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MEDIA RELEASE

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LAUNCH OF THE NEWCASTLE LOCAL AIR QUALITY MONITORING NETWORK

Environment Minister Rob Stokes has launched the Newcastle Local Air Quality Monitoring Network today.

The network will be run by the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) on behalf of the Environment Protection Agency (EPA), and was modelled on the successful Upper Hunter network.

Both networks are part of the NSW air quality monitoring network, which provides continuous high-quality measurements of pollutants, including PM2.5 and PM10 particulate matter concentrations.

“The new network will provide critical information to increase our understanding of air quality issues in the region,” Mr Stokes said.

“We use this air quality data to establish and monitor trends, inform longer term government actions and policies, and provide public access to reliable information.”

The Newcastle network will have three new sites at Mayfield, Carrington and Stockton. Site selection was based on local meteorology, potential emissions sources and existing monitoring stations. They will complement existing sites at Newcastle, Wallsend and Beresfield.

Mr Stokes said the sites were selected in consultation with the Newcastle Community Consultative Committee on the Environment (NCCCE). Expert advice was also sought from NSW Health’s Air Pollution Expert Advisory Committee.

“The NCCCE has been a strong advocate for this network to improve our understanding about air quality in the Newcastle area.” he said.

“The NSW government takes air pollution in NSW very seriously and nowhere is this more evident than in the Hunter region where we are focusing much of our effort into investigating sources and impacts of particulate pollution.”

The EPA will initially fund the operation of the network pending finalisation of ongoing funding from key industries with environment protection licences in the Newcastle local government area.