



## Spike - pollution tracker ballad

Spike is a water dragon  
Who cares about our air.  
He knows we have to help it,  
We have to do our share.

For all who have to breathe it,  
Our invisible source of life,  
We are quickly heading down  
A path that leads to strife.

Spike is based in Canberra,  
In Australia's ACT,  
Working for the Government  
It's now his job to be,

A travelling inspector,  
Moving round our land,  
Finding all the nasty substances,  
He needs a helping hand.

Cause even though they're  
everywhere  
And we are all to blame,  
We need to see what can be done  
To bring about a change.

So if you can, please help him,  
Source and identify,  
What substances and pollutants  
Are emitted to the sky.

We need to know exactly what,  
Chemicals can do.  
Emitted to the atmosphere,  
They harm both me and you.

Then when this information  
Is shared amongst us all,  
We each can do our little bit  
To help the levels fall.

Pollutants cover many things  
That are toxic in the air  
But wasting time on blaming,  
Isn't really fair.

As sometimes air pollution  
Is caused when people aim  
To help out the environment,  
So they are not to blame.

Like burning parts of forests  
To regenerate the trees,  
Carbon monoxide's emitted  
And blown into the breeze.

But sometimes the good outweighs  
the bad  
And sometimes there's a cost.  
We have to look at both of these  
Ensuring everything's not lost.

So join Spike on his journey  
To cities, states and towns,  
To regions all across the land,  
Help track pollutants down.

*This resource is available to download as an audio file from the kids section of [www.npi.gov.au](http://www.npi.gov.au)*



**Australian Government**

**Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts**





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### The Journey

Spike flew out from Canberra  
An eagle was his ride,  
Landing east of Dubbo  
Near the Great Divide.

He met some other trackers  
In good old Sydney town,  
Who told Spike of their findings  
And pollutants they had found.

Like nasty little benzenes,  
Carbon monoxide too,  
Lead and other compounds  
That come from me and you.

When we use our mowers  
Or fly by aeroplane,  
Driving in the family car  
To a local football game.

Or burning wood to keep us warm  
Or on the bus to town,  
City, state, no matter where,  
Those pollutants are around.  
Spike thanked every single tracker  
And begged the eager mob,  
To be aware and stay alert,  
Keep their minds upon the job.

He hitched a ride with a roo  
North across the border,  
Finding things in Queensland  
Were also of an order.

Where some emitted arsenic,  
Others mercury and lead,  
When sulfur dioxide was also found  
It spun out his spikey head.

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So off he went to Kakadu,  
Where he found out from a Ranger,  
That necessary forest burns  
Also put the air in danger.

Emitting benzenes and formaldehyde,  
Carbon monoxide as well,  
This was done in every state,  
As far as he could tell.

Spike also thanked him for his help  
Then off to W. A.  
Swam out to an oil rig,  
Swam back, all in one day.

Then visited a refinery  
Located on the coast.  
Toured an oil tanker  
Then thanked the local hosts.

For all they'd helped him document  
Pollutants in the air,  
The facts about the ore mines,  
Would help more become aware.

An emu picked him up in Perth  
For the journey cross the plain,  
In South Australia he stopped to see  
What data he could gain.

At a water treatment plant,  
Emission indicators read,  
Nitrogen and phosphorus  
And traces of some lead.



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### The Journey

With this local data  
He joined dolphins heading south,  
Moving into Hobart  
Through the Derwent's mouth.

There Spike took a school group  
To test the forest air,  
And found oxides of nitrogen  
Were plentiful in there.

Also heaps of oxygen  
Emitted by every tree,  
Spike also noted forests  
Give oxygen for free.  
He knew this was important,  
Like everything he'd seen.  
And vital to Earth's future health  
Was to keep our planet clean.

His next stop was Victoria,  
And a giant factory,  
Making bread and products,  
Consumed by you and me.

It emitted to the atmosphere  
Ethanol as well.  
Spike smelled that making bread  
Produced a very distinctive smell.

Once again it was time to leave  
And take the information home.  
Spike knew for sure he couldn't  
Have done it on his own.

As people all around the land  
Had helped him along the way,  
Tracking air pollutants  
Each and every day.

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The data he collected  
Was uploaded to a site,  
Where the National Pollutant Inventory  
Can be viewed both day and night.

Spike took the time to give a speech  
About what he had found.  
He mentioned how in every state  
Pollutants were around.

Caused by humans every day,  
At home, at work, at play,  
We had to keep a track of them,  
We had to find a way.

To make our environment healthier  
Our land, our water, our air,  
It's up to all of us,  
We have to be aware.

So join with Spike and all his friends,  
Keep watch, collect and share,  
Data and information  
On the water, land and air.

Know what it is that we all do,  
To add to the pollution.  
Change our ways so we become  
Part of the solution.

*Robert Colliver, 2008*  
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