

# Care For Hedland Environmental Association Inc.

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Port Hedland Dust Management Taskforce  
Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation  
Level 6, 1 Adelaide Terrace  
East Perth  
Western Australia, 6004.

## Submission In Response To Department of Health's Health Risk Assessment & Recommendations

Dear Chair Port Hedland Dust Management Taskforce,

The Care For Hedland Environmental Association (now on referred to solely as the Association) is an independent environmental group based in Port Hedland, in north west Western Australia. The Association has a membership of just over 160 members from Port, South Hedland and Wedgefield and has a diverse demographic of short term to long term residents, local business/industry, community and indigenous representation. The protection and ongoing sustainable management of the coastal environment of Port Hedland and the surrounding area is one of the Association's primary areas of focus. The Association has for fourteen nesting seasons been conducting a local volunteer Flatback Turtle (*Natator depressus*) monitoring program along Cemetery Beach and Pretty Pool Beach.

The Association would like to thank the Port Hedland Dust Management Taskforce for the opportunity to provide comment on the Department of Health's Health Risk Assessment 2016 and its recommendations.

The Association supports industry, the Port and its growth. The Association also recognises the importance of the mining industry on our local economy. However, in doing so, it is keen to see efforts to protect the historic heart of Port Hedland, the "West End". It is essential to the tourism industry of Port Hedland that the historic area of Port Hedland be attractive for visitors and residents and play a role in invigorating the town.

The Association respects that dust management in Port Hedland is a complex issue. The Association also acknowledges that there have been considerable improvements over the past decade in terms of local efforts by companies to manage dust emissions and notably changes in processes in order to mitigate dust from their operations (ie. BHP removal of crushing and screening from its Nelson Point operations).

The Association believes that State Government and industry need to work better with the Port Hedland community to ensure the long-term development and sustainability of our Town's historic heart. The Association also believes State Government and industry need to continue to work together to manage pollutants. The Australian standard of dust particulate matter of  $50\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  should be upheld in all areas of the country regardless of outside factors such as mining dust or cyclone activity. The suggested level of  $70\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  for the town of Port Hedland is not acceptable. The Association believes that smaller populations should not be discounted as the health of these people as equally important as the health of larger populations. The Association would appreciate the efforts of the State Government going forwards to minimise dust levels to ensure the safety of all Port Hedland residents and visitors.

The Association appreciates the consideration of the use of a Special Control Area. This is appropriate in terms of buffers and ensuring development does not encroach on industry (and vice versa). Also in terms of building type, the Association supports the current preference towards smaller, denser developments. However, with the data available, the Association does not support the implementation of no permanent residential zoning west of Acton Street. As the risk of cyclone damage to housing is a real threat in Port Hedland, the negative impacts on families who may need to rebuild family homes after catastrophic events would be high. The Association also likes to note that the Health Risk Assessment uses empirical data up until 2013 and feels that any recommendations made by the Dust Taskforce using these findings are

redundant without consideration and use more recent data being taken into consideration, in combination with long-term health assessments and studies being undertaken to properly evaluate the risks

Importantly, the Association would like to see greater emphasis and use within the recommendations of greening and green vegetation buffers, in effect providing a natural protective barrier between industry and the surrounding residential areas. The Association strongly supports idea of building and maintaining vegetative buffers between industry and the Town, as well as the idea of greening exposed land areas right across Port Hedland (from west of the Town of Port Hedland Civic Centre) including the former Port Hedland Hospital site, vacant residential land holdings and the Spoilbank area to name but a few.



The Association would like to see all current exports and future exports, activities and potential increases in throughput being underpinned by a commitment to world's best practice in the management of bulk resource commodities. Particular emphasis on world's best practice principles must be placed on dust management given the proximity to Port Hedland's historical heart, the West End. There should also within the recommendations be greater emphasis and encouragement on industry to continue to use "research and development" and to be continuously aiming to improve and incorporate the use of improved and modern technologies to manage and mitigate dust emissions from industrial sites. It would be pleasing to see government looking out for local residents' best interests rather than those of the mining industry who may not necessarily live near the site and therefore are not directly impacted by the dust risks.

Comprehensive and accordingly monitored and enforced environmental management strategies must be in place that aim to promote the mitigation of dust, light, noise and vibration from the Port and Industrial boundaries.

The Association again thanks you for the opportunity to be involved and would welcome the opportunity to remain involved in the process going forward. The Association would also welcome the opportunity to be involved in any review and consultation of the current dust monitoring program and network currently funded through PHIC.

Anything further regarding the above submission, please do not hesitate to contact myself directly.

Kind Regards,

Kelly Howlett  
Chairperson

6<sup>th</sup> October 2017