

PETITION

To the Honourable the Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales assembled.

The Petition of residents of, and visitors to the Blue Mountains and Lithgow, brings to the attention of the House;

the NSW Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) plans to remove 12 Air Pollution Monitors from Lithgow, Katoomba, Wentworth Falls and Springwood in June 2020.

They were vital during the recent intense and protracted bushfires, giving residents near real-time readings on hazardous bushfire smoke.

Bushfire smoke is a known threat to human health.

The Minister has rejected requests of community groups, including local government, for the monitors to stay as our communities face bushfires unprecedented in frequency and intensity, needing permanent monitoring not a temporary experiment.

This is the first time extensive air monitoring has been available to the community between St Marys and Bathurst. Blue Mountains and Lithgow residents have accessed the air-quality data thousands of times.

In 2017, local community groups came together out of concerns about air quality. Following consultations with the EPA, ambient air quality monitoring was instituted across the Blue Mountains and Lithgow using 11 KOALAs (Knowing our Ambient Local Air-Quality) and one Pod, in May 2019 for a period of 12 months.

The Blue Mountains and Lithgow Air Watch Project website received thousands of hits prior to and during recent bushfires. The site has been shared on social media and welcomed in the local Blue Mountains Gazette and Lithgow Mercury newspapers.

The Blue Mountains World Heritage-listed National Park hosts a reported 5 million visitors each year, many coming from urban areas. People have been able to monitor, on the website, public near real-time readings of air pollution. It has been used by local schools in science and geography studies.

This has been particularly beneficial for the young, and those suffering medical conditions in our community and among visitors, at quite limited cost. Long-term effects of smoke air pollution have been confirmed by scientific studies raising ongoing concern in our communities.

The EPA predicts both road and rail freight transport across the Blue Mountains will increase in the future, further challenging our communities' air quality. Blue Mountains and Lithgow Air Watch Project data is currently providing an air-quality base line and measures effects of a number of changes including bushfires.

This data is essential to State and local government planning into the future, as well as for health research, and community safety from bushfire smoke.

The petitioners, signed below, ask the House of Representatives;

to express its support for the extension of the Blue Mountains and Lithgow Air Watch Project for a further 5-year period, and to seek a response from the Minister regarding this proposal.

Name	Address	Signature

Please return original petitions completed in blue or black pen to D Smith, 52-52A Great Western Hwy, Mount Victoria, NSW, 2786.
Copies will not be accepted by the NSW Parliament and the residential address of a signatory must be included.

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