

ADDITIONAL ITEM



Item No: 1.4
Title: Administrator's Minute - Remediation of Sites containing Coal Ash Repositories
Department: Administrator

13 April 2021 Ordinary Council Meeting

Reference: F2020/00039 - D14581675

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On 15 October 2019, a Legislative Council inquiry was established to examine the cost for remediation of sites containing coal ash repositories in NSW. The Legislative Council [Report 4 – March 2021](#) provides the outcomes of this inquiry.

There are two coal-fired power stations on the Central Coast; Vales Point (operational) and Colongra (not operational). Vales Point and Colongra power stations both have coal ash dams.

Coal ash is the by-product of burning coal in a coal-fired power station. The core component of coal ash is silica. Power stations dispose of coal ash in ash dams and recycle a small percentage of coal ash for reuse in construction.

The NSW Government acknowledged in its submission to the inquiry that contamination from coal ash dams 'may threaten human health and the environment, limit land use or increase development costs.' Inquiry participants identified that the ash dams were leaching heavy metals such as selenium, zinc, nickel, copper, aluminium, iron, magnesium, cadmium and lead into Lake Macquarie and nearby waterways.

Coal ash dams are remediated using a cap and cover approach; however, concerns were raised during the inquiry on the possibility of groundwater contamination since the ash dams are not lined.

In response to the inquiry, sixteen recommendations were made to the NSW Government to improve the management of coal ash dams to protect the environment and public health.

I formally move:

- 1 *That Council supports the sixteen recommendations made in the report 'Costs for remediation of sites containing coal ash repositories', by the Public Works Committee.*
- 2 *That Council writes to the Local Members of Parliament and to the Minister for Energy & Environment to seek their support for the NSW Government to acknowledge the inquiry and commence the implementation of the recommendations.*

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- 3 *That Council acknowledge the hard work of Lake Munmorah resident, Mr Gary Blashke OAM, in raising community awareness about this important issue, and for appearing before the Legislative Council Inquiry personally.*