

Coal-fired Power Stations



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Vales Point power station, located on the shores of Lake Macquarie, has been in operation since 1978 and is slated for closure in 2028

Some stats...

- There are 20 coal-fired power stations in Australia which support our domestic energy production.
- Most of our power stations are over 30 and up to 50 years old.
- In the last six years, one third of Australia's power stations, including Hazelwood (Vic) and Port Augusta (SA) have closed down, with the remaining stations set to close in the next two decades.

Power stations cause mortality

- The annual health costs of coal-fired power stations across Australia has been estimated at about \$2.6 billion a year.
- Pre-mature deaths from particle pollution caused by power stations are estimated to be around 430 per year.
- There are various ways to reduce emissions and pollution from power stations, however Australia's use of these technologies is patchy or non-existent.
- Poor regulation has resulted in emissions limits in Australia being up to 666 times higher than the limits on power stations in China and Europe.

"Coal-fired stations are a health hazard to their local communities and beyond due to the pollutants they emit. The resulting illnesses are a significant cost to health budgets."

- Professor David Shearman of Doctors for the Environment

Power stations drastically lower air-quality

- More than 1 million tonnes of toxic pollution is emitted every year by Australia's power stations.
- In the Hunter Valley in NSW, studies indicate 30–40% of airborne fine particle pollution is caused by power stations.
- Airborne particle pollution from power stations can cause heart attack, stroke, asthma, lung cancer, respiratory and cardiovascular disease, irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, choking and coughing, headache, general discomfort and anxiety, wheezing, colds, flu and bronchitis, coughing, shortness of breath, tiredness and nausea.
- Children are most susceptible to issues caused by particle pollution due to having relatively larger lungs than adults

Power stations contaminate our waterways

- Coal-ash dumps connected to power stations often leach toxic contaminants into surrounding waterways.
- Heavy metals such as arsenic, lead, mercury, cadmium, chromium and selenium are commonly found in ash dumps; all of these substances can cause cancer and disease in humans.
- These toxins have been found to accumulate in fish and in some cases cause deformities and lower the population, affecting the entire ecosystem.

Power stations are massive carbon producers

- Australia's 20 remaining power stations produce up to 150 million tonnes of carbon every year.
- Australia has an obligation under the Paris Agreement to reduce its emissions by 26–28 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030, however most of our power stations aren't due to close until well after this date
- Coal fired power generation not only impacts local ecosystems and communities, it is also our biggest contribution to the release of carbon into our atmosphere, which spurs global climate change.

Australia's power stations require up to 40 million tonnes of thermal coal per year to generate 24.6GW of electricity.

