

I would like to draw the government's attention to the air quality in Melbourne on May 1, 2018. It proved to be a smoky day in my neighbourhood of Carlton North, however the Mooroolbark air monitoring station in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne recorded a reading of 901 on the Poor Air Quality Index – one of many stations to record dangerously poor air quality that day. To put this in perspective, the EPA advises that Air Quality readings at 151 are considered 'unhealthy', at a level where everyone may experience health effects, and members of sensitive groups may experience more serious health effects.

Forest Fire Management reported this astronomically poor Air Quality reading to be the result of planned burns and wood heaters. However, Chris Taylor and David Lindenmayer, in an article published in *The Conversation*, showed that much of the smoke in Melbourne on May 1 should have been attributed to clearfell logging burns. The researchers noted that logging coupe burns involve far greater biomass consumption per hectare on average than planned burns – approximately 140 tonnes per hectare compared to 15 tonnes per hectare – and therefore generate significantly more smoke. At the beginning of May 2018, 77 of the 119 burns that had been lit or were planned to be lit in the Central Highlands and surrounding areas were on logging coupes.

In the proposed Victoria Air Quality Strategy, I call on the state government to provide the following actions:

- Deliver greater transparency regarding the cause of poor air quality in Victoria's urban and regional areas.
- Reduce the scale and number of logging coupe burns in Victoria due to their potentially catastrophic implications for Victorian citizens, particularly those sensitive to poor air quality.
- Take steps to phase out industrial logging practices in Victoria's central highlands and surrounding areas.

Regards,
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