

Tukuna mai ōu whakaaro

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## Your submission

What do you want Environment Canterbury to do?

EC can must review its  
air pollution policy - and  
require the NZ Govt to  
amend legislation - in the  
light of new research  
findings, as published  
14.3.15 by Dr Jan Wright,  
parliamentary commissioner  
for the environment. (Copy  
attached.)

This is outlined in my submission.

Continued on next page

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Your submission

What do you want Environment Canterbury to do?

Continue your submission on additional pages if necessary.



Facilitating sustainable development  
in the Canterbury region  
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# Pollution guidelines outdated

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Canterbury's air pollution problem is not as serious as the Government's "outdated" rules indicate, the parliamentary commissioner for the environment says.

Dr Jan Wright described air quality a "good news story" in her analysis of the 2014 air domain report, which analyses changes in air quality over time and the associated pressures and effects.

Air quality was steadily improving, unlike other environmental problems, such as water quality, she said.

Presenting at Lincoln University this week, Wright said the Government's air pollution standards, based on the "PM10 rule", were "10 years out of date".

PM10 is particles of less than 10 microns in diameter.

In New Zealand, the standard is to measure whether PM10 exceeds 50 micrograms per cubic metre in 24 hours.

The Government says areas of high pollution, like Canterbury, can have no more than three exceedance days a year by next year. The Christchurch airsheds had 19 last year and one so far this year.

Wright said this is the measure of "least importance".

"The WHO [World Health Organisation] is clear that the long-term exposure guidelines are more important than the short-term exposure guidelines because the health impact on the population is greater," she said.

In the 2014 air domain report, 50 per cent of airsheds failed under the PM10 rule, including all in Canterbury and most of the South Island.

Kaipoi, Ashburton, Reefton, Dunedin, Gore, Ashburton, Alexandra, Invercargill are just over, with smoggy Timaru failing badly.

Wright said if the measure was adjusted to "long term" PM10 exposure, over 365 days, 87 per cent would pass, including Christchurch.

PM10 comes from combustion, including home heating, diesel

**“Air quality is a public health issue and should not be in the domain of regional councils.”**

**Dr Jan Wright**

cars and industry, sea spray, dirt and sulphate.

If an Australian assessment process was used, Christchurch air quality would be the second-highest standard of "good", she said.

Wright argued the measure "of most importance" was whether PM2.5, which was much smaller and capable of penetrating respiratory systems, was high over a longer period.

Air quality was a public health issue and should not be in the domain of regional councils, Wright said.

"The effect is on health, not on the natural environment."

"[It] would be counterproductive if, for instance, actions to reduce emissions from woodburners resulted in more cold, damp homes. It may be that public money spent by regional councils subsidising clean heat appliances would be better spent on smoking cessation programmes."

Minister for the Environment Nick Smith said air quality would remain with environmental issues.

"There are lots of environmental issues like water quality, pesticide management and other environmental regulations that have an effect on public health, but that does not mean they should not be managed by the [Ministry for the Environment]."

Environment Canterbury air director Katherine Trought said Wright made in clear in her report reducing "high pollution days" was still integral to air quality.

ECan was still bound by the Government's PM10 rule of 24 hour measures, she said.