

winter air report

Canterbury

October 2006

Smog in Christchurch, Timaru, Rangiora, Kaiapoi, Ashburton, Waimate and Geraldine creates major difficulties for thousands of people with respiratory problems and ruins the image of our clean, green country. The source of the problem, however, is not motor vehicles or industry – 78 to 98% of the particles discharged into our air are estimated to come from solid fuel burning for home heating.

2013 and beyond

Winter air pollution from home fires is a real problem. It damages the image of Canterbury and seriously affects the health and well-being of its people. The National Environmental Standards for Air Quality (NES) require improvement in air quality between now and 2013 if we are to avoid potential limitations on our regional economy.

The NES requires all regions to have no more than one high pollution day per year after 1 September 2013. The NES also includes woodburner standards. Environment Canterbury's Proposed Air Plan and the Clean Heat Project are two ways of working towards achieving this requirement.

Keeping warm

Canterbury residents can now easily access information about the rules for open fires, woodburners and other solid fuel burners.

The rules for keeping warm in Canterbury

If you live in Canterbury these are the rules for open fires, woodburners and other solid fuel burners.



Environment Canterbury
Your regional council

A new brochure, "The rules for keeping warm in Canterbury", has been produced by Environment Canterbury. The brochure includes information about properties inside and outside Christchurch Clean Air Zones, with some differences for those smaller or larger than 2 hectares. There is also information about saving money on running costs and what types of wood to use.

For a copy of the brochure please call Environment Canterbury's Customer Services on 03 353 9007 or 0800 324 636, or visit www.ecan.govt.nz/air.

What's happening with the Air Plan?

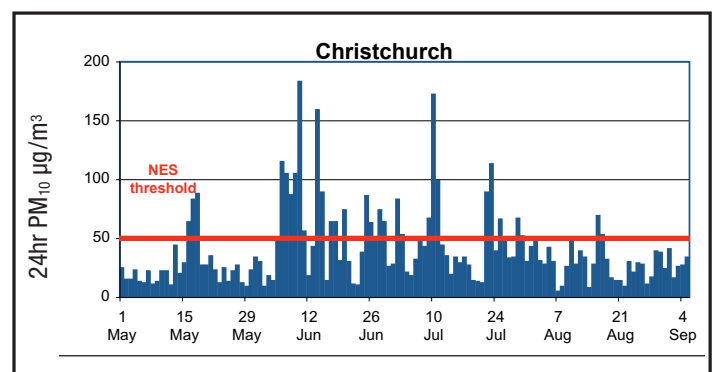
Submitters on Chapters 1-3 of the Proposed Canterbury Natural Resources Regional Plan (Proposed Air Plan) have had the opportunity to be heard. These hearings were adjourned in January 2006 and the Hearing Commissioners are expected to report to Council with their recommendations in late 2006. Council will then notify its decisions in 2007. If there are no appeals, the Air Plan will be treated as operative. The proposed ban on open fires in Christchurch, if approved in its current form, is likely to be in force in late 2007.

Winter 2006

The number of high pollution days that occur each winter depends on the weather as well as how much air pollution is produced. In Canterbury, weather conditions inland have meant calm conditions whereas coastal towns like Christchurch and Timaru had cloud and night-time breezes this winter. This resulted in fewer than average days of high air pollution in Christchurch and Timaru and more in Ashburton, Rangiora and Waimate in 2006. This winter Timaru, Ashburton, Rangiora and Waimate experienced their worst ever high pollution day with the highest daily concentration in Christchurch the worst since 2002 and in Kaiapoi since 2003.

Christchurch

In Christchurch there were 32 high pollution days to the end of September. This number is lower than average with the annual totals during the last five years ranging from 28 to 52 days. A reason for this is the combination of a reduction in burners being used, and more coastal cloud and night-time breezes this winter. While the total number of high pollution days may be lower, the worst day this year had a concentration of 183, which was the highest since 2002. An alternative analysis shows a downward trend when concentrations on cold, still nights during the previous ten years are compared.



Environment Canterbury

0800 EC INFO

0800 324 636

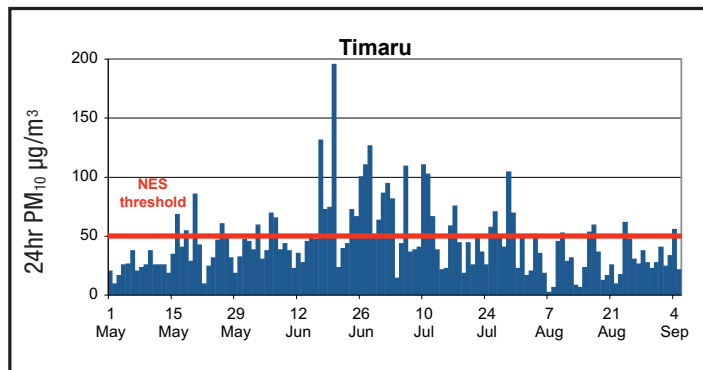
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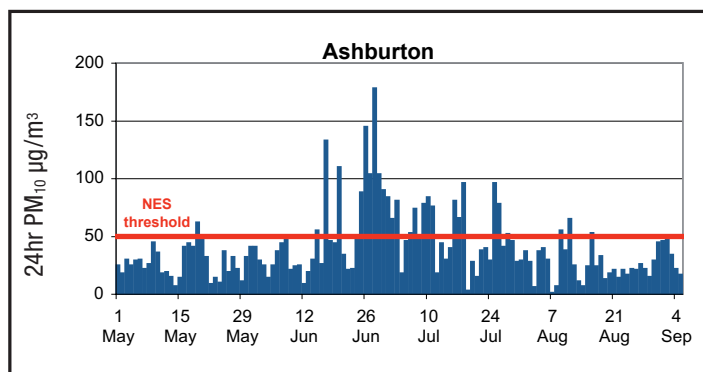
Timaru

