

**DUE TO THE ONGOING BUSHFIRE CRISIS  
ECTING NSW AND THE ACT, THERE WILL  
NO PYROTECHNICS AT TONIGHTS MATCH**

REFLECTIONS  
 OF THE  
 MIND  
 ON THE  
 WORLD  
 OF  
 LETTERS  
 AND  
 ARTS  
 IN  
 THE  
 PAST  
 AND  
 PRESENT

W  
A  
L  
L  
S  
T  
R  
U  
C  
T  
U  
R  
E  
S  
A  
N  
D  
S  
P  
A  
C  
E  
S

**Pond, Aleks (Health)**

---

**From:** Li, Min (Health)  
**Sent:** Friday, 20 December 2019 5:14 PM  
**To:** Johnston, Vanessa (Health); Fox, Ian (Health); Coleman, Kerryn (Health)  
**Cc:** #ACT Health, HPS Environmental Chemistry; Redfern, Jade (Health); Barr, Conrad (Health); So, Louise (Health); Cannon, Craig (Health)  
**Subject:** RE: air quality overview during bushfire season 1/11/19 - up to today 20/12/19  
**Attachments:** PM10PM2.5AQI 191101\_191220 13.bmp; CO 8hr 191101-191220.bmp; O3 1hr AQI changes with site AQI 191101-191220.bmp

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Completed

## UNCLASSIFIED

Hi Ian and all,

Some updated overview graphs are attached here. As you can see from the graphs, I've tried to come to some interpretation:

1. All big waves of AQI caused by ongoing bushfires **took off almost at late afternoons** when sea breeze started to blow into Canberra, and they climbed up during the night and eased down during the day when the sun heats up the inland to send heat wave back to sea. Notice the bushfires are on the east side of Canberra. These are shown on the graph when they happened on 21/11, 25/11, 28/11, 7/12, 12/12, 14/12, 16/12, 17/12, 19/12.
2. The AQI peaks are increasing from 300+ to 400+, 500+ and 1000+ each time so far from 22/11.
3. While O3 AQI mainly waved horizontally all the way below 50 but the peaks stretched with the PM AQI peaks, and it did break AQI 100 today. **The highest O3 readings appear in mid-day afternoons** when temperature is high, and lowest of the day happen in early mornings.
4. While CO AQIs haven't reached to 50 overall, but the peak concentrations have been 10 times of normal readings! The peak readings are growing higher each time since 21/11. It's worth noticing the **CO peak readings appear to be in early mornings 3-5am**.

I hope I have made some sense.

Kind regards,

*Min Li* | Analyst | Environmental Chemistry

Ph: 5124 9166 | Email: [min.li@act.gov.au](mailto:min.li@act.gov.au)

ACT Government Analytical Laboratory | Health Protection Service | Public Health, Protection & Regulation | ACT Health Directorate  
 25 Mulley St, Holder, ACT 2611

[health.act.gov.au](http://health.act.gov.au)

---

**From:** Johnston, Vanessa (Health) <Vanessa.Johnston@act.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Thursday, 19 December 2019 2:07 PM  
**To:** Li, Min (Health) <Min.Li@act.gov.au>; Fox, Ian (Health) <Ian.Fox@act.gov.au>; Coleman, Kerryn (Health) <Kerryn.Coleman@act.gov.au>  
**Cc:** #ACT Health, HPS Environmental Chemistry <#ACTHealthHPSEnvironmentalChemistry@act.gov.au>; Redfern, Jade (Health) <Jade.Redfern@act.gov.au>; Barr, Conrad (Health) <Conrad.Barr@act.gov.au>; So, Louise (Health)

<Louise.So@act.gov.au>; Cannon, Craig (Health) <Craig.Cannon@act.gov.au>

**Subject:** RE: air quality overview during bushfire season 1/11/19 - up to today 18/12/19

UNCLASSIFIED

Thanks Min for this useful information –  
Regards

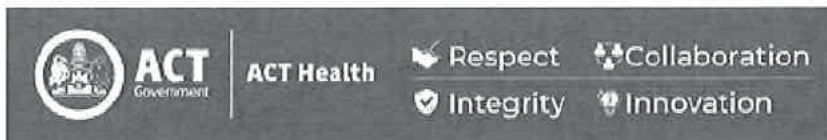
Vanessa Johnston | **Public Health Specialist** | **Acting Director, Communicable Disease Control**

Ph: 5124 9455 | Email: [vanessa.johnston@act.gov.au](mailto:vanessa.johnston@act.gov.au)

**Public Health, Protection and Regulation | ACT Health Directorate**

25 Mulley Street, HOLDER ACT 2611 | Locked Bag 5005, Weston Creek, ACT, 2611

[health.act.gov.au](http://health.act.gov.au)



**From:** Li, Min (Health) <[Min.Li@act.gov.au](mailto:Min.Li@act.gov.au)>

**Sent:** Wednesday, 18 December 2019 5:08 PM

**To:** Fox, Ian (Health) <[Ian.Fox@act.gov.au](mailto:Ian.Fox@act.gov.au)>; Johnston, Vanessa (Health) <[Vanessa.Johnston@act.gov.au](mailto:Vanessa.Johnston@act.gov.au)>; Coleman, Kerryn (Health) <[Kerryn.Coleman@act.gov.au](mailto:Kerryn.Coleman@act.gov.au)>

**Cc:** #ACT Health, HPS Environmental Chemistry <[#ACTHealthHPSEnvironmentalChemistry@act.gov.au](mailto:#ACTHealthHPSEnvironmentalChemistry@act.gov.au)>; Redfern, Jade (Health) <[Jade.Redfern@act.gov.au](mailto:Jade.Redfern@act.gov.au)>; Barr, Conrad (Health) <[Conrad.Barr@act.gov.au](mailto:Conrad.Barr@act.gov.au)>; So, Louise (Health) <[Louise.So@act.gov.au](mailto:Louise.So@act.gov.au)>; Cannon, Craig (Health) <[Craig.Cannon@act.gov.au](mailto:Craig.Cannon@act.gov.au)>

**Subject:** air quality overview during bushfire season 1/11/19 - up to today 18/12/19

UNCLASSIFIED

Hi Ian and all,

I have put together some graphs and data to have an overall look of the air quality so far **from 1/11/19**. It looks like the smoke is persistently coming back to Canberra in late afternoons with the sea breeze blowing to the west while the eastern bush fires continue for the next few very hot days or weeks if no rain greets us.

- PM2.5 one day exceedances: 13 days Civic and Florey sites, 11 days Monash site, max 6 times of standard
- PM10 one day exceedances: 11 days Civic and Florey sites, 7 days Monash site, max 4 times of standard
- CO 8 hour average level elevated to 8 times of usual reading at the worst, but still below standard 9ppm.

The latest 2016 NEPM standard is quoted here with none exceedances allowable for PM10 and PM2.5. Current air quality data is definitely making historical record!

**Table 1: Standards for Pollutants**

Column 1 Item	Column 2 Pollutant	Column 3 Averaging period	Column 4 Maximum concentration standard	Column 5 Maximum allowable exceedances
1	Carbon monoxide	8 hours	9.0 ppm	1 day a year
2	Nitrogen dioxide	1 hour	0.12 ppm	1 day a year

		1 year	0.03 ppm	None
3	Photochemical oxidants (as ozone)	1 hour 4 hours	0.10 ppm 0.08 ppm	1 day a year 1 day a year
4	Sulfur dioxide	1 hour 1 day 1 year	0.20 ppm 0.08 ppm 0.02 ppm	1 day a year 1 day a year None
5	Lead	1 year	0.50 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$	None
6	Particles as $\text{PM}_{10}$	1 day 1 year	50 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ 25 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$	None None
7	Particles as $\text{PM}_{2.5}$	1 day 1 year	25 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ 8 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$	None None

You can use the magnifier to enlarge the graph for viewing. I'm more than happy to provide extended graphs if you would like in later days, or if you want some other specific graphs.

Kind regards,

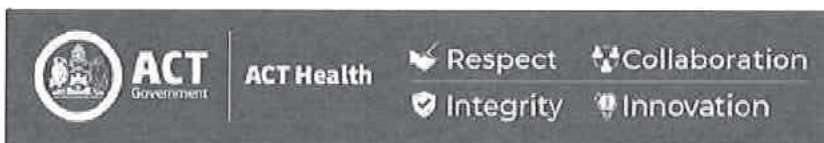
*Min Li* | Analyst | Environmental Chemistry

Ph: 5124 9166 | Email: [min.li@act.gov.au](mailto:min.li@act.gov.au)

ACT Government Analytical Laboratory | Health Protection Service | Public Health, Protection & Regulation | ACT Health Directorate

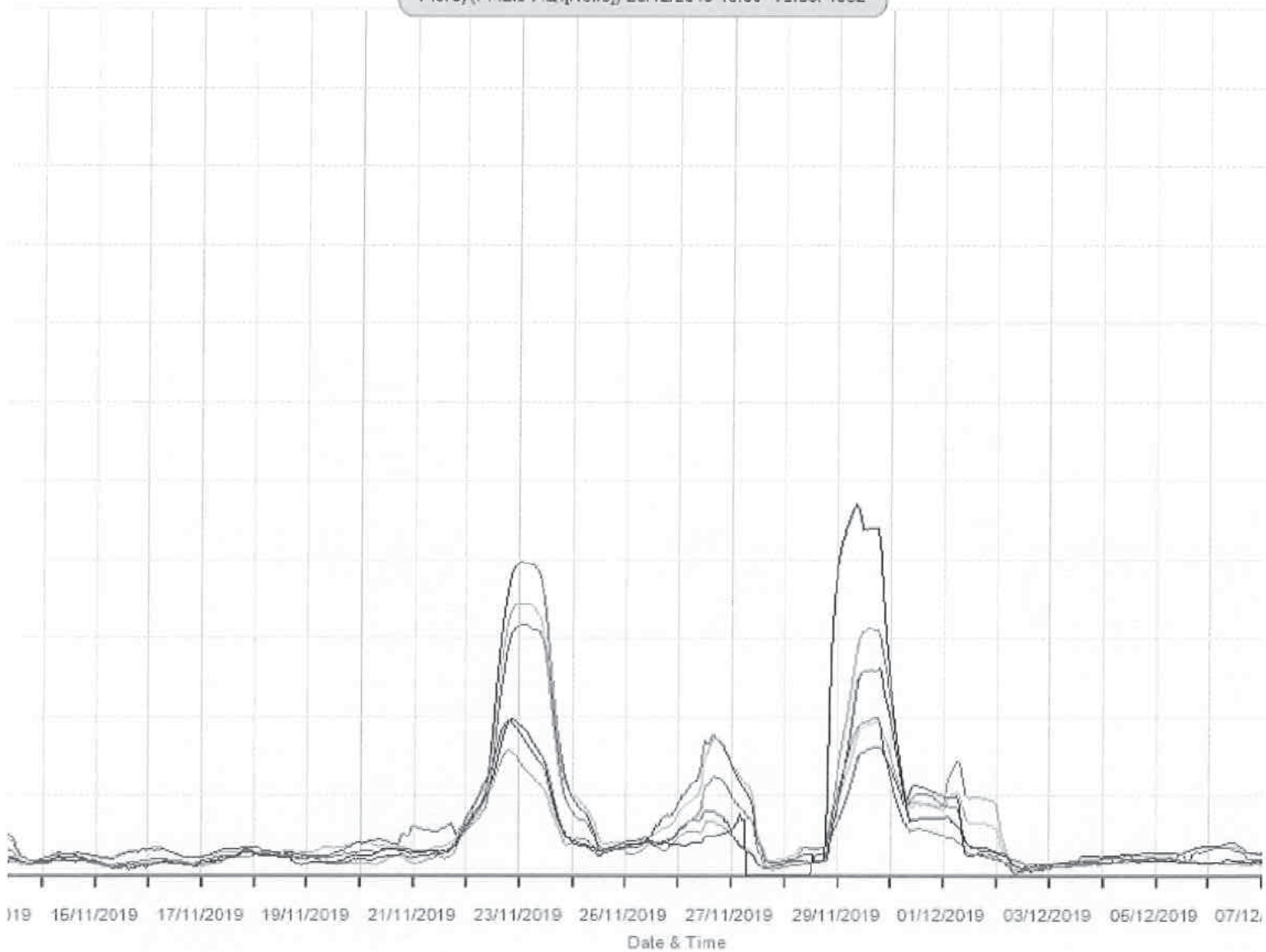
25 Mulley St, Holder, ACT 2611

[health.act.gov.au](http://health.act.gov.au)



