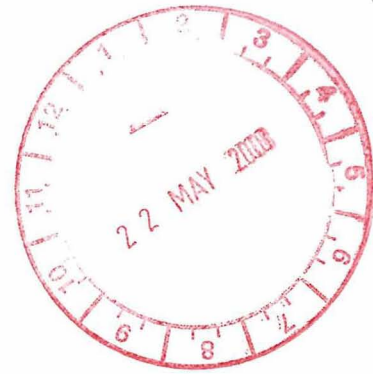


From:
To: lomar@parliament.wa.gov.au
Date: 22/05/2008 8:10:03 pm
Subject: Letters to Parliament House.doc

Petra Bettermann



The Chairman
Environment and Public Affairs Committee
Parliament House
Perth WA 6000

Attention: Linda Omar

As a resident of Willetton for the over 20 years, I have never felt so unimportant and ill-considered by my local council.

Having to endure the unmitigated disaster that has been the South Metropolitan Recycling Plant has forced us to significantly alter our lifestyle while impacting on our health and sense of wellbeing.

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We are often woken in the night or early morning hardly able to breathe, we cough and suffer from watery eyes and headaches. I have also suffered skin rashes and itchy on my forearms and feet.

We pride ourselves on a large and busy family where our children and grandchildren freely and daily visit the property. We often have our grandchildren (aged 6 months to 10 years) during the day and for sleep-overs. However, this is becoming increasingly difficult as the smell causes the younger ones distress and the older ones are forced inside; unable to use the pool, the bird cages or play outside.

As if that is not enough, at times, the smell is so overwhelming that our guests have been forced to leave. Christmas Eve, 2006, we hosted a Christmas party at our home with 20 of our family and friends. With an expansive undercover outdoor area with pool, we put a great deal of effort into decorating, setting up a barbeque and table settings. By 8pm we were saying goodbye to the last of our guest, the evening ruined (and the meal wasted) by the most incredible stench that had even permeated the house. I cried all night.

This is not an isolated incident, I wish it were but there have been many evening meals, afternoons teas and general daily activities that have been soured by this site.

We have made so many appeals to local council, the Dept of Environment and the Minister for Health directly. We have been fobbed off, lied to, ignored, belittled and accused of exaggeration. I have made countless offers to the 'spin doctors' (who have been hired to silence us) for them to come and share my home for one week or even a few days, to experience this for themselves. Then they can ask themselves if they would subject their family to this pollution, even for a few short days.

The wildly conflicting and suspiciously unaccredited environmental studies done on this plant have at best been inconclusive as to the permanent damage that may be caused by continued exposure. Even if there is some small risk to the public, surely the council should stop all production until such times as the plant is deemed safe (by actual scientists without an agenda); regardless of the income generated and 'carbon credits' earned. We are talking hundreds of families here, children, babies and pregnant mothers who are all exposed on a regular basis. Just a cursory glance at the latest statistics shows Canning Vale and Willetton as having some of the highest incidence of ADHD in Australia, the cause as yet undetermined. I wonder whether there are any statistics of birth defects, miscarriage, depression, unexplained skin conditions, bronchial problems etc clustered in the area. The human cost here is potentially priceless, the legal cost almost as much. Surely we don't need a Hollywood blockbuster to tell us how this might end?

Sincerely

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Petra Bettermann

CC: parliamentary-submission@cmcoag.com

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