Timaru experienced 36 high pollution days to the end of September. This number is lower than average with the annual totals during the last 5 years ranging from 33 to 51 days. While the total number of high pollution days was lower the worst day this year had a concentration of 195, which was the highest since monitoring began in 1997. The monitoring site was moved to Anzac Park this year, so direct comparisons to previous years are not possible.



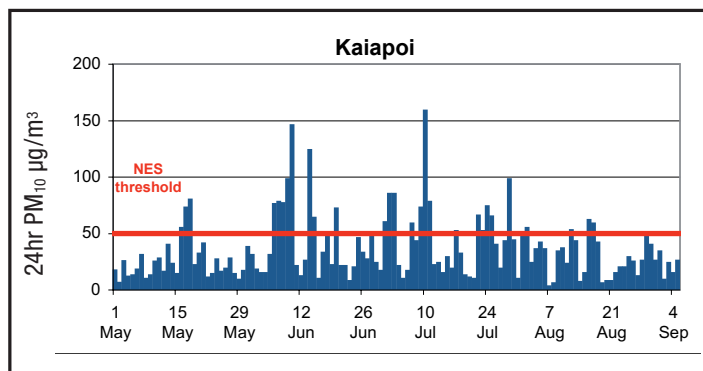
Ashburton

Ashburton had 28 high pollution days to the end of September, the highest number in the four years air pollution has been monitored in the town. In previous years, this number was between 13 and 18. The highest concentration this winter was 178 compared to the highest in previous years of 97.



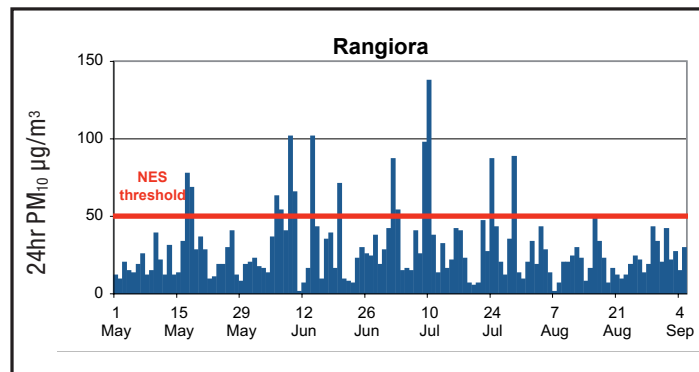
Kaiapo

Kaiapo had 28 high pollution days to the end of September. This compares to annual totals ranging from 17 to 40 during the previous five years. The highest concentration this winter was 159 which is more than has been measured since 2003.



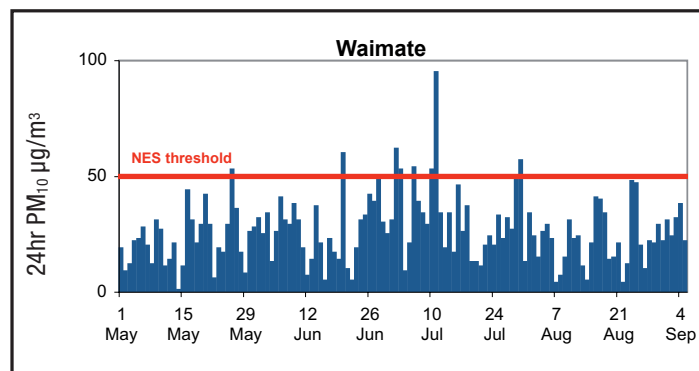
Rangiora

Rangiora had 14 high pollution days to the end of September. This is the highest number in the four years that Rangiora has been monitored. In previous years the number of high air pollution days ranged from 6 to 11 days. The highest concentration this winter was 136 compared to the highest in previous years of 99.



Waimate

Waimate experienced nine high pollution days to the end of September. In 2002 and 2003, when the town's air quality was last monitored, there were four (2002) high pollution days and six in 2003. The highest concentration was 95, compared to 51 in 2002 and 82 in 2003.



Geraldine to be monitored

Late this year a site will be established in Geraldine to conduct air quality monitoring. Environment Canterbury had previously monitored high pollution in the town during 2003 and 2004, when there were five and three high pollution days with the highest concentration of 63.

Guide to graph: NES is the National Environmental Standards threshold and is set at 50 micrograms of particulate per cubic metre of air which should not be breached more than once a year by 2013.