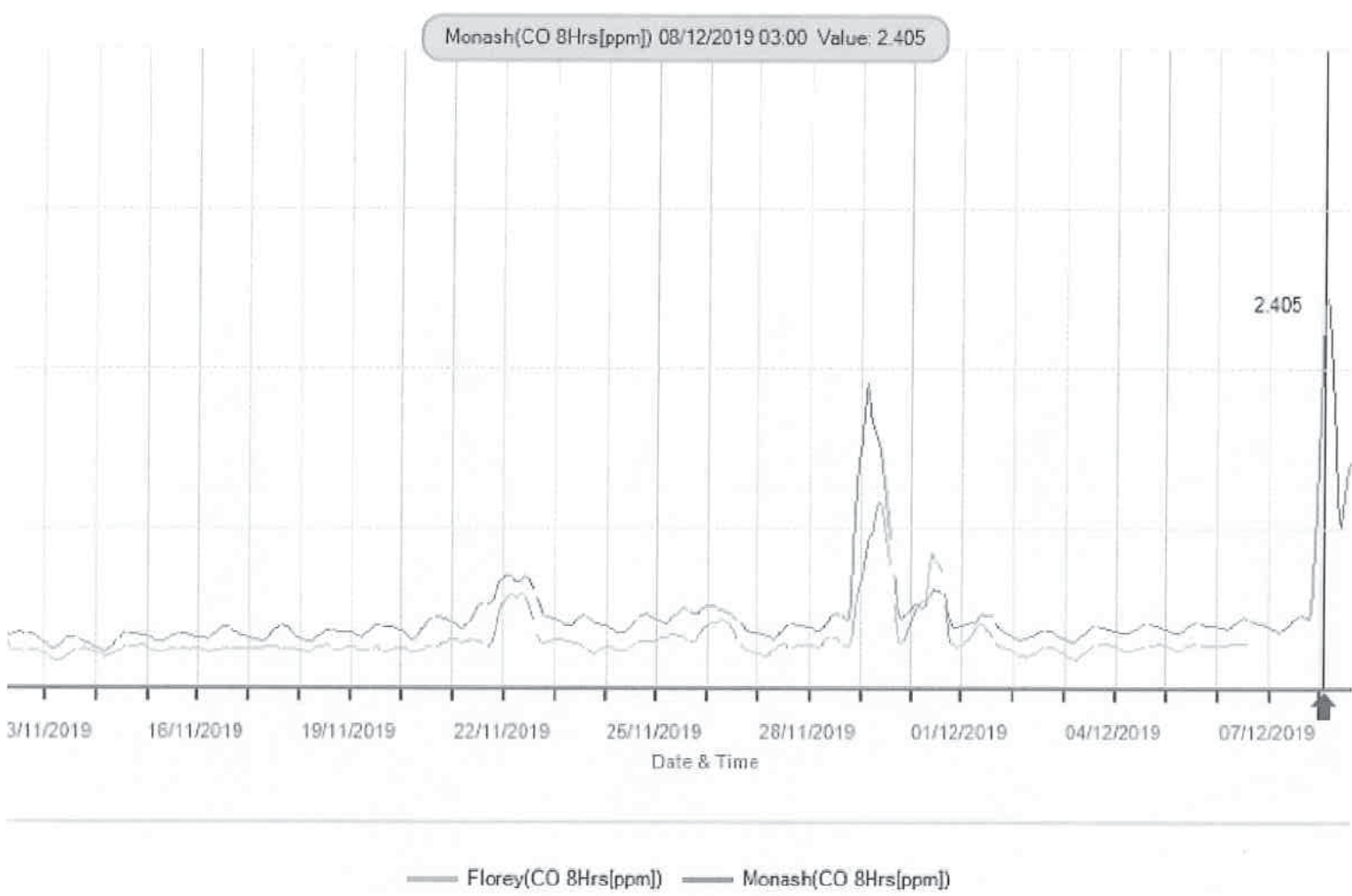
MultiStation: Periodically: 01/11/2019 01:00-21/12/2019 00:00 Type: AVG 1 Hr.

Florey(PM2.5-AQI[None]) 20/12/2019 13:00 Value: 1032



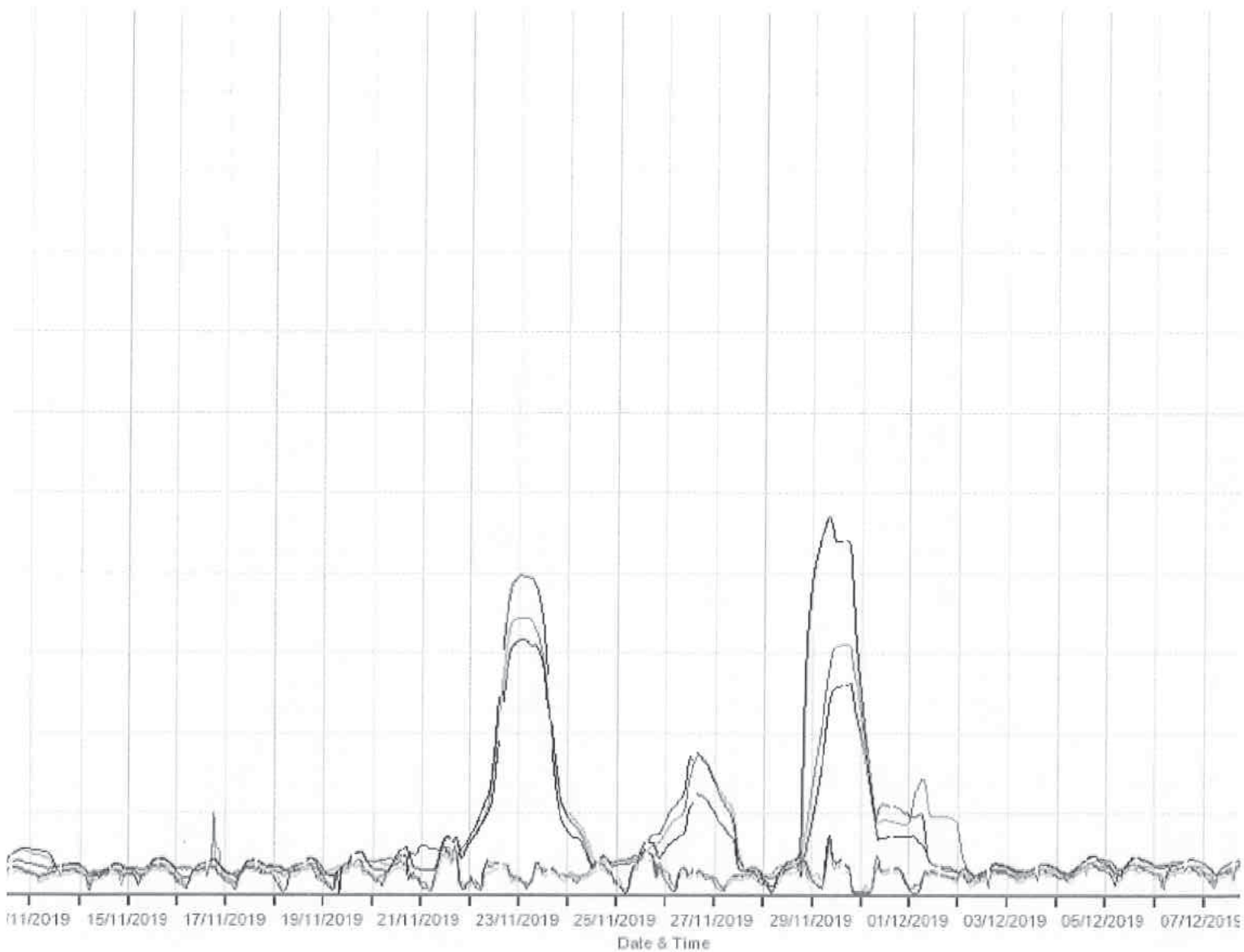
lone] — Civic(PM2.5-AQI[None]) — Florey(PM10-AQI[None]) — Florey(PM2.5-AQI[None]) — Monash(PM10-AQI[None]) — M

MultiStation: Periodically: 01/11/2019 01:00-21/12/2019 00:00 Type: AVG 1 Hr.





MultiStation: Periodically: 01/11/2019 01:00-21/12/2019 00:00 Type: AVG 1 Hr.



[[None]] — Civic(Site AQI[None]) — Florey(O3-1Hr-AQI[None]) — Florey(Site AQI[None]) — Monash(O3-1Hr-AQI[None]) — Mo

## Pond, Aleks (Health)

---

**From:** Reid, David (Health) on behalf of ACT Health, HPSOps  
**Sent:** Thursday, 2 January 2020 10:48 AM  
**To:** Coleman, Kerryn (Health)  
**Cc:** ACT Health Office of the Chief Health Officer; Health Media; Reid, David (Health); ACT Health, HPSOps  
**Subject:** For approval - Health messaging re smoke for Childcare Centres and Health Alert  
**Attachments:** Media Alert - Prepared by TP and DR.docx; Media Alert - Childcare Centres - Developed by EDU, reviewed by TP and DR.docx; DRAFT update for review; FW: Health Alert for child care providers

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Completed

**Categories:** CHO to Action

UNCLASSIFIED For-Official-Use-Only

Good morning Kerryn,

Tracey Pulli has requested your approval of two media items:

- First Word Doc is from EDU pertaining to childcare providers
- The second Word Doc is a media alert based on yesterday's draft that Tracey has completed.

I have reviewed both docs. Could you please approve this messaging?

Kind regards,

David Reid | Assistant Director (Emergency Planning Coordinator)

Ph: 5124 9199 | Email: [david.reid@act.gov.au](mailto:david.reid@act.gov.au)

Health Emergency Management Unit | Public Health, Protection and Regulation | ACT Health Directorate

25 Mulley Street, Holder ACT 2611 | Locked Bag 5005, Weston Creek, ACT 2611

[health.act.gov.au](http://health.act.gov.au)



RED Contact Officer - *'feel empowered to speak up'*

## Update on heavy smoke and air quality in the ACT

The heavy smoke affecting the ACT since New Year's Eve has eased slightly, however, is expected to continue on and off over the coming days while fires continue to burn across the border.

This dense smoke is impacting the air quality across a large area of our region and South East Australia, and the ACT Health Directorate advice remains the same at this time.

During these periods of heavy smoke, all Canberrans are advised to keep an eye on smoke levels in their area and avoid prolonged or heavy physical activity outside.

People who are sensitive to smoke, especially those with pre-existing heart and lung conditions, should take extra care by staying indoors where possible and taking medication as prescribed by their doctor.

Anyone with concerns about their health should seek medical advice from their doctor. And anyone experiencing wheezing, chest tightness or difficulty breathing should seek urgent medical attention and in the event of a medical emergency call triple-zero (000).

With extreme heat forecast for the ACT from Friday – particularly Saturday, which is forecast to be one of the hottest on record – the ACT Health Directorate is working closely with the ACT Emergency Services Agency to prepare for the conditions.

We also ask the community to be prepared, by having a plan for keeping healthy in the heat.

People who are sensitive to smoke and air pollution can be more vulnerable to heat-related illness as well, staying hydrated and cool is important.

People who are able to do so, are also encouraged to check on others who they think might need extra help, to see that they are okay.

For further information on minimising the health impacts of outdoor smoke, refer to our [factsheet](#).

For further tips on how to beat the heat see our [summer safety](#) page.

To monitor the levels of smoke in the air (PM2.5), see our [Health advice for smoky air](#) page.

At this time, the smoky air conditions are expected to continue to impact the ACT while bushfires are burning across the border. For further information on weather conditions, visit: [www.bom.gov.au](http://www.bom.gov.au).

Dear Sector Colleagues

The ACT Health Directorate has advised that air quality across Canberra is expected to remain hazardous over the next few days. As a result, ACT Health has recommended that children should avoid physical activity outside. To minimise the risk to children and educators:

- Stay indoors, with windows and doors closed;
- Stay in air-conditioned premises and switch the air-conditioner to 'recycle' or 'recirculate' to reduce the amount of smoke entering the building;
- Do not use evaporative cooling systems which import air from outdoors

Again, we recommend that services speak with families to ensure that medical plans for children with known conditions are up to date and that the correct medication is on hand.

For further information on minimising the health impacts of outdoor smoke, refer to the ACT Health Directorate [factsheet](#).

To monitor the levels of smoke in the air (PM2.5), see the [Health advice for smoky air](#) page.

The ACT Health Directorate will continue to monitor the air quality in the ACT over the coming days and will advise of additional public health advice if needed. Further public health advice will be provided as it becomes available. If you have any concerns or your service is unable to remain open due to health concerns please contact CECA on 6207 1114.

In addition the temperature is forecast to reach 36-39 degrees over the next two days. Please review your extreme heat plan to ensure that you have appropriate strategies in place to keep staff and children safe and well. Please consider the strategies below and recommended information resources when developing your plans.

