

## The need for reform

For most industrial developments, responsibility for approvals lies with the states. In their zeal for economic growth and revenue, state governments sometimes approve developments with scant regard for human health.

In the interests of human health, Australia must take a national approach to assessing the health impacts of resource projects and other heavy industries.

DEA is drawing attention to the true cost of under-regulation in terms of increased healthcare and other costs. DEA emphasises the need for reform at a national level.

“Australians are suffering ill health because of grossly inadequate assessment and management”

## Read the full report

*The Health Factor: Ignored by industry, overlooked by government* is a comprehensive analysis of the under-regulation of resource projects. It describes damning case studies of projects that pollute at levels known to cause human ill-health.

The full report is available on the DEA website. For a printed copy, please contact the office.



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## The health factor:

Ignored by industry,  
overlooked by government

**Failure to prevent  
pollution and protect  
human health is  
creating a costly  
legacy for  
Australia.**

**Doctors argue that proper  
health impact assessments and  
national oversight are crucial  
and long overdue.**

## Failure to protect health

Australians are suffering ill health and Australia is incurring economic loss because of grossly inadequate assessment and management of the health impacts of some resource projects and other major developments.

The rapid expansion of the coal and unconventional gas industries has not only created widespread community concern over health and environmental issues, it has exposed the inadequate processes used by state governments to approve developments.

The health impacts on workers and communities should be properly assessed, however, the health impact processes are typically confusing, inefficient and often rudimentary – and the health of communities has not been adequately protected.

The current trend to 'cut green tape' to expedite projects could make present health assessments even more inadequate.

The approval process differs from state to state leaving some communities less protected than others. Decision-making is seldom transparent, health departments are typically under-resourced, and EPA regulations are sometimes bypassed. Proponents are not required to be accountable for impacts on communities. Formalised appeals processes are not available.

## Doctors on the front line

Doctors are seeing long term, short term and cumulative health effects resulting from exposure to environments damaged by industry in a climate of indifference by governments.

Doctors for the Environment Australia (DEA) is on the front line of exposing these health and social problems.

Developments that proceed with little regard to the environment or the health impact resulting from damage to the air, water or soil should have no place in Australia. The cost of this legacy is just too great.



Emissions from some coal projects are not properly measured and are likely to be contributing to ill health.  
Pictured: Loy Yang power. Copyright: Rim Zrtkevicius/Environment Victoria

## Health impact assessment

A Health Impact Assessment (HIA) identifies and examines the health impacts of a development during its planning and development stages.

HIA provides decision makers with crucial information about how a project may affect the health of people. It involves the scientific processes of identifying and measuring the risks.

Without a proper HIA, a community can have no confidence their health is being protected when resource projects are developed.