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**Title:**

Material for Advertiser Supplement - From Director General of Public Health - Pollution

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From the very early days of the State the South Australian Government has been concerned to ensure that proper legal authority should exist for preserving a healthy environment for the people.

The Health Act of 1878 charged the Central Board of Health with the execution of the Act 'for securing the proper sanitary condition of the State'. This provision has continued in subsequent modifications of Health legislation right down to the present day.

Successive Central Boards have seen this as a requirement that they take not only an interest, but a direct responsibility for the state of the environment at least as far as it may directly affect the health of the people.

The Central Board, and the Department of Public Health through which it works, have therefore built up an expert staff of doctors, scientists, health inspectors and public health nurses, charged with this responsible task of ensuring a healthy environment. They in turn work with and through the staffs of local boards of health throughout the State. There are now some 125 qualified health inspectors in South Australia contributing to this effort.

The traditional areas of concern have been disposal of solid and liquid wastes. In recent years have been added a growing concern with emission of gases and particulate matter into the atmosphere, and a need to control contamination of the environment with chemicals and radioactive substances. Modern technology poses problems which require expert guidance. Expert advisory committees have therefore been set up to provide this guidance in relation to clean air, radioactive substances, and poisons. They in turn keep in close touch with the National Health and Medical Research Council, so that common patterns of control may be applied throughout Australia.

The struggle to guard the environment is a continuing and a changing one as cities grow larger, populations denser and yet more mobile, and new technological developments produce entirely new problems.

But what of the results of all this effort? It is a long story, but to state it shortly the vast volumes of solid wastes we create are being disposed mainly by sanitary landfill - converting swamps and pug holes into recreation grounds and other useful land; liquid wastes go now to modern disposal plants by way of sewers or to oxidation ponds by way of common effluent drains, and safe effluents are used to irrigate park lands, sports grounds and suitable crops. Our air remains cleaner than that in other places. Los Angeles County calls a smog alert if sulphur oxides rise above 3 parts per million. The highest level recorded in Adelaide since measurement began in 1964 has been 0.06 parts per million.