



The Coastwatchers Association Inc.

CHARCOALITION

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COMMUNITIES & BUSINESSES FOR A CHARCOAL-FREE SOUTH COAST

Dioxins from the Charcoal Plant?

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This paper includes information from
Dioxins – What & Where are they, by the Dioxin Action Campaign

The proposed charcoal factory at Broulee will burn 200,000 tonnes of timber every year for the next 20 years. One of the most dangerous emissions from the charcoal factory are Dioxins.

Australian Silicon's Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), Section 9.2.2, states that the proposed emission equipment will "minimise the formation of dioxins and furans". That means that some dioxins and furans are produced. How much? No emission data regarding dioxin or furan emissions are provided anywhere in the EIS, including the list of emissions in Table 1 of Appendix J.

Dioxins are a group of chlorinated compounds, one of which is among the most toxic substances ever identified. They are by-products of industrial processes such as municipal and medical waste incinerators, paper and electricity production, coke and sinter production, all metal smelting and refining and chemical manufacturing. They also result from natural processes such as forest fires and volcanic eruptions.

Once in the environment, they remain stable and accumulate in the food chain, soils and sediments. Even if production ceased now, the existing load will continue to cycle through the environment for decades or even centuries.

Animals and humans absorb dioxins from the environment through their food and water intake and in breathing polluted air. Dietary pathways are meat, dairy products, fish and eggs and dioxins can also be inhaled through tobacco smoking. Dioxins do not break down and they become stored in the body fats.

Impacts on Human Health

The effects of dioxins are multiple and complex and affect all exposed. They interfere with hormone regulation, immunity, nervous and reproductive systems. They have been associated with a wide range of health impacts including;

- Tumour promotion
- Testicular and Prostrate cancers
- Leukaemia and Lymphoma
- Breast cancer
- Endometriosis
- Immune deficiency and infections
- Low sperm count
- Children's behavioural and memory problems
- Delayed learning in children
- Altered sexual development
- Asthma
- Diabetes
- Auto-immunity
- Parkinson's disease
- Alzheimer's disease

Unborn babies are most sensitive to dioxin exposure. Dioxins are transferred through the placenta in the mother's womb and to newborn babies through breast milk. These intakes can be in excess of the Tolerable Daily Intake (TDI) proposed by the World Health Organisation (WHO) ie. 1-4 picograms per kg of body weight per day.



Dioxin Action Campaign

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