Tips to stay cool:

- Keep hydrated – make sure staff and children drink plenty of water.
- Soak – provide cool showers, wet flannels/towels or water play to help children to cool down.
- Be cool – stay indoors and make use of fans or air-conditioners.
- Rest – make sure children get enough sleep, and can rest if they feel tired.
- Eat fresh – provide cold foods such as salads or fruit.
- Dress down – wear light weight clothing and be sun-smart.
- Watch out – know and be on the lookout for symptoms of heat related illness and exhaustion, including; nausea, dizziness, confusion, staggering, fainting, weakness, headaches, vomiting, heat rash, heat cramps and loss of sweating.
- If staff or children show signs of heat stress call triple zero (000) immediately.

For further tips on how to beat the heat see the ACT Health Directorate [summer safety](#) page.

The following link is to resources regarding extreme heat, ways to mitigate heat related illness and how to identify heat related illnesses and first aid treatment if required.

<http://www.sunsmart.com.au/downloads/communities/sports-clubs/uv-exposure-heat-illness-guide.pdf>

**Pond, Aleks (Health)**

---

**From:** Pulli, Tracey (Health)  
**Sent:** Thursday, 2 January 2020 10:28 AM  
**To:** Reid, David (Health); ACT Health, HPSOps  
**Cc:** Health Media; So, Louise (Health); Warner, KarenL (Health)  
**Subject:** DRAFT update for review

UNCLASSIFIED

Hi David

Please see below the update I drafted yesterday. I have spoken with Kerryn this morning and based on that conversation, looks like our advice will remain the same today.

Can you please review the text below and let me know of any issues? If okay, can we get Kerryn to review so we can get this out this morning please? Once out to media, we will go out through our social and web channels.

## **Update on heavy smoke and air quality in the ACT**

The heavy smoke affecting the ACT since New Year's Eve has eased slightly, however, is expected to continue on and off over the coming days while fires continue to burn across the border.

This dense smoke is impacting the air quality across a large area of our region and South East Australia, and the ACT Health Directorate advice remains the same at this time.

During these periods of heavy smoke, all Canberrans are advised to keep an eye on smoke levels in their area and avoid prolonged or heavy physical activity outside.

People who are sensitive to smoke, especially those with pre-existing heart and lung conditions, should take extra care by staying indoors where possible and taking medication as prescribed by their doctor.

Anyone with concerns about their health should seek medical advice from their doctor. And anyone experiencing wheezing, chest tightness or difficulty breathing should seek urgent medical attention and in the event of a medical emergency call triple-zero (000).

With extreme heat forecast for the ACT from Friday – particularly Saturday, which is forecast to be one of the hottest on record – the ACT Health Directorate is working closely with the ACT Emergency Services Agency to prepare for the conditions.

We also ask the community to be prepared, by having a plan for keeping healthy in the heat.

People who are sensitive to smoke and air pollution can be more vulnerable to heat-related illness as well, staying hydrated and cool is important.

People who are able to do so, are also encouraged to check on others who they think might need extra help, to see that they are okay.

For further information on minimising the health impacts of outdoor smoke, refer to our [factsheet](#).

For further tips on how to beat the heat see our [summer safety](#) page.

To monitor the levels of smoke in the air (PM2.5), see our [Health advice for smoky air](#) page.

At this time, the smoky air conditions are expected to continue to impact the ACT while bushfires are burning across the border. For further information on weather conditions, visit: [www.bom.gov.au](http://www.bom.gov.au).

Cheers

Tracey

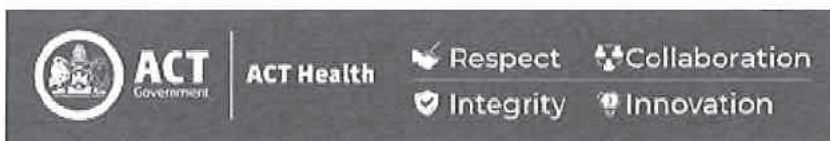
**Tracey Pulli | Senior Director of Media**

Ph: (02) 5124 9444 | Email: [tracey.pulli@act.gov.au](mailto:tracey.pulli@act.gov.au)

**Communications and Government Relations | Office of the Director-General | ACT Health Directorate**

Level 5, 6 Bowes Street Phillip ACT 2606

[health.act.gov.au](http://health.act.gov.au)



## Pond, Aleks (Health)

---

**From:** Pulli, Tracey (Health)  
**Sent:** Thursday, 2 January 2020 10:17 AM  
**To:** Reid, David (Health); ACT Health, HPSOps  
**Cc:** Health Media  
**Subject:** FW: Health Alert for child care providers

UNCLASSIFIED

Hi David

Please see below from the EDU Directorate, who want to send an email to childcare providers. They have asked that we review the text they have drafted below.

Over to you to review/edit and to brief up to Kerryn for her review.

Cheers  
 Tracey

Tracey Pulli | Senior Director of Media

Ph: (02) 5124 9444 | Email: [tracey.pulli@act.gov.au](mailto:tracey.pulli@act.gov.au)

Communications and Government Relations | Office of the Director-General | ACT Health Directorate

Level 5, 6 Bowes Street Phillip ACT 2606

[health.act.gov.au](http://health.act.gov.au)




---

**From:** Hunter, Ian <[ian.hunter@act.gov.au](mailto:ian.hunter@act.gov.au)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, 2 January 2020 9:57 AM  
**To:** Health Media <[HealthMedia@act.gov.au](mailto:HealthMedia@act.gov.au)>; Pulli, Tracey (Health) <[Tracey.Pulli@act.gov.au](mailto:Tracey.Pulli@act.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** FW: Health Alert for child care providers

UNCLASSIFIED

Hi Tracey

We need to send a message to our child care providers about the air quality and heat. Do you plan on issuing an updated alert re smoky conditions? I imagine it does not need to be changed? Can you consider the following and let me know if you think it is ok?

Cheers, Ian

Dear Sector Colleagues

The ACT Health Directorate has advised that air quality across Canberra is expected to remain hazardous over the next few days. As a result, ACT Health has recommended that children should avoid physical activity outside. To minimise the risk to children and educators:



- Stay indoors, with windows and doors closed;
- Stay in air-conditioned premises and switch the air-conditioner to 'recycle' or 'recirculate' to reduce the amount of smoke entering the building;
- Do not use evaporative cooling systems which import air from outdoors

Again, we recommend that services speak with families to ensure that medical plans for children with known conditions are up to date and that the correct medication is on hand. Further details on precautions will help to minimise the effects of smoke and air pollution can be found at:

<https://health.act.gov.au/public-health-alerts>

In addition the temperature is forecast to reach 36-39 degrees over the next two days. Please review your extreme heat plan to ensure that you have appropriate strategies in place to keep staff and children safe and well. Please consider the strategies below and recommended information resources when developing your plans.

Tips to stay cool:

- Keep hydrated – make sure staff and children drink plenty of water.
- Soak – provide cool showers, wet flannels/towels or water play to help children to cool down.
- Be cool – stay indoors and make use of fans or air-conditioners.
- Rest – make sure children get enough sleep, and can rest if they feel tired.
- Eat fresh – provide cold foods such as salads or fruit.
- Dress down – wear light weight clothing and be sun-smart.
- Watch out – know and be on the lookout for symptoms of heat related illness and exhaustion, including; nausea, dizziness, confusion, staggering, fainting, weakness, headaches, vomiting, heat rash, heat cramps and loss of sweating.
- If staff or children show signs of heat stress call triple zero (000) immediately.

The following link is a to resources regarding extreme heat, ways to mitigate heat related illness and how to identify heat related illnesses and first aid treatment if required.

<http://www.sunsmart.com.au/downloads/communities/sports-clubs/uv-exposure-heat-illness-guide.pdf>

The ACT Health Directorate will continue to monitor the air quality in the ACT over the coming days and will advise of additional public health advice if needed. Further public health advice will be provided as it becomes available. If you have any concerns or your service is unable to remain open due to health concerns please contact CECA on 6207 1114.

Kind Regards

Clare Brookes

Senior Director, Early Childhood Regulation, Early Childhood Policy and Regulation | Education | ACT Government

P 02 6205 0615 M [REDACTED]

Level 3, Hedley Beare Centre for Teaching and Learning, 51 Fremantle Drive Stirling 2611 |  
GPO Box 158 Canberra ACT 2601

[www.education.act.gov.au](http://www.education.act.gov.au) | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Instagram](#) | [LinkedIn](#) | [CECA Facebook](#) | [www.det.act.gov.au](http://www.det.act.gov.au)

**Pond, Aleks (Health)**

---

**From:** Pulli, Tracey (Health)  
**Sent:** Thursday, 2 January 2020 11:10 AM  
**To:** Coleman, Kerryn (Health)  
**Subject:** RE: masks

UNCLASSIFIED

Cool.

---

**From:** Coleman, Kerryn (Health) <Kerryn.Coleman@act.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Thursday, 2 January 2020 11:10 AM  
**To:** Pulli, Tracey (Health) <Tracey.Pulli@act.gov.au>  
**Subject:** Re: masks

Will call after minister meeting

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)


---

**From:** Coleman, Kerryn (Health) <Kerryn.Coleman@act.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 2, 2020 10:58:57 AM  
**To:** Pulli, Tracey (Health) <Tracey.Pulli@act.gov.au>  
**Subject:** Fwd: masks

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)


---

**From:** Coleman, Kerryn (Health)  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 2, 2020 10:36:58 AM  
**To:** Michael De'Ath (Michael.De'Ath@act.gov.au) <Michael.De'Ath@act.gov.au>  
**Cc:** ACT Health Office of the Chief Health Officer <ACTHealthOCHO@act.gov.au>  
**Subject:** masks

UNCLASSIFIED

Hi Michael

Greg and I have discussed and agree on the below messaging.

## Community advice:

- Not specifically recommending the use of masks
- The best course of action is to avoid exposure to the smoke through remaining indoors with windows and doors closed
- Ordinary paper masks are not effective at filtering smoke, however do not cause any harm if people choose to wear them and they feel they get some benefit.
- P2 masks are the evidence based mask to wear, however there are challenges with appropriate fit for general community, hence not routinely recommended.

## Worksafe:

- Employers need to do a risk assessment re exposure of workers to hazards (including smoke. Mitigation measures may include:
  - Avoid or reschedule the outdoor work if possible

- Rotate workers to limit prolonged exposure
- Provide P2 masks as part of pre-exposure prophylaxis for those who need to do prolonged outdoor activity or workers sensitive to smoke.

Access to P2 masks through workplace-gear organisations (Sears), but for general community Bunnings or similar. I understand there may be limitations on availability at the moment.

***Dr Kerryn Coleman***

**Acting ACT Chief Health Officer**

**Public Health Physician**

Public Health, Protection and Regulation | **ACT Health Directorate**

PH 5124 9442 | MOB [REDACTED]

25 Mulley Street, HOLDER ACT 2611 | GPO Box 825, Canberra City ACT 2601

E [Kerryn.coleman@act.gov.au](mailto:Kerryn.coleman@act.gov.au) W <https://health.act.gov.au/>

**Pond, Aleks (Health)**

---

**From:** Pulli, Tracey (Health)  
**Sent:** Thursday, 2 January 2020 12:13 PM  
**To:** Coleman, Kerry (Health)  
**Subject:** RE: Air quality info...

**Follow Up Flag:** Flag for follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

UNCLASSIFIED

Oh, cool. Give me a call when you can.

---

**From:** Coleman, Kerry (Health) <Kerry.Coleman@act.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Thursday, 2 January 2020 12:12 PM  
**To:** Pulli, Tracey (Health) <Tracey.Pulli@act.gov.au>  
**Cc:** ACT Health, HPSOps <ACTHealthHPSOps@act.gov.au>  
**Subject:** Re: Air quality info...

I need to look at this properly - I'm still in min meeting - hopefully out soon

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

---

**From:** Pulli, Tracey (Health) <Tracey.Pulli@act.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 2, 2020 12:05:19 PM  
**To:** Coleman, Kerry (Health) <Kerry.Coleman@act.gov.au>  
**Cc:** ACT Health, HPSOps <ACTHealthHPSOps@act.gov.au>  
**Subject:** FW: Air quality info...

UNCLASSIFIED

Kerry

Are you happy with this?

Cheers

Trace

---

**From:** Harris, Jacqui <Jacqui.Harris@act.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Thursday, 2 January 2020 11:37 AM  
**To:** Pulli, Tracey (Health) <Tracey.Pulli@act.gov.au>  
**Cc:** Springett, Emily <Emily.Springett@act.gov.au>; Dal Molin, Vanessa (Health) <Vanessa.DalMolin@act.gov.au>  
**Subject:** RE: Air quality info...  
**Importance:** High

UNCLASSIFIED

Hi Trace

Just seeking clearance on the below lines from the CM to include in the HOS message. These have been drafted from the points you provided earlier, so hopefully a quick one to clear:

"I would like to assure Canberrans that the latest health advice is that for those in our community in good health, there is no reason to panic or be alarmed by the deteriorating air quality in Canberra.

