



NEPC Report on the Implementation of the
Ambient Air Quality NEPM

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PART 1 — GENERAL INFORMATION

NEPM details

Title: National Environment Protection (Ambient Air Quality) Measure

Made by Council: 26 June 1998

Commencement date: 8 July 1998 (advertised in *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette* no. GN 27, 8 July 1998, p. 2211)

NEPM goal (or purpose)

The goal of the National Environment Protection (Ambient Air Quality) Measure is set out in clause 6 of the Measure as follows:

6. National environment protection goal

The national environment protection goal of this Measure is to achieve the National Environment Protection Standards as assessed in accordance with the monitoring protocol (Part 4) within ten years from commencement to the extent specified in Schedule 2 column 5.

Desired environmental outcomes

The desired environmental outcome of the National Environment Protection (Ambient Air Quality) Measure is set out in clause 5 of the Measure as follows:

5. Desired environmental outcome

The desired environmental outcome of this Measure is ambient air quality that allows for the adequate protection of human health and well-being.

Evaluation criteria

The assessment of the effectiveness of the National Environment Protection (Ambient Air Quality) Measure is based on the following criteria.

General criteria (specified in the NEPC Implementation Reporting Protocol)

- progress in implementing the NEPM
- compliance by parties bound by the NEPM with NEPM protocols and/or other NEPM reporting requirements
- progress towards achievement of the NEPM goal, the desired environmental outcomes and any NEPM standards
- issues arising that reflect on the efficiency and simplicity of NEPM administration.

PART 2 – IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEPM, AND ANY SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

This part provides a summary of jurisdictional reports on implementation, discussion of any issues of concern raised by jurisdictions, and Council's overall assessment of the implementation of the NEPM.

Legislative, regulatory and administrative framework

Table 3: Summary of implementation frameworks

Jurisdiction	Summary of implementation frameworks
Commonwealth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Commonwealth is not required by the NEPM to undertake direct monitoring.
New South Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NEPM is implemented under the Protection of the Environment Operations (Clean Air) Regulation 2002 and through programs in the NSW government's 25-year Air Quality Management Plan, 'Action for Air'.
Victoria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The key legislative instruments made under the <i>Environment Protection Act 1970</i> are the State Environment Protection Policy (Ambient Air Quality) and the State Environment Protection Policy (Air Quality Management).
Queensland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NEPM is implemented under the <i>Environmental Protection Act 1994</i>, the Environmental Protection (Air) Policy 1997 and through programs in the 'South-east Queensland Regional Plan 2005–26'.



Jurisdiction	Summary of implementation frameworks
Western Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The NEPM is implemented under the <i>National Environment Protection Council (Western Australia) Act 1996</i> and through programs in the ‘Perth Air Quality Management Plan’.
South Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The NEPM operates as an environment protection policy under the <i>Environment Protection Act 1993</i>.
Tasmania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The NEPM is a state policy under the <i>State Policies and Projects Act 1993</i>. The Environment Protection Policy (Air Quality) 2004 was made in December 2004.
Australian Capital Territory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The NEPM is implemented through the <i>Environment Protection Act 1997</i> and the Environment Protection Regulation 1997.
Northern Territory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The key legislative instruments are the <i>Waste Management and Pollution Control Act 1998</i> and the <i>National Environment Protection Council (Northern Territory) Act 2004</i>.

Council assessment of implementation frameworks

Jurisdictions have implemented the NEPM through their legislative and policy frameworks. Some jurisdictions have developed comprehensive management plans which are leading to improved monitoring data and air quality.

Implementation activities

The NEPC initiated the preliminary work on the review of the ozone standard for the Ambient Air Quality NEPM review. The review of the sulfur dioxide standard was finalised in this reporting year. The NEPC has commenced work on the first stage of the review of the Ambient Air Quality NEPM — the preparation of an issues paper which will be released for public consultation in the next reporting year.

Table 4: Summary of Jurisdictional implementation activities

Jurisdiction	Summary of implementation activities
Commonwealth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Commonwealth focused on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – chairing the Peer Review Committee – completing a draft report on the Fine Particle Composition Study – completing a review of the <i>Fuel Quality Standards Act 2000</i> – continuing work on research and development initiatives relating to NEPM standards – funding the \$2.4 million ‘Cycle Connect’ grants program – expanding ‘The National Woodheater Audit Program’ with the states and territories.
New South Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Department of Environment and Conservation focused on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – commencing a review of ‘Action for Air’ – finalising activities to reduce emissions from commercial and domestic sources funded by the Clean Air Fund – operating a trial of devices for the diesel retrofit demonstration program.



