

CONSTITUENT QUESTION

House of Assembly

ASKED BY: Dr Rosalie Woodruff MP

ANSWERED BY: Hon Bridget Archer MP
Minister for Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing

QUESTION:

This is a question from my constituent David in Geeveston, who contacted me and said: I am being seriously affected by the amount of smoke from burn-offs in the Huon Valley. I have asthma and smoke makes it hard for me to breathe. As a resident of Geeveston, I know very well we need to have fuel reduction burns to protect us from bushfire risks, but I was horrified to learn that Forestry Tasmania also adds a huge amount of smoke by burning logged sites. This adds a huge smoke load which is terrible for people like me and others with respiratory conditions. The amount of smoke last Sunday was so extreme I couldn't even go outside to mow the lawn or go to the shops, and I spent the day in the house. Will you put the community's health first and stop these unnecessary forestry burns?

ANSWER:

- I am advised that EPA Tasmania provides real-time air-quality data, and the AirRater app can help track local conditions. More guidance is available at health.tas.gov.au/air-quality and through the TasALERT website and app.
- The Tasmanian Fire Service also provides information about planned burns in Tasmania, including fuel reduction burns. This includes information about why fuel reduction burns are undertaken along with a map of all planned burns conducted for the current season.

- I am further advised that the EPA does not determine if planned burns should or should not occur in Tasmania. The EPA's role in relation to smoke pollution and air quality in Tasmania more generally is centred around monitoring and reporting of air quality, regulating major industries with respect to emissions, and supporting regulators such as local government with information and advice.
- This is undertaken within the legislative framework including the *Environmental Management and Pollution Control Act 1994*, *Environment Protection Policy (Air Quality) 2004*, and *Environmental Management and Pollution Control (Smoke) Regulations 2019*.
- Tasmania's Coordinated Smoke Management System (CSMS) is a smoke management tool for planned burns co-ordinated by the Forest Practices Authority.
- The CSMS is designed to reduce smoke pollution levels near populated areas. This is a voluntary system currently used by the forest industry, Tasmania Fire Service, and Parks and Wildlife Service.
- People with asthma are advised to have an up-to-date action plan and appropriate medications, in consultation with their health practitioner such as a GP.

Bridget Archer

Hon Bridget Archer MP
Minister for Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing

Date: 15/5/26