"This is an exceptional time for our city – usually our air quality is among the best in the world. While air quality in the ACT has deteriorated and it is likely that it will continue to do so with hot temperatures forecast over the coming days, I would like to reinforce the message that the short period of time Canberrans have been exposed, is not particularly dangerous.

"Please stay up to date with the latest advice from ACT Health, and look after yourselves and each other."

**Jacqui Harris** | Assistant Director, Whole of Government Communications  
Ph: 6207 4257 Email: [jacqui.harris@act.gov.au](mailto:jacqui.harris@act.gov.au)

*I am in the office on Monday, Thursday and Friday*

**From:** Pulli, Tracey (Health) <[Tracey.Pulli@act.gov.au](mailto:Tracey.Pulli@act.gov.au)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, 2 January 2020 9:52 AM  
**To:** Harris, Jacqui <[Jacqui.Harris@act.gov.au](mailto:Jacqui.Harris@act.gov.au)>  
**Cc:** Springett, Emily <[Emily.Springett@act.gov.au](mailto:Emily.Springett@act.gov.au)>; Dal Molin, Vanessa (Health) <[Vanessa.DalMolin@act.gov.au](mailto:Vanessa.DalMolin@act.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** FW: Air quality info...

UNCLASSIFIED

Hi Jacqui

As discussed, please see below emails exchanged with Emily Springett this morning on smoke. You will see a link to our latest health advice, some of the other messaging that Dr Dugdale has used, and also some of the high level messages from a WorkSafe perspective. May also be worth speaking with Emily.

Also attached is a previous all staff message on Working in Extreme Heat have might be a useful template to work from.

Let me know how you go.

Cheers  
Tracey

**From:** Springett, Emily <[Emily.Springett@act.gov.au](mailto:Emily.Springett@act.gov.au)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, 2 January 2020 8:22 AM  
**To:** Health Media <[HealthMedia@act.gov.au](mailto:HealthMedia@act.gov.au)>  
**Cc:** Dugdale, Paul (Health) <[Paul.Dugdale@act.gov.au](mailto:Paul.Dugdale@act.gov.au)>; CMTEDDMedia <[CMTEDDMedia@act.gov.au](mailto:CMTEDDMedia@act.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** Re: Air quality info...

Thanks Trace

In addition to below Greg will likely cover off:

- workers/employers should reschedule work if possible so workers are inside or rotate workers through outside work to limit prolonged exposure
- Employers can provide P2 masks if there will be prolonged outdoor activity or for those workers sensitive to smoke
- workers should be encouraged to speak up if they are feeling the effects of smoke

- Employers should find alternative cooling - if work places have evaporative air conditioning.

Thanks

Emily

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

---

**From:** Health Media <[HealthMedia@act.gov.au](mailto:HealthMedia@act.gov.au)>

**Sent:** Thursday, January 2, 2020 8:13 am

**To:** Springett, Emily

**Cc:** Dugdale, Paul (Health)

**Subject:** Air quality info...

Hey Emily

Thanks for letting me know that Greg Jones will be doing media this morning on working in the smoky conditions.

Please see link to our latest health alert on impact to air quality in the ACT from heavy smoke. This has all our latest health advice for the community.

Link - <https://www.health.act.gov.au/public-health-alert/air-quality-deterioration-across-act-smoke>

A few extra lines from comments that Dr Dugdale has made over the past few days...

- This is an exceptional time for Canberra – usually our air quality is among the best in the world.
- It's a particularly difficult time for people with heart and lung conditions who are sensitive to smoke. Our message to them is to follow your doctor's advice, take your medications and if you have got an asthma action plan, put that into effect.
- People who are sensitive to smoke and air pollution can be more vulnerable to heat-related illness as well, so with the heat forecast over the coming days, staying hydrated and cool is important in these conditions.
- Plan to be out during the cool of the morning when the air quality is usually better.
- It's not particularly dangerous for the sorts of period of time that we've had - this is not a year-round smog that some cities have to contend with. This is a bad summer of bushfires and we'll get through it.

Let us know if you need anything further.

Cheers

Trace

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

**Pond, Aleks (Health)**

---

**From:** ACT Health, HPSOps  
**Sent:** Thursday, 2 January 2020 12:26 PM  
**To:** Coleman, Kerryn (Health); Crane, Rachael (Health); ACT Health, HPSOps  
**Cc:** Pulli, Tracey (Health); ACT Health Office of the Chief Health Officer  
**Subject:** RE: Masks

UNCLASSIFIED For-Official-Use-Only

I'll do some research on P2 duration.

Chris

---

**From:** Coleman, Kerryn (Health) <Kerryn.Coleman@act.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Thursday, 2 January 2020 12:18 PM  
**To:** Crane, Rachael (Health) <Rachael.Crane@act.gov.au>; ACT Health, HPSOps <ACTHealthHPSOps@act.gov.au>  
**Cc:** Pulli, Tracey (Health) <Tracey.Pulli@act.gov.au>; ACT Health Office of the Chief Health Officer <ACTHealthOCHO@act.gov.au>  
**Subject:** Masks

Hi both - can someone please check how long a P2 mask can be worn for before needing a brief and/or changing??  
This is not in our fact sheet.

Need to pull the air quality fact sheet for review this afternoon - masks information needs to be beefed up.

Rachael - as a public health nurse, are you please able to look into some extra advice re the P2 masks if public wants to wear them.

K

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

**Pond, Aleks (Health)**

---

**From:** Pulli, Tracey (Health)  
**Sent:** Thursday, 2 January 2020 12:28 PM  
**To:** Coleman, Kerry (Health); Crane, Rachael (Health); ACT Health, HPSOps  
**Cc:** ACT Health Office of the Chief Health Officer  
**Subject:** RE: Masks

UNCLASSIFIED

Hi Kerry and all

A the moment we are referring people to our fact sheet on minimising the health impacts of outdoor smoke. Link – <https://health.act.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-12/Outdoor%20Smoke%20%20Health%20Impacts%20Factsheet%20-%20Dec%202019%20-%20FINAL.pdf?fbclid=IwAR35tNUG7yIUGM23N3q6wVQQ8A95FQ1AuaUDDgZvLZUsofuQ8QzRWPhrVQs>

Here is the information from this fact sheet that could be updated:

**Can I wear a mask to protect me from smoke?**

If you must be outdoors when smoke is present, consider wearing a P2 / N95 rated mask designed to filter fine particles. These masks are available from hardware retailers and other safety equipment suppliers. P2 / N95 masks sold in Australia are usually only available in adult sizes and will not fit most children aged less than 12 years.

To offer the best protection, a P2 / N95 mask must be fitted properly. When purchasing P2 / N95 masks it is important to take time to correctly identify which size and style of mask is suitable for you.

The following steps should be followed to ensure a P2/N95 mask is correctly fitted:

1. Remove glasses and hats. Tie back long hair so it does not become tangled in the straps of the mask
2. Put the mask on your face, ensuring the nose piece is at the top of the mask
3. Place the top strap or tie high on the back of your head
4. Move the bottom strap over your head and position it below your ears
5. Compress the mask against the face to ensure a seal across the bridge of the nose
6. Compress the mask to ensure a seal across the cheeks and the face
7. Conduct a fit check: check the seal of the mask by gently inhaling. If the mask is not drawn in towards the face, or air leaks around the face seal, readjust the mask and repeat process or check for defects in the mask. If the mask still leaks you may need to try a different size or style of mask
8. People with beards should shave before using a P2 / N95 mask as a good seal between the mask and the wearer's face cannot be guaranteed if they have facial hair.

Cheers  
Tracey

Tracey Pulli | Senior Director of Media

Ph: (02) 5124 9444 | Email: [tracey.pulli@act.gov.au](mailto:tracey.pulli@act.gov.au)

Communications and Government Relations | Office of the Director-General | ACT Health Directorate

Level 5, 6 Bowes Street Phillip ACT 2606

[health.act.gov.au](http://health.act.gov.au)





**From:** Coleman, Kerry (Health) <Kerry.Coleman@act.gov.au>

**Sent:** Thursday, 2 January 2020 12:18 PM

**To:** Crane, Rachael (Health) <Rachael.Crane@act.gov.au>; ACT Health, HPSOps <ACTHealthHPSOps@act.gov.au>

**Cc:** Pulli, Tracey (Health) <Tracey.Pulli@act.gov.au>; ACT Health Office of the Chief Health Officer <ACTHealthOCHO@act.gov.au>

**Subject:** Masks

Hi both - can someone please check how long a P2 mask can be worn for before needing a brief and/or changing?? This is not in our fact sheet.

Need to pull the air quality fact sheet for review this afternoon - masks information needs to be beefed up.

Rachael - as a public health nurse, are you please able to look into some extra advice re the P2 masks if public wants to wear them.

K

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

**Pond, Aleks (Health)**

---

**From:** De'Ath, Michael (Health)  
**Sent:** Thursday, 2 January 2020 2:35 PM  
**To:** [REDACTED] Coleman, Kerryn (Health)  
**Subject:** Re: Face Mask Numbers

Thanks [REDACTED]

Michael De'Ath  
Director General  
ACT Health

---

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 2, 2020 2:32:36 PM  
**To:** De'Ath, Michael (Health) <Michael.De'Ath@act.gov.au>  
**Subject:** Fwd: Face Mask Numbers  
Hi Michael

Please see email below with details of supply numbers.

[REDACTED]  
Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Date:** 2 January 2020 at 2:28:40 pm AEDT  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** FW: Face Mask Numbers

Hi [REDACTED]  
As discussed,  
Regards,

[REDACTED]  
General Manager



Public Hospital Bruce  
Cnr Belconnen Way & Haydon Drive Bruce ACT 2617  
PO Box 254 Jamison Centre ACT 2614

P [REDACTED]  
E [REDACTED]  
[www.calvary-act.com.au](http://www.calvary-act.com.au)



**From:** [Redacted]

**Sent:** Thursday, 2 January 2020 2:24 PM

**To:** [Redacted]

**Subject:** RE: Face Mask Numbers

Hello [Redacted]

We are using the BSN Proshield soft resistant ear loop masks code 36361353.

These are ordered directly from BSN Medical.

We currently have 240 boxes of masks in our storeroom, each box contains 50 single masks.

The wards are re stocked daily from our supply in the storeroom.

We also stock on the wards the FACE MASK RESPIRATORY PRECAUTIONS MEDIUM P2/N95 from ACT Health - code 72509-10

These are a stock item at ACT Health and are ordered on a daily basis.

Each Ward has their own Par level averaging 5 boxes of 50 masks.

I have also ordered in 4 boxes of FACE MASK RESPIRATORY PRECAUTIONS MEDIUM P2/N95 from ACT Health costed to Supply for emergency backup.

Please let me know if you require any more information.

Thank you.

[Redacted]  
 Purchasing Officer  
 Supply Services



Public Hospital Bruce  
 Cnr Belconnen Way & Haydon Drive Bruce ACT 2617  
 PO Box 254 Jamison Centre ACT 2614  
 P [Redacted]  
 E [Redacted]  
[www.calvary-act.com.au](http://www.calvary-act.com.au)



**From:** [Redacted]

**Sent:** Thursday, 2 January 2020 2:06 PM

**To:** [Redacted]

**Subject:** Face Mask Numbers

Hi [Redacted]

As discussed could I just have advice on the number and type of masks that we have in stock. As mentioned could you also just give me a few words on how we manage our face mask supply,  
 Thanks and regards,



General Manager



Public Hospital Bruce  
Cnr Belconnen Way & Haydon Drive Bruce ACT 2617  
PO Box 254 Jamison Centre ACT 2614

P: [Redacted]  
E: [Redacted]

[www.calvary-act.com.au](http://www.calvary-act.com.au)



Please consider the environment before printing this e-mail.

Hospitality | Healing | Stewardship | Respect

Continuing the Mission of the Sisters of the Little Company of Mary

This email is confidential and may be subject to copyright and legal professional privilege. If this email is not intended for you please do not use the information in any way, but delete and notify us immediately. For full copy of our Privacy Policy please visit [www.calvarycare.org.au](http://www.calvarycare.org.au).

