



The Honourable Scott Emerson MP
Minister for Transport and Main Roads

Our ref: PET 10960

Your ref: Petitions

22 MAY 2013

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

I refer to a petition number 2042-13 lodged with the Legislative Assembly by Mr Carl Judge MP, Member for Yeerongpilly on 1 May 2013 about the West Moreton Coal System.

The petition raised concerns about the cumulative impact of fugitive coal dust and noise emissions as well as other emissions from coal trains operating on the West Moreton Rail System. The petition also requested that all coal trains operating on the West Moreton Rail System be "veneered" as a minimum standard and requests that an expert panel be appointed to study the impact of coal and dust emissions.

The Department of Environment and Heritage Protection undertook a coal dust monitoring study at Tennyson during September-October 2012. The *Tennyson Dust Monitoring Investigation Report* was released in December 2012 by the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection. The investigation found dust levels were within acceptable levels.

The health impacts from dust are predominantly related to exposure to fine particles, usually originating from fuel combustion and secondary chemical reactions. Transported coal and coal dust have very low levels of fine particles. The *Tennyson Dust Monitoring Investigation Report* found 24 hour average PM₁₀ fine particle levels did not exceed national standards and were found to be 47 percent below these standards.

The PM₁₀ fine particles measured as part of the study also included fine particle emissions from diesel locomotives, and again as stated, the total PM₁₀ fine particle levels were found to be in compliance with national standards at a level 47 percent below the standard.

Deposited dust (coarse dust) levels were also tested and found to be lower than accepted dust nuisance trigger guidelines. Analysis of deposited dust showed that the major component was mineral dust (soil and rock dust) comprising between 40% and 50%, with coal dust comprising between 10% and 20%.

Despite these findings, the Department of Transport and Main Roads has established an inter-agency Coal Dust Working Group (including representatives from the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection, Department of Premier and Cabinet, Department of State Development and Infrastructure Planning and Queensland Rail), which has been working with the South West System User's Group (comprising coal miners, Queensland Rail, Aurizon Limited and Queensland Bulk Handling Pty Ltd), to progress the development of additional measures to reduce coal dust emissions on the West Moreton Rail System.

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As a result of this collaboration the Queensland Resources Council (on behalf of the South West Users Group) has now committed to the development of a Coal Dust Management Plan which is expected to be completed by the end of 2013. As part of this plan New Hope Corporation Limited (accounting for around 60% of coal exports) committed to the installation of coal wagon veneering systems at its New Acland Coal Mine, and veneering operations commenced in early May 2013.

The Veneering Program involves the spraying of a bio-degradable polymer onto the surface of loaded coal wagons before they leave the mine rail-loading facility. The veneer forms a crust which, based on the roll-out of a similar program on the Central Queensland rail network, can reduce dust emissions by up to 75%.

Following on from the New Hope Corporation commitment to introduce veneering, the remaining coal miners using the West Moreton Rail System have now also committed to introduction of veneering at their mines by the end of 2013.

In addition, as part of the Coal Dust Management Plan, the Queensland Resources Council has commissioned an ongoing Coal Dust Monitoring Program at dedicated locations along the rail corridor, including at Oakey, Toowoomba, Dinmore, Tennyson, Fairfield and Coorparoo.

The Coal Dust Monitoring Program is being conducted by the Department of Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts, and commenced in early March 2013. Once the Coal Dust Management Plan is implemented it will maintain an ongoing coal dust monitoring program to help manage ongoing performance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Scott Emerson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Scott Emerson MP
Minister for Transport and Main Roads