

# winter air report

Christchurch

October 2006

Christchurch's smog creates major difficulties for thousands of people with respiratory problems and ruins the image of our clean, green city. The source of the problem, however, is not motor vehicles or industry – 80% of the polluted air we breathe is estimated to come from solid fuel burning for home heating.

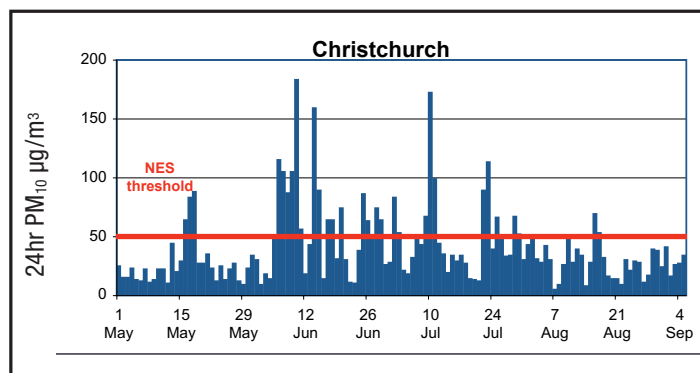
## 2013 and beyond

Winter air pollution from home fires is a real problem. It damages the image of Christchurch 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.

## Update

The summer months are a great time to get clean heating installed in your home before the onset of next winter. The Clean Heat Project has just had its 12,000 home assessed. Over 3,000 more have registered for a free home assessment while close to 7,000 have already had their cleaner heating and insulation installed. The most popular forms of cleaner heating to date are heat pumps (60%), followed by low emission fuel burners (21%) and pellet fires (17%).

The Clean Heat Project was established three years ago to assist Christchurch people to voluntarily move to cleaner heating and insulation and to enjoy a warmer home in the process. Environment Canterbury has major funding incentives available that will save you hundreds, if not thousands, of dollars on insulating your home and installing more efficient heating technologies.



**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.

## Winter 2006

In Christchurch, air quality was monitored in St Albans, Burnside, and Woolston and at a new roadside investigation site, which was established in Riccarton Road in July. Altogether there were 32 days when the PM<sub>10</sub> threshold was breached (24-hour average greater than 50 µg/m<sup>3</sup>) in the Christchurch air shed from January 2006.

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 may be the reduction in burners being used, but is most likely to be because there was 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.

On 6 and 9 June, the carbon monoxide (CO) threshold was breached in Christchurch when there were very high PM<sub>10</sub> concentrations. On these days there were seven hours when the 8-hour average was greater than 10 mg/m<sup>3</sup>, and one is permissible by the NES. The highest CO concentration last year was 8, with 9.8 measured in both 2003 and 2004.

## Keeping warm

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

A new brochure, "The rules for keeping warm in Canterbury", has been produced by Environment Canterbury. The brochure includes maps with the two Christchurch Clean Air Zones and also information about properties inside and outside these zones. 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](http://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.

## Environment Canterbury

0800 EC INFO

0800 324 636

[www.ecan.govt.nz/air](http://www.ecan.govt.nz/air)

[ecinfo@ecan.govt.nz](mailto:ecinfo@ecan.govt.nz)

