The following template email, circulated by Environmental Justice Australia, was received from 206 submitters.

Many of the submitters also added comments on the following issues:

- Moorebank terminal
- Second Sydney airport
- Renewable energy
- Electric vehicles
- Hazard reduction burning
- Plant more trees
- Construction site particle reduction
- Reduce background particle levels
- Land use planning controls near busy roads
- Vehicle emissions

Dear EPA and Minister Speakman,

Thank you for the opportunity to make comments on the Clean Air for NSW Consultation Paper.

There are six things the NSW Government must do to improve air quality and protect the health of the community:

1. A strong air pollution control strategy for NSW must seek to reduce pollution levels to the lowest level possible, not just below the national standards.

   There are significant health benefits in reducing pollution concentrations to well below the national standards. An effective air pollution control strategy must be based on objectives that are measured (e.g. a 50% reduction in emissions from coal mines by 2020), actions that are monitored, and meaningful community involvement.

2. Tackle air pollution from power stations.

   Our five largest coal-fired power stations emit huge quantities of fine particle (PM2.5) pollution, sulphur dioxide, oxides of nitrogen and a wide range of toxic pollutants. The NSW Government must commit to supporting the rapid closure of these major polluters and a planned transition to non-polluting renewable energy. This transition needs to be carefully managed to minimise social impacts. In the short-term, coal-fired power stations must be required to implement all available measures to control air pollution.

3. Control air pollution from coal mines.

   In the Hunter and other coal-mining regions, open cut coal mines are responsible for about 90% of coarse particle pollution, which have doubled in the last five years and trebled in the last ten.
The consultation Paper proposes no significant new measures to tackle these emissions. The Dust Stop program which aims to reduce coal dust by 80% isn’t working.

New and expanded coal mines should not be approved where pollution levels exceed the national standards. Existing coal mines need to be much more actively regulated to control coal dust.

4. Cover coal wagons.

Each year, millions of uncovered coal wagons pass through residential areas throughout NSW. Independent studies have demonstrated that particle concentrations increase significantly as these wagons pass. Covering wagons can reduce coal dust emissions by 99%. The Government must require all coal wagons be covered.

5. Scrap dirty wood heaters.

Wood heaters are responsible for 47% of Sydney’s fine particle (PM2.5) pollution each year; up to 75% in July. This is a very high priority for controlling air pollution and one of the most cost effective options. A small incentive would support residents to replace their polluting wood heaters with clean, efficient heaters. Incentives for home insulation would reduce the need for heating.

6. Polluters must pay.

Air pollution costs the people of NSW dearly, with the most polluted communities carrying an unfair share of this burden. By requiring polluters to pay, the NSW Government can create incentives for cleaner production. Load-based licencing fees paid by major polluters should be significantly increased. An analysis by Doctors for the Environment Australia recommends increasing fees to 50 times the current rate, so that polluters pay for their health impacts. Load-based licencing fees should also be paid by coal mining companies who are currently exempt.

Thank you

Kind regards,