

What's new in the Air Quality EPP?



One Policy to regulate and manage air quality in SA instead of four policies plus two guidelines

3 policies and 2 guidelines have all been consolidated into 1 policy. These are the *Environment Protection (Air Quality) Policy 1994*, the *Environment Protection (Burning) Policy 1994*, the *Environment Protection (Solid Fuel Heaters) Policy 2015*, the *Air Quality Impact Assessment Using Design Ground Level Pollutant Concentrations (DGLCs) Guideline 2006* (DGLC Guideline) and the *Odour Assessment Using Odour Source Modelling Guideline 2007*.

As the *Environment Protection (Motor Vehicle Fuel Quality) Policy 2002* is now fully covered by the Commonwealth's *Fuel Quality Standards Act 2000* and supporting Fuel Standards, it is proposed that it is revoked to remove duplication in legislation.

EPA can take a 'whole of air shed' approach to managing specific areas of concern and set air quality objectives for the area

A number of factors determine the risk to communities from exposure to air pollution, including the amount of pollutants emitted, the emission sources, weather, topography, natural events and the size of the air shed (a geographical area where local topography and meteorology limit the dispersion of pollutants away from the area). The EPA is now able to declare that localised air quality objectives apply for a specific area. A person carrying on an activity in such an area must ensure that any pollutants named in the declaration do not exceed any ambient concentrations declared for that pollutant.

All solid fuel heaters sold and installed in SA must comply with relevant Australian Standards (AS/NZS 4013 and AS/NZS 2918)

Compliant solid fuel heaters produce less emissions and the requirement brings SA into line with other jurisdictions and ensures that the market is not subverted by cheap, non-compliant imports that have the potential to further degrade South Australia's air quality.

The sale of green firewood (moisture content exceeding 20%) is prohibited

A maximum moisture content of 20% is generally accepted as the highest moisture content before wood begins to burn inefficiently. Fuel with greater than 20% moisture has substantially higher emissions (such as increased PM_{2.5} particle pollution) contributing to impacts on human health and the environment.

Requirement to operate solid fuel heater correctly and prevent excessive smoke.

People are required to limit the impacts of 'excessive' wood smoke from their solid fuel heaters. A simple test is provided for determining what constitutes 'excessive smoke' within the context of an 'environmental nuisance' under the EP Act.

Councils will have the power to manage burning in the open in their areas.

The current Burning Policy prohibits burning in the open in prescribed areas (eg the Adelaide metropolitan area), but leaves burning in remaining areas either partly or largely unregulated. Burning may not be appropriate at different times depending on local meteorological conditions, geographic conditions and the location of other residents. The new draft Air Quality EPP seeks to provide greater control at the local level and where appropriate, councils will have the ability to apply to the EPA to allow burning in the open on premises in certain parts of their area and manage it at the local level.

Under the new Air Quality EPP, burning in the open is generally not permitted (with exceptions for activities such as bushfire prevention, disposal of agricultural waste, preparation of food and beverages, recreational activities and in exempted council areas as outlined above).