



Robyn Parker MP

Minister for the Environment

Minister for Heritage

MEDIA RELEASE

Saturday, 29 June 2013

ADDITIONAL FUNDING TO TACKLE AIR QUALITY ISSUES

Environment Minister Robyn Parker today announced further details of projects to be undertaken with funding provided in last week's budget to improve air quality throughout the state.

Ms Parker said the projects, which will be undertaken by the NSW Environment Protection Authority, will help develop a scientific evidence based approach to reducing impacts from harmful emissions.

"It is critical to determine how best to direct our efforts into areas of emissions reduction that are likely to yield the most effective results for better air quality for the community," Ms Parker said.

"Understanding where emissions come from, how they are impacted by weather and wind and then accurately predicting the effects of these elements on pollutants at a local population level is a complex science that requires significant resourcing."

The EPA is now developing a number of important air quality initiatives, including:

- A study on coal seam gas mining to monitor fugitive emissions associated with coal seam gas activities
- A review of high risk EPA regulated premises - in particular those that have the potential to discharge toxic air pollutants
- An update of the NSW Emissions Inventory to provide comprehensive evidence of air pollution sources including particles from coal mining activities; and
- A community information and communication research project

EPA Chair and CEO Barry Buffier said air quality is a priority area for the EPA and the community, and that additional funding would ensure that it has the resources to develop further initiatives to reduce harmful emissions into the future.

"This funding will also help the EPA to continue its work with the community and business in initiatives to reduce wood smoke and to retrofit diesel equipment with exhaust treatment devices to reduce particle pollution," Mr Buffier said.

"In addition to these programs a study into particle characterisation in the Upper Hunter is nearing completion.

“The EPA has proposed a Lower Hunter particle study to the Land & Environment Court as a project to be undertaken as part of an environment service order in regard to the nine charges brought against Orica by the EPA in December last year.

“Because many of these initiatives are applicable to the Hunter region the EPA will be undertaking detailed discussions with the Newcastle Community Consultative Committee for the Environment to ensure full community engagement in these projects.”