## Pond, Aleks (Health)

---

**From:** Reid, David (Health) on behalf of ACT Health, HPSOps  
**Sent:** Thursday, 2 January 2020 2:58 PM  
**To:** Coleman, Kerryn (Health)  
**Cc:** ACT Health, HPSOps  
**Subject:** For review and approval - ART Minutes / Sitrep  
**Attachments:** 2020Jan02 - ART #1 Smoke Event DRAFT.docx

UNCLASSIFIED For-Official-Use-Only

Good afternoon Kerryn,

Please see attached the ART Minutes from 1300hrs. This includes verbal discussion at the meeting and completed actions not discussed.

If approved, I can send this to meeting attendees (including DG, media/comms etc).

Rhian has setup the 1600hrs teleconference. These minutes may inform your briefing.

Kind regards,

David Reid | Assistant Director (Emergency Planning Coordinator)

Ph: 5124 9199 | Email: [david.reid@act.gov.au](mailto:david.reid@act.gov.au)

Health Emergency Management Unit | Public Health, Protection and Regulation | ACT Health Directorate

25 Mulley Street, Holder ACT 2611 | Locked Bag 5005, Weston Creek, ACT 2611

[health.act.gov.au](http://health.act.gov.au)



RED Contact Officer - *'feel empowered to speak up'*

<b>Acute Response Team (ART) – Meeting Outcomes</b>	
<b>ART Chair:</b>	Dr Kerryn Coleman
<b>Incident Name:</b>	Smoke Event
<b>First ART Date:</b>	2 January 2020
<b>Attendees:</b>	Dr Kerryn Coleman, Michael De’Ath, Vanessa Dal Molan, Rhian Blackwell, David Reid, Jason Kneipp, Swarup Chatterjee, Tracey Pulli, Louise So, Karen Warner
<b>No. of Confirmed Cases:</b>	N/A
<b>Pathogen:</b>	N/A
<b>Suspected Cause:</b>	Bushfires across South-East Australia
<b>Background:</b>	<p>The ART was established to respond to increased activity surrounding bushfires in South-East Australia. Dr Kerryn Coleman provided a verbal update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Met with ACT ministers and Head of Service today;</li> <li>• Concerns over Dunns Road Fire (NSW), with risk to the ACT;</li> <li>• Fire conditions likely worsen until Saturday 10pm;</li> <li>• A State of Alert will be declared under <i>Emergencies Act 2004</i> today and the ESA Commissioner will be appointed an Emergency Controller;</li> <li>• The Emergency Coordination Centre (ECC) will be pre-emptively activated at 1330hrs at ESA Headquarters;</li> <li>• The Security and Emergency Management Senior Officials Group (SEMSOG) will be meeting at 1330hrs;</li> <li>• The Public Information Coordination Centre (PICC) will be activated at 1330hrs at ESA Headquarters.</li> </ul> <p><b>Health actions to be completed:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tracey Pulli – Messaging to be pulled back regarding air quality affecting those people who are healthy.</li> <li>• Tracey Pulli – Coordinate whole-of-government advice on masks from hospitals (current status is that P2 masks are effective until wet).</li> <li>• Tracey Pulli – Liaise with other directorates and WorkSafe ACT.</li> <li>• Rhian Blackwell – Teleconference to be setup at 1600hrs with ACT health sector stakeholders, and Denise Riordan (Chief Psychiatrist) and Wendy Townsend (Chief Veterinary Officer).</li> <li>• Jason Kneipp – Coordinate actions pertaining to Summernats.</li> <li>• Swarup Chatterjee – Monitor air quality.</li> <li>• Chris Kelly – Health ECC Liaison Officer.</li> <li>• Tracey Pulli and Louise So – Health PICC Liaison Officers.</li> </ul>

	<p>Dr Coleman have concerns about Summernats and burnouts at the event:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Burnouts scheduled at 1600hrs today for one hour;</li> <li>• Burnout schedule for Saturday from 1100-1300hrs and 1600-1800hrs;</li> <li>• Events ACT have been in discussions with Summernats, who meet requirements to hold burnouts;</li> <li>• The Minister may request Environment Protection Agency to reconsider exemption;</li> <li>• Jason Kneipp to manage enquiries and issues with Events ACT.</li> </ul> <p>Tennis Australia have contacted ACT Government about whether their event next week should be cancelled. Tennis Australia has been referred to ESA Risk and Planning for weather forecasting information.</p>
<p><b>Control Measures to Date:</b></p>	<p><u><b>Actions Completed prior to 1300hrs</b></u></p> <p><u>Health Emergency Management Unit Update</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confirmed that Communicable Diseases Control (CDC) have 400 P2 face masks that will be held for use in HPS;</li> <li>• Public calls about air quality to Health Protection Service will be referred to Marlena Kaczmarek (x49254) in the first instance and Racheal Crane (x49219) for overflow;</li> <li>• Coordinated available ECC Liaison Officers for weekend.</li> </ul> <p><u>Emergency Services Agency Update</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provided event documentation on Summernats to ACT Health including Emergency Response Plan, Risk Assessment etc (key points below);</li> <li>• Anticipated activation of Incident Management Teams over the weekend;</li> <li>• ECC to be pre-emptively stood up today at 1330hrs;</li> <li>• No planned stand-up of the ECC over the weekend, unless there is a significant emergency (e.g. bushfire in the ACT).</li> </ul> <p><u>Summernats Event Update</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 110,000 – 120,000 people expected at the event;</li> <li>• Key contact: Russell Avis (General Manager) [REDACTED]</li> <li>• Environmental Health will be in attendance for food inspections only;</li> <li>• Specific measures for air quality and heat include misting fans, air conditioned buildings for refuge, additional water bottles and water bubblers.</li> </ul> <p><u>Air Quality Update</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Air quality remains at hazardous levels for PM2.5 and PM10.</li> </ul>



	<p><u>Communications Update</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The ACT Health Directorate have circulated health advice to the community due to the deterioration of air quality across Canberra from smoke.</li><li>• Information updated on the ACT Health website and messaging disseminated across ACT Health social media channels and broader ACT Government channels.</li></ul>
<b>Samples Obtained:</b>	N/A
<b>Laboratory Advice:</b>	N/A
<b>ART Summary prepared by:</b>	David Reid (HEMU)
<b>Next ART:</b>	ART #2 – TBC



## Pond, Aleks (Health)

---

**From:** Chatterjee, Swarup (Health)  
**Sent:** Thursday, 2 January 2020 3:23 PM  
**To:** ACT Health, HPSOps; Coleman, Kerryn (Health)  
**Cc:** Pulli, Tracey (Health)  
**Subject:** RE: Air quality info...

**Importance:** High

UNCLASSIFIED

Hi Kerryn,

I talked to [REDACTED] from Uni of Tasmania (in charge of AirRater). Some advice regarding exposure for healthy people.

Limited work done on a 'period of time' of exposure to PM levels such as we have such that we could give a time period.

Messaging during Tas bushfires last summer was: Exposure to high levels of PM is unpleasant, but there is no evidence of long-term harm to healthy people from such episodes as we currently have.

Focus precautionary advice on sensitive/unhealthy groups.

I asked about dust masks too – her advice was along the same lines as ours in that they reduce PM exposure if used correctly but doesn't eliminate exposure. Also added that if people are using them to check them every 10 minutes or so to ensure the seal is good.

Swarup

**Swarup Chatterjee | Environmental Chemist**

Ph: 02 5124 9139 | Email: [swarup.chatterjee@act.gov.au](mailto:swarup.chatterjee@act.gov.au)

**ACT Government Analytical Laboratory, Health Protection Service, Public Health, Protection and Regulation | ACT Health Directorate**  
 25 Mulley Street, HOLDER ACT 2611

[health.act.gov.au](http://health.act.gov.au)

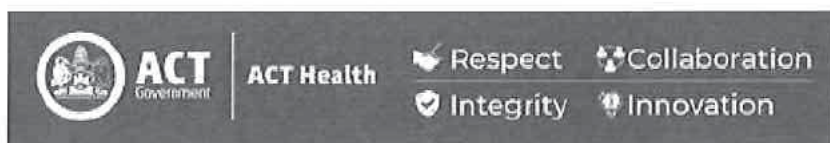


**From:** Reid, David (Health) <David.Reid@act.gov.au> **On Behalf Of** ACT Health, HPSOps  
**Sent:** Thursday, 2 January 2020 3:23 PM  
**To:** Chatterjee, Swarup (Health) <Swarup.Chatterjee@act.gov.au>  
**Subject:** FW: Air quality info...  
**Importance:** High

UNCLASSIFIED

**David Reid | Assistant Director (Emergency Planning Coordinator)**

Ph: 5124 9199 | Email: [david.reid@act.gov.au](mailto:david.reid@act.gov.au)



RED Contact Officer - *'feel empowered to speak up'*

**From:** Pulli, Tracey (Health) <[Tracey.Pulli@act.gov.au](mailto:Tracey.Pulli@act.gov.au)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, 2 January 2020 12:05 PM  
**To:** Coleman, Kerryn (Health) <[Kerryn.Coleman@act.gov.au](mailto:Kerryn.Coleman@act.gov.au)>  
**Cc:** ACT Health, HPSOps <[ACTHealthHPSOps@act.gov.au](mailto:ACTHealthHPSOps@act.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** FW: Air quality info...  
**Importance:** High

UNCLASSIFIED

Kerryn

Are you happy with this?

Cheers  
 Trace

**From:** Harris, Jacqui <[Jacqui.Harris@act.gov.au](mailto:Jacqui.Harris@act.gov.au)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, 2 January 2020 11:37 AM  
**To:** Pulli, Tracey (Health) <[Tracey.Pulli@act.gov.au](mailto:Tracey.Pulli@act.gov.au)>  
**Cc:** Springett, Emily <[Emily.Springett@act.gov.au](mailto:Emily.Springett@act.gov.au)>; Dal Molin, Vanessa (Health) <[Vanessa.DalMolin@act.gov.au](mailto:Vanessa.DalMolin@act.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** RE: Air quality info...  
**Importance:** High

UNCLASSIFIED

Hi Trace

Just seeking clearance on the below lines from the CM to include in the HOS message. These have been drafted from the points you provided earlier, so hopefully a quick one to clear:

"I would like to assure Canberrans that the latest health advice is that for those in our community in good health, there is no reason to panic or be alarmed by the deteriorating air quality in Canberra.

"This is an exceptional time for our city – usually our air quality is among the best in the world. While air quality in the ACT has deteriorated and it is likely that it will continue to do so with hot temperatures forecast over the coming days, I would like to reinforce the message that the short period of time Canberrans have been exposed, is not particularly dangerous.

"Please stay up to date with the latest advice from ACT Health, and look after yourselves and each other."

Jacqui Harris | Assistant Director, Whole of Government Communications  
Ph: 6207 4257 Email: [jacqui.harris@act.gov.au](mailto:jacqui.harris@act.gov.au)

*I am in the office on Monday, Thursday and Friday*

---

**From:** Pulli, Tracey (Health) <[Tracey.Pulli@act.gov.au](mailto:Tracey.Pulli@act.gov.au)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, 2 January 2020 9:52 AM  
**To:** Harris, Jacqui <[Jacqui.Harris@act.gov.au](mailto:Jacqui.Harris@act.gov.au)>  
**Cc:** Springett, Emily <[Emily.Springett@act.gov.au](mailto:Emily.Springett@act.gov.au)>; Dal Molin, Vanessa (Health) <[Vanessa.DalMolin@act.gov.au](mailto:Vanessa.DalMolin@act.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** FW: Air quality info...

UNCLASSIFIED

Hi Jacqui

As discussed, please see below emails exchanged with Emily Springett this morning on smoke. You will see a link to our latest health advice, some of the other messaging that Dr Dugdale has used, and also some of the high level messages from a WorkSafe perspective. May also be worth speaking with Emily.

Also attached is a previous all staff message on Working in Extreme Heat have might be a useful template to work from.

Let me know how you go.

Cheers  
Tracey

---

**From:** Springett, Emily <[Emily.Springett@act.gov.au](mailto:Emily.Springett@act.gov.au)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, 2 January 2020 8:22 AM  
**To:** Health Media <[HealthMedia@act.gov.au](mailto:HealthMedia@act.gov.au)>  
**Cc:** Dugdale, Paul (Health) <[Paul.Dugdale@act.gov.au](mailto:Paul.Dugdale@act.gov.au)>; CMTEDDMedia <[CMTEDDMedia@act.gov.au](mailto:CMTEDDMedia@act.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** Re: Air quality info...

Thanks Trace

In addition to below Greg will likely cover off:

- workers/employers should reschedule work if possible so workers are inside or rotate workers through outside work to limit prolonged exposure
- Employers can provide P2 masks if there will be prolonged outdoor activity or for those workers sensitive to smoke
- workers should be encouraged to speak up if they are feeling the effects of smoke
- Employers should find alternative cooling - if work places have evaporative air conditioning.

