

**What do you think are the best value actions listed in the statement that are likely to help improve future air quality?**

The list of actions in the statement area good start.

Improved air quality monitoring is essential so that the quality of our air is comprehensively measured and understood. Challenges to Victoria's air quality cannot be accurately managed and dealt with unless the state of the air is known.

Preventing and reducing the occurrence of air pollution are the most effective and efficient ways of achieving good air quality. Having a complete understanding of the causes of air pollution is critical in order to avoid creating air pollution.

**How would you build on or vary these actions?**

Preventing and reducing the occurrence of air pollution need more emphasis.

Air pollution caused by emissions from post-logging fires needs to be included. In April and May this year the Poor Air Quality Index of some areas of Melbourne reached 901. This followed industrial clearfell logging burns. The list of planned burns on Forest Fire Management Victoria's website showed that, at the beginning of May, more than half the burns either lit or planned to be lit across the Central Highlands of Victoria and surrounding areas were on logging coupes. Up to 400 tonnes of vegetation biomass per hectare is burnt after industrial clearfell logging compared to 9 tonnes/hectare in planned (fuel reduction) burns. This significant air pollution caused by industrial clearfell logging must be avoided.

The practice of clearfell logging our native forest assets is endorsed by government and the air pollution that burning its residue produces is a health issue for vulnerable Victorians (elderly, ill, young and asthma sufferers). Native forests also provide fresh air, enhance water quality and quantity and provide respite and recreation. Our native ash forests are the most carbon dense forests in the world and the carbon should remain sequestered in them rather than releasing it by logging and burning them. Climate change will have devastating effects on human health if immediate action to reduce its impact is not undertaken.

Industrial clearfell logging with its associated burning must be avoided and existing supplies of sustainable plantation timber be used to replace it.

**Do you have any suggestions for further actions?**

A consistent, transparent, coordinated, whole of government approach to preventing air pollution and its harm to our community and environment is needed. The strategy must be focused on minimising and preventing pollution, not simply measuring and managing it.

The Environment Protection Act 1970 needs strengthening to enable protection of threatened species and habitat (native forests). Tougher air pollution laws and standards are needed to prevent pollution.

**Are there any air quality actions you believe should be avoided? Why?**

Current practices such as conducting post-logging burns of large volumes of vegetation biomass in the form of tree heads, branches, bark and downed understory vegetation need to be avoided.

**Are there particular areas of air quality (either pollution sources or geographic regions) you think the government should target for improvement? Why?**

Pollutants with the largest impacts and the potential and emerging pollutants with the largest impacts on our community need to be targeted by government. Government should:

- Publish independently evaluated potential pollution impacts of all proposed significant projects and agreements as part of an independent and transparent process of assessment.
- Increase monitoring so that pollution data is immediately accessible to community when industrial logging burns are planned.

**Do you have other suggestions on how to secure a clean air future?**

Burning waste (including industrial clearfell logging burns) should never be considered; these practices are not sustainable and are detrimental to air quality and health.

No new coal fired power stations. More effective, efficient and non-polluting sources of energy exist.

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