Jurisdiction	Summary of implementation activities
Victoria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment Protection Authority Victoria focused on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – eco-maintenance training for diesel mechanics – media campaigns on vehicle efficiency and reducing woodheater smoke – releasing the Waste Management Policy (Solid Fuel Heating) in July 2004 – establishing two new campaign monitoring programs and concluding three others – continuing the use of the mobile air monitoring laboratory to monitor ‘hot-spots’.
Queensland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Queensland Environmental Protection Agency focused on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – monitoring in six of the ten regions identified in its Ambient Air Quality monitoring plan – the commissioning of PM_{2.5} reference samplers at two sites.
Western Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Department of Environment continued: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – releasing the Progress Report to June 2004 on implementation of the Perth Air Quality and Management Plan – improving community access to air quality monitoring data via the Air Quality web-page. • Under the Western Australian monitoring plan, there were to be nine monitoring sites consisting of a mixture of performance, trend and campaign stations. In 2004, six sites were operational with a further four stations pending installation.
South Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment Protection Authority South Australia focused on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – upgrading of the Elizabeth monitoring site and establishing a campaign monitoring site at Whyalla – developing a framework for implementing smoky vehicle legislation – amending the <i>Environment Protection Act 1993</i> to facilitate greater involvement of local government in air quality issues for unlicensed activities – releasing a draft code of practice for the environmentally responsible use of wood heaters – continuing use of a mobile station for investigative air monitoring.
Tasmania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment focused on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – developing new regulations for backyard burning and domestic solid fuel heating – amending the Tasmanian Air Monitoring Plan and upgrading the monitoring network – implementing the Tasmanian Air Quality Database – upgrading its modelling capabilities to develop comprehensive models for Launceston and Hobart – public education programs on efficient woodheater use.
Australian Capital Territory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chief Minister’s Department (Arts, Heritage and Environment) continued monitoring in accordance with the Australian Capital Territory monitoring plan.



Jurisdiction	Summary of implementation activities
Northern Territory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Department of Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts focused on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – continuing the monitoring of particulate matter as part of the three-year Australian Research Council Bushfire Smoke Project – continuing monitoring at three stations in accordance with the Northern Territory monitoring plan.

Council evaluation and assessment of jurisdictional implementation activities

In this reporting year, jurisdictions have:

- continued to work to obtain or maintain National Association of Testing Authorities accreditation of NEPM monitoring activities
- maintained monitoring sites and extended existing networks in accordance with their monitoring plans
- upgraded networks to capture PM_{2.5} monitoring data
- continued to work with the Commonwealth on research and development initiatives relating to ambient air quality
- maintained a focus on raising public awareness about air quality, including the display of information on web sites
- strengthened legislation and regional air quality strategies
- focused on woodheater auditing, education and replacement programs
- continued to work with industry to reduce hazardous emissions
- continued to participate in project teams and working groups associated with the NEPM.

The above activities demonstrate that jurisdictions are committed to achieving the goal of the NEPM.

The PM_{2.5} Equivalence Program is being gradually implemented by jurisdictions. It will enable an assessment of the accuracy and precision of other PM_{2.5} monitoring methods in respect of monitoring data obtained using the reference method. Data will be collected over a three-year period and reported in due course.

PART 3 — ASSESSMENT OF NEPM EFFECTIVENESS

Monitoring results indicate that, in most cases, the NEPM standards are being met. Occasionally, some jurisdictions have not demonstrated compliance with the NEPM standards. The major causes of non-compliance are natural events such as bushfires and dust storms, the impact of vehicle use associated with urban expansion, and localised industrial sources.

Monitoring data collected over the life of the NEPM are assisting jurisdictions in the development of programs to improve air quality. However, some jurisdictions have expressed concern that for specific NEPM standards the 2008 goal might not be achievable.

To fulfil the requirements of the NEPM, jurisdictional monitoring regimes involve a network of sites. Not all criteria pollutants are measured at every monitoring site, nor is this required by the NEPM. In some jurisdictions, the monitoring results for criteria pollutants such as lead and sulfur dioxide are significantly below the NEPM standard and this has allowed cessation of monitoring in these jurisdictions.

PART 4 — REPORTING REQUIRED BY THE NEPM

Jurisdictions have submitted reports in accordance with clause 18 of the NEPM. These reports have been prepared in accordance with the Peer Review Committee's *Technical Paper 8 Annual Reports for the Ambient Air Quality NEPM*.

Annual compliance reports have been reviewed for national consistency and technical rigour by the Peer Review Committee. The reports provided clear and valuable information. The Peer Review Committee reported that the level of consistency across all the reports continues to be high.

More detailed monitoring data are available in jurisdictional compliance reports which are available from <www.ephc.gov.au>.



PART 5 — REPORTS ON IMPLEMENTATION BY JURISDICTIONS

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