ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AUTHORITY

Adelaide Hills winter air quality results
4 February 2008

EPA air quality monitoring has revealed that air quality levels in the Adelaide Hills region were acceptable during the 2007 winter months. The monitoring was conducted in the Woodside area between early June and late October 2007 as part of the EPA's SmokeWatch program to assess the impacts of wood smoke.

A report, soon to be released by the EPA, highlights that the air quality was generally good in Woodside during the study, with the impact of wood heaters mainly being detected during cold and still nights.

Director of Science and Sustainability, Peter Dolan said these wood smoke events were transient in nature and quickly dispersed as the morning breeze developed.

"This is the second year that the EPA has initiated the SmokeWatch program in the Adelaide Hills area. The 2007 study results are very similar to those of 2006.

"The results showed that hydrocarbon levels were almost identical for the two study years.

"An advance in measurement technologies allowed the EPA to measure the size of wood smoke particles for the first time. The particles measured were found to be less than 2 micrometers in diameter, in comparison human hair is 30 micrometers in a diameter.

"Particles of this size can be breathed deep into the lungs where they can cause adverse health effects.

"Both studies did not detect any pollution events above National (NEPM) Standards or Goals for the relevant parameters".

Mr Dolan said that the EPA used an air monitoring caravan to monitor wood smoke. The caravan contains several instruments that measure particles, gases and meteorological events.

"The SmokeWatch program has provided the EPA with an excellent opportunity to assess the impact of wood smoke in an isolated airshed".

The SmokeWatch program aims to encourage residents in the Adelaide Hills to reduce wood smoke pollution levels by operating their wood heater correctly.

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