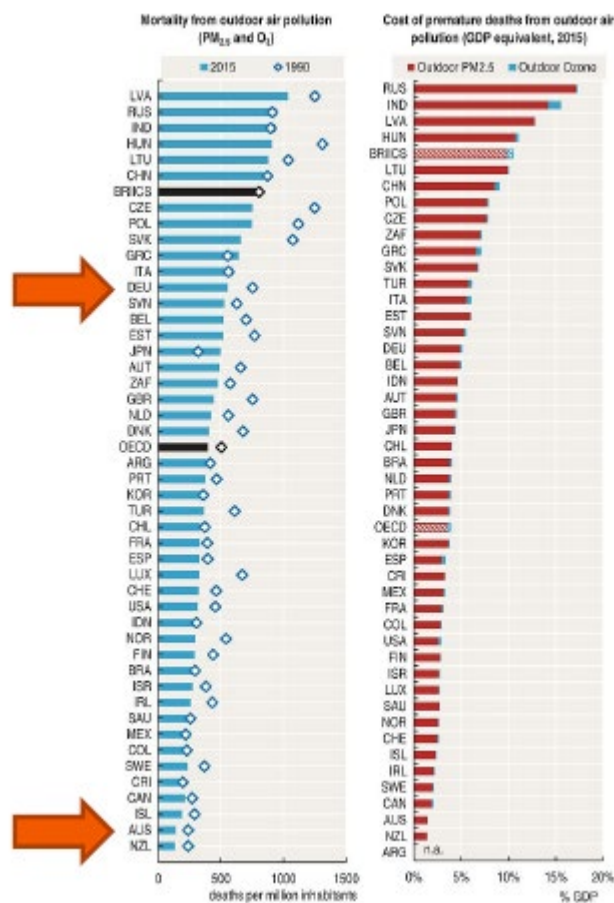
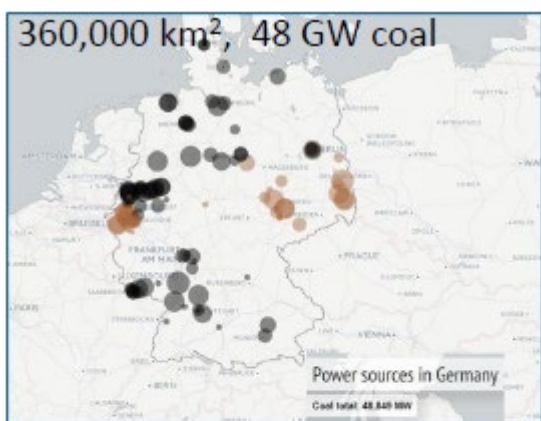


Figure 7-3: Lake Macquarie - Wyong 1-hour average NO₂ levels - 2019



OECD Comparison





Air Quality Study for the NSW Greater Metropolitan Region

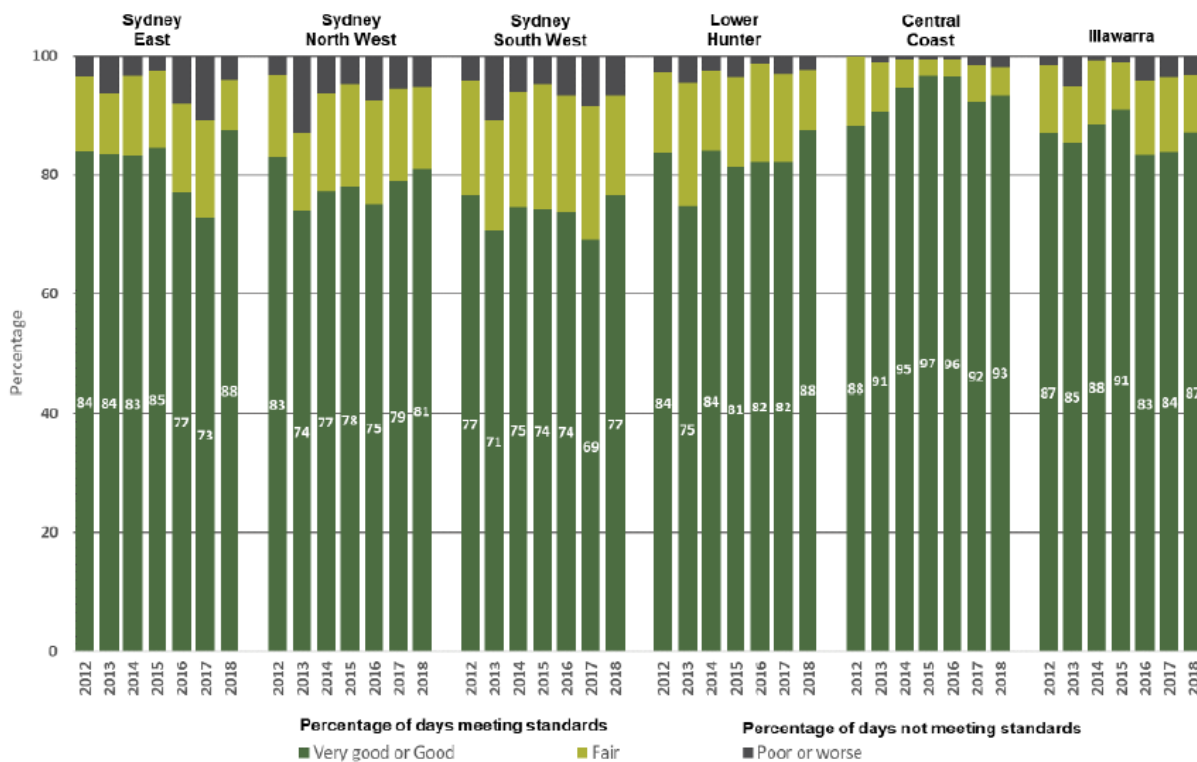


Figure 5 Air quality across the NSW Greater Metropolitan Region between 2012 and 2018 based on the Air Quality Index scale (at sites monitored against National Environment Protection Measure standards).