



Robyn Parker MP

Minister for the Environment

Minister for Heritage

MEDIA RELEASE

Friday, 22 March 2013

NSW GOVERNMENT TACKLES HUNTER DUST ISSUES HEAD ON

The NSW Government has taken a tough stand on coal dust in the Hunter, issuing all open cut mines with pollution control conditions aimed at slashing dust emissions by about 20 per cent.

Environment Minister Robyn Parker said today all open cut coal mines in NSW have been issued with three Pollution Reduction Programs (PRPs), as part of the Environment Protection Authority's (EPA) ongoing Dust Stop program.

"One PRP will require all open cut mines to achieve best practice controls of wheel-generated dust and to undertake monitoring over a year to make sure that this is being achieved," Ms Parker said.

"Dust generated from mine haul roads - generally dirt routes with constant machine traffic - is the biggest source of fine dust particles on most mine sites, contributing about 40 per cent of total emissions.

"Reducing dust from haul roads at mines has been a key focus of the EPA's Dust Stop program and these PRPs are effective immediately.

Ms Parker said the loading, dumping and moving of soil and rock waste (overburden) is also a major source of dust emissions at coal mines.

"The second PRP issued by the EPA requires all open cut mines to modify or stop their handling of overburden during adverse weather conditions and to monitor the outcomes," Ms Parker said.

"The EPA is also requiring the NSW mining industry via a third PRP to build on these initiatives and find additional, better ways of controlling dust from operations.

"This next stage of the Dust Stop program requires all open cut mines to implement best practice measures to significantly reduce their dust emissions.

"The NSW Government is committed to working with industry to reduce dust generated by mining operations and the Dust Stop program takes a big step forward in achieving this," Ms Parker said.

Ms Parker said the Upper Hunter Air Quality Monitoring Network established by the NSW Government in response to community concerns about dust, will continue to provide community information about air quality and inform the EPA's ongoing regulatory work.

The PRP program is being implemented in response to recommendations from an independent *International Best Practice Measures for Controlling Emissions from Coal Mining report*, commissioned by the EPA.

This report looked into dust suppression techniques used by operational open cut and underground coal mines and then benchmarked these against international best practice.

The requirements of each PRP are available by viewing the individual mine licence on the EPA's Public Register of environment protection licences
<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/air/coalminingNSW.htm>

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