Thanks  
Emily

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

---

**From:** Health Media <[HealthMedia@act.gov.au](mailto:HealthMedia@act.gov.au)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 2, 2020 8:13 am

**To:** Springett, Emily  
**Cc:** Dugdale, Paul (Health)  
**Subject:** Air quality info...

Hey Emily

Thanks for letting me know that Greg Jones will be doing media this morning on working in the smoky conditions.

Please see link to our latest health alert on impact to air quality in the ACT from heavy smoke. This has all our latest health advice for the community.

Link - <https://www.health.act.gov.au/public-health-alert/air-quality-deterioration-across-act-smoke>

A few extra lines from comments that Dr Dugdale has made over the past few days...

- This is an exceptional time for Canberra – usually our air quality is among the best in the world.
- It's a particularly difficult time for people with heart and lung conditions who are sensitive to smoke. Our message to them is to follow your doctor's advice, take your medications and if you have got an asthma action plan, put that into effect.
- People who are sensitive to smoke and air pollution can be more vulnerable to heat-related illness as well, so with the heat forecast over the coming days, staying hydrated and cool is important in these conditions.
- Plan to be out during the cool of the morning when the air quality is usually better.
- It's not particularly dangerous for the sorts of period of time that we've had - this is not a year-round smog that some cities have to contend with. This is a bad summer of bushfires and we'll get through it.

Let us know if you need anything further.

Cheers

Trace

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

**Pond, Aleks (Health)**

---

**From:** Wynn, Sandra (Health)  
**Sent:** Thursday, 2 January 2020 3:48 PM  
**To:** Crane, Rachael (Health); Coleman, Kerryn (Health); ACT Health, HPSOps  
**Subject:** FW: Masks

UNCLASSIFIED

Hi there

I have made a few updates to the mask information on the fact sheet. Happy to discuss.

**Can I wear a mask to protect me from smoke?**

If you must be outdoors when smoke is present, consider wearing a P2 / N95 rated mask designed to filter fine particles. These masks are available from chemists/pharmacies, and hardware retailers/other safety equipment suppliers. P2 / N95 masks sold in Australia are usually only available in adult sizes and will not fit most children aged less than 12 years.

People with respiratory conditions i.e. chronic obstructive airways disease, asthma, emphysema or people in respiratory distress, must take care when using masks as they may exacerbate the symptoms. These people should obtain advice from a medical practitioner prior to using a mask.

To offer the best protection, a P2 / N95 mask must be fitted properly. When purchasing P2 / N95 masks it is important to take time to correctly identify which size and style of mask is suitable for you.

The following steps should be followed to ensure a P2/N95 mask is correctly fitted:

1. Remove glasses and hats. Tie back long hair so it does not become tangled in the straps of the mask
2. Put the mask on your face, ensuring the nose piece is at the top of the mask
3. Place the top strap or tie high on the back of your head
4. Move the bottom strap over your head and position it below your ears
5. Compress the mask against the face to ensure a seal across the bridge of the nose
6. Compress the mask to ensure a seal across the cheeks and the face
7. Gently exhale and check air does not escape around the seal. Adjust if necessary.
8. Gently inhale and check the mask is drawn in towards the face and there are no air leaks around the face seal. Adjust if necessary.
9. If there are air leaks that can't be rectified by adjusting, check the mask for defects or try another style of mask.

Important notes:

- People with respiratory conditions i.e. chronic obstructive airways disease, asthma, emphysema or people in respiratory distress, must take care when using masks as they may exacerbate the symptoms. Obtain advice from a medical practitioner prior to use.
- People with facial hair (including a 1-2 day beard growth) may not be able to achieve an adequate seal between the mask and the wearer's face.
- Also refer to the manufacturer's instructions for fit checking the individual brands of masks.
- It is best to change masks regularly in order for them to remain effective. They should be replaced when they become moist. Masks should only be worn for a maximum of 8 hours.

Sandy Wynn | Infection Control Manager  
 PH 02 5124 9248 | MOB [REDACTED]  
 Communicable Disease Control | Health Protection Service

**From:** Crane, Rachael (Health) <Rachael.Crane@act.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Thursday, 2 January 2020 2:01 PM  
**To:** Wynn, Sandra (Health) <Sandra.Wynn@act.gov.au>  
**Subject:** FW: Masks

UNCLASSIFIED

**From:** Pulli, Tracey (Health) <Tracey.Pulli@act.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Thursday, 2 January 2020 12:28 PM  
**To:** Coleman, Kerryn (Health) <Kerryn.Coleman@act.gov.au>; Crane, Rachael (Health) <Rachael.Crane@act.gov.au>; ACT Health, HPSOps <ACTHealthHPSOps@act.gov.au>  
**Cc:** ACT Health Office of the Chief Health Officer <ACTHealthOCHO@act.gov.au>  
**Subject:** RE: Masks

UNCLASSIFIED

Hi Kerryn and all

A the moment we are referring people to our fact sheet on minimising the health impacts of outdoor smoke. Link – <https://health.act.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-12/Outdoor%20Smoke%20%20Health%20Impacts%20Factsheet%20-%20Dec%202019%20-%20FINAL.pdf?fbclid=IwAR35tNUG7ylUGM23N3q6wVQQ8A95FQ1AuaUDDgZvLZUsofuQ8QzRWPhrVQs>

Here is the information from this fact sheet that could be updated:

#### **Can I wear a mask to protect me from smoke?**

If you must be outdoors when smoke is present, consider wearing a P2 / N95 rated mask designed to filter fine particles. These masks are available from hardware retailers and other safety equipment suppliers. P2 / N95 masks sold in Australia are usually only available in adult sizes and will not fit most children aged less than 12 years.

To offer the best protection, a P2 / N95 mask must be fitted properly. When purchasing P2 / N95 masks it is important to take time to correctly identify which size and style of mask is suitable for you.

The following steps should be followed to ensure a P2/N95 mask is correctly fitted:

1. Remove glasses and hats. Tie back long hair so it does not become tangled in the straps of the mask
2. Put the mask on your face, ensuring the nose piece is at the top of the mask
3. Place the top strap or tie high on the back of your head
4. Move the bottom strap over your head and position it below your ears
5. Compress the mask against the face to ensure a seal across the bridge of the nose
6. Compress the mask to ensure a seal across the cheeks and the face
7. Conduct a fit check: check the seal of the mask by gently inhaling. If the mask is not drawn in towards the face, or air leaks around the face seal, readjust the mask and repeat process or check for defects in the mask. If the mask still leaks you may need to try a different size or style of mask
8. People with beards should shave before using a P2 / N95 mask as a good seal between the mask and the wearer's face cannot be guaranteed if they have facial hair.

Cheers  
Tracey

Tracey Pulli | Senior Director of Media

Ph: (02) 5124 9444 | Email: [tracey.pulli@act.gov.au](mailto:tracey.pulli@act.gov.au)

Communications and Government Relations | Office of the Director-General | ACT Health Directorate

Level 5, 6 Bowes Street Phillip ACT 2606

[health.act.gov.au](http://health.act.gov.au)



**From:** Coleman, Kerryn (Health) <[Kerryn.Coleman@act.gov.au](mailto:Kerryn.Coleman@act.gov.au)>

**Sent:** Thursday, 2 January 2020 12:18 PM

**To:** Crane, Rachael (Health) <[Rachael.Crane@act.gov.au](mailto:Rachael.Crane@act.gov.au)>; ACT Health, HPSOps <[ACTHealthHPSOps@act.gov.au](mailto:ACTHealthHPSOps@act.gov.au)>

**Cc:** Pulli, Tracey (Health) <[Tracey.Pulli@act.gov.au](mailto:Tracey.Pulli@act.gov.au)>; ACT Health Office of the Chief Health Officer <[ACTHealthOCHO@act.gov.au](mailto:ACTHealthOCHO@act.gov.au)>

**Subject:** Masks

Hi both - can someone please check how long a P2 mask can be worn for before needing a brief and/or changing??  
This is not in our fact sheet.

Need to pull the air quality fact sheet for review this afternoon - masks information needs to be beefed up.

Rachael - as a public health nurse, are you please able to look into some extra advice re the P2 masks if public wants to wear them.

K

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

**Pond, Aleks (Health)**

---

**From:** Pulli, Tracey (Health)  
**Sent:** Thursday, 2 January 2020 4:27 PM  
**To:** Coleman, Kerryn (Health)  
**Subject:** FW: All staff message on impact of smoke from NSW bushfires

UNCLASSIFIED

Hi Kerryn

Can you please have a look at this?

Cheers  
 Trace

---

**From:** Jean, David (Health) <David.Jean@act.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Thursday, 2 January 2020 2:18 PM  
**To:** Pulli, Tracey (Health) <Tracey.Pulli@act.gov.au>; Springett, Emily <Emily.Springett@act.gov.au>  
**Cc:** Canberra Health Services Media <CHSmedia@act.gov.au>; Canberra Health Services Communications <CHScomms@act.gov.au>  
**Subject:** All staff message on impact of smoke from NSW bushfires

UNCLASSIFIED

Hi guys, we are needing to send some staff messaging out on the smoke – particularly the use of masks, which is becoming a bit of an issue. Can you please clear the below to be sent out from Liz Chatham?

## ALL STAFF MESSAGE

Smoke from NSW bushfires continues to affect air quality in Canberra, and this is likely to continue on and off over the coming weeks.

Facilities management have worked across CHS buildings since the smoke started to minimise smoke entry. This has included setting all of our air filtration settings to minimise smoke entering. Please keep windows and doors closed to help reduce the impact of smoke.

The health advice for people is that anyone with concerns about their health should seek medical advice from their doctor. In particular, anyone:

- with a heart or lung condition should take their medication as prescribed by their doctor
- with asthma should follow their asthma action plan
- experiencing wheezing, chest tightness or difficulty breathing should seek medical attention.

Please note that the health advice we have been provided with is that P2 or N95 masks are not required if you are healthy and working indoors. However, if employees feel that they will provide some comfort, N95 masks are available for use. Please note that we have a limited supply of these so use them responsibly. Please observe infection control procedures when using masks.

Ordinary surgical masks are not recommended for use as they are not designed to prevent smoke inhalation.



If your health is affected by the smoke, please speak with you manager.

**Staff who are unable to attend work due to NSW bushfires**

If you are unable to return to work due to the bushfires, please speak with your manager as you may be able to access personal leave 'in Extraordinary and Unforeseen Circumstances' for up to four days.

For more information, please see your relevant enterprise agreement, available on the [ACTPS Employment Portal](#).

**Liz Chatham**  
**Chief Operating Officer**

**David Jean**  
 Director, Content and Engagement  
**Media and Communications**

Canberra Health Services | ACT Government  
 P. (02) 512 46115 | M. [REDACTED] E. [David.Jean@act.gov.au](mailto:David.Jean@act.gov.au)  
 Canberra Health Services media on-call phone: 0466 948 935

**RELIABLE | PROGRESSIVE | RESPECTFUL | KIND**  
*Creating exceptional healthcare together*



*This email and any attachments may be confidential and also privileged. If you're not the intended recipient, please notify the sender and delete all copies of this message along with any attachments immediately. You should not copy or use this information for any purpose, nor disclose its contents to any other persons.*

**From:** Jean, David (Health)  
**Sent:** Thursday, 2 January 2020 12:35 PM  
**To:** Lang, Samantha (Health) <[Samantha.Lang@act.gov.au](mailto:Samantha.Lang@act.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** FW: Impact of smoke from NSW bushfires

UNCLASSIFIED

Staff email

**David Jean**  
 Director, Content and Engagement  
**Media and Communications**

Canberra Health Services | ACT Government  
 P. (02) 512 46115 | M. [REDACTED] E. [David.Jean@act.gov.au](mailto:David.Jean@act.gov.au)  
 Canberra Health Services media on-call phone: 0466 948 935

**RELIABLE | PROGRESSIVE | RESPECTFUL | KIND**  
*Creating exceptional healthcare together*



*This email and any attachments may be confidential and also privileged. If you're not the intended recipient, please notify the sender and delete all copies of this message along with any attachments immediately. You should not copy or use this information for any purpose, nor disclose its contents to any other persons.*

**From:** Wells, Michelle (Health) <Michelle.Wells@act.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Thursday, 2 January 2020 12:31 PM  
**To:** Jean, David (Health) <David.Jean@act.gov.au>  
**Subject:** Impact of smoke from NSW bushfires

UNCLASSIFIED

Hi David – please see below for the draft all staff message. Do you want to review it first to see if it reflects what Liz wants before sending to her for clearance?

I cut out a lot of stuff related to staff on leave as all of this info is in the relevant clauses on each enterprise agreement. Surely the message should be that if staff can't return to work they should speak with their manager and that they may be able to access personal leave 'due to extraordinary and unforeseen circumstances'.

