



Air Quality

Good air quality is essential to our wellbeing

There is a direct link between air pollution and health effects. The presence of contaminants in the air can have negative health and nuisance effects on people, property and the environment. Here in Tasman, the main air quality issue is winter pollution due to wood burning.

Wood burners used for home heating and outdoor fires associated with the burning of garden waste and land management practices contribute to this air pollution. The calm, clear and cold winter days don't allow smoke to rise and disperse. Instead, the smoke sits low to the ground.

People with pre-existing respiratory and heart conditions, diabetes, the young, and older people are particularly vulnerable to air pollution. These tiny airborne particles of pollution, known as particulate matter (PM10 and PM2.5) can cause a range of health effects.



In the short term, particulate matter mainly affects people's lungs and heart, ranging from reduced lung function, impaired activities (e.g. sick days off school or work), more doctor and hospital visits. Long term effects are reduced life expectancy.

Health-check: Tasman's air quality

The Council has tools in place via our current resource management plan to manage discharges to air, including specific rules for the Richmond Airshed. Monitoring reveals air quality in Richmond is good most of the time, but during winter we see an increase in smoke pollution due to wood burning. The Richmond Airshed has more rules than the wider district because it does not meet the Air Quality National Environmental Standards for PM10 due to winter exceedances.

To better understand if there are air quality issues in our other towns and local centres, we have recently initiated an ongoing monitoring programme with an initial focus on Motueka.

Early results suggest Motueka does have an air quality issue. Some locations monitored showed smoke concentrations greater than national air quality guidelines allow and there is also evidence that rural burning in the surrounding countryside makes a significant short-term contribution to poor air quality locally.

Toward improvements

We will work with our communities to design solutions for improving our air quality, while enabling people to afford to live in warm, dry and healthy homes.

We will also be looking at outdoor burning practices, while enabling our land-based industries to undertake essential land management, for example orchards, horticulture and forestry. This will involve looking at alternatives to burning vegetation waste, or better practices that can be used to ensure that burning takes place outside of late autumn and winter when air pollution is at its worst.

How you can help improve local air quality

We all have a role to reduce the amount of pollutants we put into the air.

We have helpful advice on our website including best practice guides for home heating and outdoor burning (www.tasman.govt.nz).

Applying good practices when burning wood can significantly reduce the amount of smoke produced, ensure more efficient burning and in the case of home heating is more cost effective. Remember to never burn treated or painted timber as this exposes yourself and the environment to dangerous chemicals.

For outdoor burning, don't forget to check if you need a fire permit from Fire and Emergency NZ (www.checkitsalright.nz).



Get involved

Looking ahead, through the process to create a new Tasman Environment Plan, we will work with our communities to design solutions for improving our air quality, while enabling people to afford to live in warm, dry, and healthy homes. We will also look at how we can move away from outdoor burning, while enabling land-based industries to undertake essential land management practices.

If you're interested in helping us improve air quality in Tasman, sign up online (www.environmentplan.tasman.govt.nz).

We will keep you informed as we progress the Aorere ki uta, Aoere ki tai - Tasman Environment Plan and provide regular opportunities for your input and feedback on the matters that are important to you.

Contact details

Web: www.environmentplan.tasman.govt.nz

Email: environmentplan@tasman.govt.nz

Post: 189 Queen Street, Private Bag 4, Richmond, Nelson, 7050

Phone: 03 543 8400