Anyway, let me know if this is OK. I should be able to put in the template and send out when cleared.

Thanks,  
Michelle

---

**Pond, Aleks (Health)**

---

**From:** Kaczmarek, Marlena (Health)  
**Sent:** Thursday, 2 January 2020 5:09 PM  
**To:** Health.Ops@health.gov.au  
**Cc:** Coleman, Kerryn (Health)  
**Subject:** FYI: P2 masks being given out at Dickson College

UNCLASSIFIED

Its already on facebook in the "Bushfire Emergency Accommodation in Canberra" group which has ~2,400 members... (see screenshot attached)

The exact words used were "The Government is establishing a recovery centre at Dickson College providing driver reviver stops as well as working to ensure the supply of P2 masks for those that need them".

Dr Marlena Kaczmarek | Epidemiologist - Surveillance Coordinator

Phone: 02 5124 9254 | Mobile: [REDACTED] Email: [marlena.kaczmarek@act.gov.au](mailto:marlena.kaczmarek@act.gov.au)

Communicable Disease Control Section | Health Protection Service | Population Health Protection and Prevention | ACT Health | ACT Government

25 Mulley Street, Holder ACT 2611 | [www.health.act.gov.au/hps](http://www.health.act.gov.au/hps)

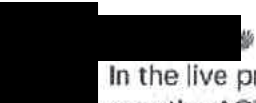
< [redacted] Bushfire Emergency  
accommodation in Canberra ...  
Admin · 1 hr ·

DICKSON COLLEGE is open as a relief centre until midnight tonight for those travelling through Canberra offering drinks and linking them into emergency supports. Hours will vary depending on volunteers being available. Will update as more information is available.

Like Comment Share

[redacted] and others

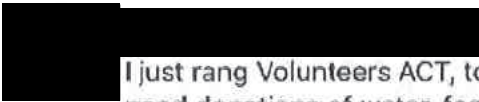
5 shares



In the live press announcement happening now the ACT govt also mentioned they'd be handing out P2 masks there?

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=1510081755810730>

1h Like Reply 2



I just rang Volunteers ACT, to see if they need donations of water, food, help etc at Dickson College, apparently they want donations of \$\$ to go through 'GIVIT' ACT, rather than people arriving with food etc.

Write a comment... GIF 😊

Home Profile 1 9+ 1

## Pond, Aleks (Health)

---

**From:** Springett, Emily  
**Sent:** Thursday, 2 January 2020 9:58 PM  
**To:** Leigh, Kathy; Whelan, Georgeina; Burkevics, Bren; Nicol, David; Doran, Karen; Glenn, Richard; Coleman, Kerryn (Health)  
**Cc:** Paviour, Mark; Craig, Alexandra; Stewart-Moore, Karen; Perkins, Anita; McCormick, Isabel; Pulli, Tracey (Health)  
**Subject:** PICC Summary of activity - 2 January 2019

UNCLASSIFIED

Good Evening

Please find a summary of key activity undertaken by the PICC this evening for your information in response to the State of Alert, government service changes and support. Significant traction was achieved today with the community, particularly on social media.

Bren: can you please forward this email on to SEMSOG if appropriate (and can you add me to SEMSOG alerts and information?)

Mark: can you also forward if appropriate

### PICC operations:

- Stood up at 1:30pm
- Stood down at 9pm
- Will re-stand up at 8am tomorrow morning. PICC rosters organised until the end of the day.

### Key activity today:

- Media conference with Ministers occurred at 3:30pm, response from community who viewed it live and journalists who attended has been positive. Auslan Translation Service attended and it was live streamed on Facebook. Statistics are below on social media traction.
- State of Alert communications were issued.
- Service changes and support information issued.
- Total Fire Ban communications issued.
- Banners and social media established and published.

### Community messaging:

- Key information provided to the community covering: State of Alert (what it means, what community needs to do, what we are doing), Total Fire Ban, service changes relating to: air quality, child care centres, city services, transport, act national parks, worker safety, respite centres, transitional support. Information is [available here](#)
- This page is being constantly updated (and typos corrected) noting changes in information. **Tomorrow morning messaging will be added including: more detail on horses and housing, P2 masks, mental health and wellbeing, location of evacuation centres, support Canberrans can provide (ie. donations).**

### Community response today, trends and tractions:

- The Access Canberra Contact Centre has advised they received 40 calls from the community which were logged as relating to 'smoke' or 'fires' today.
- Banners are up on major ACT Government websites advising of the State of Alert and pointing community to information on key service changes and support information. Total Fire Ban banners will go up from midnight as per BAU.

- Directorates are also sharing across their channels their support and service information as it relates to them as well as including the link to the [ESA page](#) which includes the consolidated information. Ministers are also sharing detail.
- We have responded to 20+ social media questions and will continue tomorrow morning. Trending themes on social media include:
  - Why there was an A/g Chief Minister
  - P2 masks – effectiveness and how to get them
  - Summernats and why it is going ahead

**Traction** – note ESA followers on Facebook has grown by 7000 in the last week, with ESA being the single point of truth cutting through with the community as well as broad community interest and awareness.

**Traction on video conference with Ministers:**

- 53,000 (live stream reach) (288 shares, 390 comments)
- 51,000 reach of post after conference (150 comments, 288 shares)
- 60,000 reach – spot app alert advising of media stand up (700 comments, 506 shares)

**State of Alert social media post:**

- 123,000 reach
- 2,000 shares, 601 comments (mainly tagging of friends/family)

**Important information (service changes/support):**

- 20,000 reach
- 143 shares, 19 comments

**Our predictions of comms pressure points for tomorrow:**

- Summernats (questions on event going ahead)
- Comparisons to 2003 fires, including likely footprint
- NSW fires/proximity
- Ongoing focus on air quality

\* Note, the death at Canberra Airport and the safety incident at Summernats will likely also get follow up activity/interest.

**Key activity planned for tomorrow so far:**

- 8:30am – ESA Commissioner on ABC radio providing an update
- 10am – possible media stand up on total fire ban
- 3:45pm – press conference at ESA with the Chief Minister.

We will continue to build on community information with Directorates and ESA tomorrow and analyse community sentiment and pressure points and feed this back to ECC.

We will also do a PICC de-brief in the morning on improvements to processes tomorrow to continue to improve around timeliness and support. Thank you to all Directorates for support today.

Emily Springett

**Emily Springett | Senior Director, Communications and Engagement**

Phone: 6205 9093 | Mobile [REDACTED] [emily.springett@act.gov.au](mailto:emily.springett@act.gov.au)

**Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate | ACT Government**

Level 5, Canberra Nara Centre, 1 Constitution Avenue, Canberra City | GPO Box 158 Canberra City ACT 2601 |

[www.act.gov.au/accessCBR](http://www.act.gov.au/accessCBR)

**Pond, Aleks (Health)**

---

**From:** Pulli, Tracey (Health)  
**Sent:** Friday, 3 January 2020 11:29 AM  
**To:** Coleman, Kerryn (Health)  
**Cc:** Behm, Claire (Health); ACT Health, HPSOps  
**Subject:** For approval - latest air quality update  
**Attachments:** Latest air quality update.docx

UNCLASSIFIED

Hi Kerryn

Please see attached the latest air quality update for ACT Health channels (web and social media). Updated text for the ESA State of Alert webpage has also been drafted and is included in the attached. Sending for your approval. I will then provide to the PICC for approval the Emergency Controller.

**Craig** – for your information as Health ECC rep.

**Louise** – see attached the DRAFT Facebook post. Can you do up a social media tile to go with this?

Cheers  
Tracey

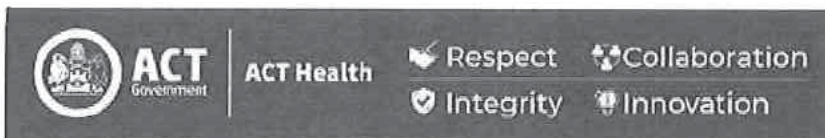
Tracey Pulli | Senior Director of Media

Ph: (02) 5124 9444 | Email: [tracey.pulli@act.gov.au](mailto:tracey.pulli@act.gov.au)

Communications and Government Relations | Office of the Director-General | ACT Health Directorate

Level 5, 6 Bowes Street Phillip ACT 2606

[health.act.gov.au](http://health.act.gov.au)



## Latest air quality update

---

Below is the latest air quality update for ACT Health channels (web and social media). Updated text for the ESA State of Alert webpage has also been drafted.

### ACT Health website (new health alert)

---

## Heavy smoke and extreme heat conditions in the ACT

The heavy smoke affecting the ACT has eased slightly, however, is expected to continue while fires continue to burn across the border. During this time, the ACT Health Directorate's advice remains the same.

This dense smoke is impacting the air quality across a large area of our region and South East Australia, not just the ACT.

Extreme heat conditions for the ACT are also expected from Friday 3 January, with above 40-degree temperatures forecast for Saturday 4 January.

### Health advice in the smoky air

During these periods of heavy smoke, all Canberrans are advised to avoid prolonged or heavy physical activity outside when there is heavy smoke in the area.

Common reactions people may experience with heavy smoke include:

- itchy or burning eyes
- throat irritation
- runny nose, and
- coughing.

These common irritations are not serious and can be best managed by avoiding prolonged periods outdoors. People can also consider using water-based eye drops and throat lozenges to help alleviate these irritations.

While exposure to high levels of smoke can be unpleasant, there is no strong evidence to suggest there will be any long-term harm to healthy people from smoke events like those currently being experienced in the ACT.

#### **For people sensitive to smoke and air pollution**

People who are sensitive to smoke, especially those with pre-existing heart and lung conditions, should take extra care during these conditions.

This includes remaining indoors where possible, with windows and doors closed, and not using evaporative air conditioners which draw air into the house from outside.



Anyone with a heart or lung condition should take their medication as prescribed by their doctor. People with asthma should follow their asthma action plan.

Anyone with concerns about their health should seek medical advice from their doctor. And anyone experiencing wheezing, chest tightness or difficulty breathing should seek urgent medical attention and in the event of a medical emergency call triple-zero (000).

People who can be more vulnerable to smoke and air pollution include:

- people with heart or lung conditions (including asthma)
- children aged less than 14 years
- pregnant women, and
- people over 65 years of age.

### **P2/N95 masks**

Our advice to the community is that it is best to avoid exposure to the smoke through staying indoors where possible, and not using evaporative air conditioners which draw air into the house from outside.

Ordinary paper masks are not effective at filtering smoke, however do not cause any harm if people choose to wear them and they feel they get some benefit.

Evidence shows P2 and N95 masks do filter some smoke and are most commonly used in occupational settings where exposure to airborne particles occur on a regular basis. However they cannot completely eliminate exposure to smoke, and as they can be difficult to fit and use appropriately, they are not recommended for use in the general community as an alternative to avoiding outdoor exposure.

If you choose to use a mask outdoors there is further information in our outdoor smoke [factsheet](#), including on how to fit a P2 mask.

## **Staying healthy in the heat**

With extreme heat forecast for the ACT on Friday and Saturday, it is important to be prepared, by having a plan for keeping healthy in the heat.

People who are sensitive to smoke and air pollution can be more vulnerable to heat-related illness as well, staying hydrated and cool is important.

People who are able to do so, are also encouraged to check on others who they think might need extra help, to see that they are okay.

## **Where can I find further information?**

The ACT Health Directorate is unable to provide individual health advice. If you have any concerns about your health, speak to a health professional.

For further information on minimising the health impacts of outdoor smoke, refer to our [factsheet](#).

For further tips on how to beat the heat see our [summer safety](#) page.

The ACT Health Directorate is continuing to monitor the air quality in the ACT and will advise the public of additional public health advice if needed. For those interested in monitoring the levels of smoke in the air (PM2.5), see our [Health advice for smoky air](#) page.

At this time, the smoky air conditions are expected to continue to impact the ACT while bushfires are burning across the border, with dense smoke impacting a large area of our region. For further information on weather conditions, visit: [www.bom.gov.au](http://www.bom.gov.au).

### **State of Alert in the ACT**

To prepare the community for the extreme weather conditions forecast for the ACT and region in the coming days, a State of Alert has been declared for the ACT.

The State of Alert will ensure our emergency services and broader ACT Government services are able to be as responsive as possible to the needs of the community.

Further information on what this means, what you need to do, support available and government service changes is on the ACT ESA website at: [www.esa.act.gov.au](http://www.esa.act.gov.au)

## **ACT Health Facebook (new health alert)**

---

### **Health alert: Heavy smoke and extreme heat conditions in the ACT**

The heavy smoke affecting the ACT has eased slightly, however, is expected to continue while fires continue to burn across the border. During this time, the ACT Health Directorate's advice remains the same.

With extreme heat conditions for the ACT also expected from today, with above 40-degree temperatures forecast for tomorrow (Sat 4 Jan), it is important to be prepared, by having a plan for keeping healthy in the heat.

Read more here: [\(INSERT link\)](#)

#### **P2 and N95 masks**

There have been lots of questions around using P2 and N95 masks. Our advice to the community is that it is best to avoid exposure to the smoke through staying indoors where possible, and not using evaporative air conditioners which draw air into the house from outside.

Ordinary paper masks are not effective at filtering smoke, however do not cause any harm if people choose to wear them and they feel they get some benefit.

Although evidence shows P2 and N95 masks do filter some smoke, they cannot completely eliminate exposure to smoke, and as they can be difficult to fit and use appropriately, they are not recommended for use in the general community as an alternative to avoiding outdoor exposure.

If you choose to use a mask outdoors there is further information on the ACT Health website on how to fit a P2 mask.

For information on the State of Alert declared in the ACT and @ACT Government services changes and support, refer to the @ACT ESA website: [www.esa.act.gov.au](http://www.esa.act.gov.au)

## ACT Health website (new health alert)

---

### Air quality

During these periods of heavy smoke, all Canberrans are advised to avoid prolonged or heavy physical activity outside when there is heavy smoke in the area.

People who are sensitive to smoke, especially those with pre-existing heart and lung conditions, should take extra care by staying indoors where possible and taking medication as prescribed by their doctor.

While exposure to high levels of smoke can be unpleasant, there is no strong evidence to suggest there will be any long-term harm to healthy people from smoke events like those currently being experienced in the ACT.

Keep up to date with the latest health advice through the ACT Health website ([www.health.act.gov.au](http://www.health.act.gov.au))

#### **P2/N95 masks**

The best way to avoid exposure to the smoke is by staying indoors (with windows and doors closed) where possible, and not using evaporative air conditioners which draw air into the house from outside.

Ordinary paper masks are not effective at filtering smoke, however do not cause any harm if people choose to wear them and they feel they get some benefit.

Evidence shows P2 and N95 masks do filter some smoke and are most commonly used in occupational settings where exposure to airborne particles occur on a regular basis. However they cannot completely eliminate exposure to smoke, and as they can be difficult to fit and use appropriately, they are not recommended for use in the general community as an alternative to avoiding outdoor exposure.

If you choose to use a mask outdoors there is further information on the ACT Health website ([www.health.act.gov.au](http://www.health.act.gov.au)) on how to fit a P2 mask.

**Pond, Aleks (Health)**

---

**From:** Health Ops <Health.Ops@health.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Friday, 3 January 2020 5:53 PM  
**To:** kecha@doh.health.nsw.gov.au; [AHPPC:CHO-NT] Dr Hugh Heggie; jeannette.young@health.qld.gov.au; VEITCH, Mark; [AHPPC:CHO-VIC] Dr Annaliese van Diemen; [AHPPC:CHO-VICProxy] Dr Brett Sutton; [AHPPC:CHO-WA] Dr Andy Robertson; Dr Jeremy McAnulty; Coleman, Kerryn (Health); Nicola Spurrier  
**Cc:** Kelly, Paul; GEBBIE, Sandra; Lucas, Roz; Health Ops  
**Subject:** Draft for input - P2 mask FAQ factsheet [SEC=OFFICIAL]  
**Attachments:** Masks and Smoke from bushfires\_PKcomments\_3jan20.docx

Dear Colleagues

As you may be aware, there is significant and growing interest from the public regarding P2 masks for use against smoke and bushfires. We have prepared a draft fact sheet for P2 masks with the intention to make this publicly available. Could you please review the attached draft and provide any comments or changes by Monday?

It is important that we are complementary and consistent with state and territory advice. We appreciate any input you may provide.

Many thanks for your assistance

Maddy Marsland

*for*

**National Incident Room**

Office of Health Protection  
Australian Government Department of Health  
Australian National IHR Focal Point

T: (+61) 2 6289 3030 (24 hours)

F: (+61) 2 6289 3040

E: [health.ops@health.gov.au](mailto:health.ops@health.gov.au)

Please note that this mailbox is monitored during normal business hours and can be accessed by a duty officer after hours. The telephone number listed above is monitored 24 hours.

---

"Important: This transmission is intended only for the use of the addressee and may contain confidential or legally privileged information. If you are not the intended recipient, you are notified that any use or dissemination of this communication is strictly prohibited. If you receive this transmission in error please notify the author immediately and delete all copies of this transmission."

## Masks and Smoke from bushfires

### General points

- PM<sub>2.5</sub> is an air pollutant that is a concern for people's health when levels are high in particular after bushfires.
- These fine particles are two and one half microns or less in width and reduce visibility in the air. When inhaled they penetrate deep into lung and can be absorbed into the bloodstream. Too much exposure can cause a variety of health problems.
- Disposable P2/N95 face masks (also known as P2/N95 respirators) are designed to filter out PM<sub>2.5</sub> particles.
- While P2 masks are designed to filter out these particles when worn correctly, their effectiveness to protect against high levels of air pollution is limited. They are not recommended for general community use.
- Those with underlying heart or lung health issues and other chronic conditions should consult their doctor for advice in regards to the use of P2 masks.
- People with heart disease are at increased risk of heart attack and arrhythmias from exposure to high levels of PM<sub>2.5</sub>. Particulates from smoke can worsen symptoms associated with asthma and lung diseases including Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD).
- Wearing masks is not an alternative to avoiding the smoke. The best thing to do is stay inside.
- If the mask becomes damaged, soiled, moist or contaminated, it is best to refit and replace or remove it. Wearing a P2 mask can make it harder to breathe and increases the risk of heat-related illness. Therefore it is important to consult your doctor before using one if you have a heart or lung condition.
- P2 masks have many limitations and are only effective if fitted perfectly. Achieving the air-tight seal required is not easy and men need to be clean-shaven for the mask to be effective. A guide to fitting a P2 mask can be found here:  
<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/environment/factsheets/Pages/face-mask.aspx>
- If you feel dizzy, faint or out of breath while wearing a P2 mask, remove it and go to a place with cleaner air quality.

### Frequently asked questions

#### **Are all face masks the same?**

No, there are many different types of face masks. Ordinary paper dust masks, handkerchiefs or bandannas do not filter out fine particles or some gases associated with bushfire smoke and are generally not very useful in protecting your lungs. While cloth and paper masks can stop aerosols and water droplets they do not filter well enough to be of use against the microscopic dust particles that make bushfire smoke dangerous.

For protection from particulates, there are three classes of filters under called P1, P2 and P3. P1 masks are ineffective in filtering out PM<sub>2.5</sub>.

#### **Will a P2 mask provide total protection?**

No. P2 masks do not provide complete protection especially if fitted improperly. They do not remove or protect against gases that may be contained in the smoke such as carbon monoxide.

### **What are the benefits of wearing a P2 mask?**

Fitted properly, a P2 mask can filter out some of the fine particles from smoke. Make sure the mask is fitted properly and a good seal has been achieved. The mask should be sealed over the bridge of the nose and mouth, and there should be no gaps between the mask and face. Men should be clean shaven to get a good seal.

### **What are some of the problems with P2 masks?**

P2 masks can be very hot and uncomfortable and can make it harder for you to breathe normally. If the mask is not fitted properly or becomes loaded up with particles from extended use, it will be even less effective. Children, in particular, may find it difficult or impractical to wear a face mask correctly so should instead reduce exposure to the smoke and ash. There are different sizes of masks available and children should not be fitted with an adult mask.

### **What else can I do to protect myself from bushfire smoke?**

Masks are not the only measure you can take to minimise exposure to bushfire smoke. Depending on the level of PM 2.5 concentrations in your local area there are a number of different ways of minimising exposure on days with high air pollution:

- Stay indoors if you can with windows and doors shut.
- If you use an air conditioner set it to recirculate the air. Check the product information of your air conditioning unit to determine whether it has capacity to filter out PM 2.5 particles. As a general rule older air conditioning units may not have this capacity.
- Follow your medical plan and doctor's advice about medications and asthma management.
- Avoid physical activity outdoors.
- Avoid indoor sources of air pollution including cigarettes, candles and incense sticks.
- Take advantage of periods of clean air to ventilate your home, as smoke can take some time to disperse unless the house is opened up.
- Use an air purifier with a high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter.

### **What about if I come across asbestos?**

Asbestos in buildings may have been disturbed as a result of damage from bushfires though undisturbed asbestos poses a lower risk. P2 masks may offer some protection if asbestos exposure is unavoidable. Check the product information of the P2 mask prior to encountering asbestos.

### **Where can I get a P2 mask?**

P2 masks are sold at hardware stores and other supply businesses. In the case of a shortage, the Australian Government is in close contact with local manufacturers and distributors of P2 masks about availability and has arrangements with states and territories to ensure access where needed. State and Territory Governments will assess the need for P2 masks at a local level and prioritize to areas of high need.

**Pond, Aleks (Health)**

---

**From:** Pulli, Tracey (Health)  
**Sent:** Friday, 3 January 2020 7:21 PM  
**To:** PICCO2; Dal Molin, Vanessa (Health)  
**Cc:** ACT Health, HPSOps; Coleman, Kerryn (Health); Stewart-Moore, Karen  
**Subject:** For approval: Updated ACT Health factsheet on outdoor smoke  
**Attachments:** ESA webpage update on air quality; Outdoor Smoke - Health Impacts Factsheet - January 2020.docx

UNCLASSIFIED

Hi Vanessa

Please see attached the updated ACT Health factsheet on outdoor smoke. This has been updated with our new lines on P2 masks and to provide further information on fitting P2 masks given the significant community interest in using these. We have also included a new section on use of air purifiers following questions received on social media about these.

The attached has been cleared by the Chief Health Officer. Sending for clearance through the IC/EC. Once cleared, I will work to have this updated on the ACT Health website.

Can I also raise an issue that the webpage text on Air Quality on the ESA State of Alert page has not been updated with the text that I sent through earlier today and that was cleared through the IC. This means this advice is currently inconsistent with what is on the ACT Health website. Are you able to check where this webpage update is at? Attached is the email I sent through earlier...

Cheers  
Tracey

**Tracey Pulli | Senior Director of Media**

Ph: (02) 5124 9444 | Email: [tracey.pulli@act.gov.au](mailto:tracey.pulli@act.gov.au)

**Communications and Government Relations | Office of the Director-General | ACT Health Directorate**

Level 5, 6 Bowes Street Phillip ACT 2606

[health.act.gov.au](http://health.act.gov.au)



**Pond, Aleks (Health)**

---

**From:** Pulli, Tracey (Health)  
**Sent:** Friday, 3 January 2020 1:53 PM  
**To:** Van Aalst, Sally  
**Cc:** Virtue, Geoff  
**Subject:** ESA webpage update on air quality

UNCLASSIFIED

Hi Sally

As discussed, here is the cleared ESA webpage content on air quality to be replaced:

Will let you know once our social is up so this can be shared on ESA channels...

## Air quality

During these periods of smoke, all Canberrans are advised to minimise their levels of prolonged or heavy physical activity outdoors. When there is heavy smoke in the area it is best to avoid all physical activity outdoors.

People who are sensitive to smoke, especially those with pre-existing heart and lung conditions, should take extra care by staying indoors where possible and taking medication as prescribed by their doctor.

While exposure to smoke can be unpleasant, for healthy people taking measures to limit their exposure, it is unlikely they will be at risk of serious health harms from the current smoke event.

Keep up to date with the latest health advice through the ACT Health website ([www.health.act.gov.au](http://www.health.act.gov.au))

### **P2/N95 masks**

The best way to avoid exposure to the smoke is by staying indoors (with windows and doors closed) where possible, and not using evaporative air conditioners which draw air into the house from outside.

Ordinary paper masks are not effective at filtering smoke, however do not cause any harm if people choose to wear them and they feel they get some benefit.

Evidence shows P2 and N95 masks do filter some smoke and are most commonly used in occupational settings where exposure to airborne particles occur on a regular basis. However they cannot completely eliminate exposure to smoke, and as they can be difficult to fit and use appropriately, they are not recommended for use in the general community as an alternative to avoiding outdoor exposure.

If you choose to use a mask outdoors there is further information on the ACT Health website ([www.health.act.gov.au](http://www.health.act.gov.au)) on how to fit a P2 mask.

Cheers  
Tracey

Tracey Pulli | Senior Director of Media  
Ph: (02) 5124 9444 | Email: [tracey.pulli@act.gov.au](mailto:tracey.pulli@act.gov.au)  
Communications and Government Relations | Office of the Director-General | ACT Health Directorate  
Level 5, 6 Bowes Street Phillip ACT 2606