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# Valley bid to breathe easier

## Call to ban polluting industry

By Peter Reynolds

THE Tuggeranong Community Council has called on the ACT Government to limit the amount of industrial development near Tuggeranong in a bid to improve the air quality in the valley.

The issue of air quality is one that is continuing to trouble Tuggeranong residents. The main concern in recent years had been the smoke emitted from wood burning heaters.

The council had previously had a stance that all wood burning heaters be phased out within the next six years, however this was dropped last year so a new more comprehensive approach to air quality could be developed.

The environmental and planning sub-committee of the council presented this new approach to council members last week, and along with rejecting any development that will add to pollution problems in the valley, called for an air quality monitoring station to be introduced into southern Tuggeranong and for stronger

programs and initiatives to be designed to encourage people and businesses to reduce their pollution levels.

The sub-committee's chairman Dug Holmes said an inversion layer, created by Tuggeranong's unique topography, trapped pollution in the valley on cold and still days.

He said increased heavy industrial development in areas such as Hume would only worsen the situation.

"We've heard that Hume will be having heavy industry expansion, there's a bitumen processing plant that's just been put in, and there's a gas fired power station and data centre project that's been proposed," Mr Holmes said.

"All these things that are happening around us are contributing to our air quality issues.

"We are opposed to any developments that will add to air pollution levels in the Tuggeranong Valley."

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## Second air quality station needed

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Mr Holmes said a secondary monitoring station, in addition to the one at Monash, was needed in an area such as Conder or Gordon, which was more deeply affected by poor air quality.

"The current one (monitoring station) at Monash is not deep in the inversion layer so the readings are always going to be lighter," he said.

"We would also like it to monitor the pm2.5 levels, which are the particulate matter that gets down deep into your lungs, that you can't filter out. The station at Monash monitors this and according to the environmental pollution agency, this is being exceeded about 20 times a year."

A spokeswoman from the ACT Government's Environment and Sustainable Development Directorate said significant industrial development was already subject to an air quality assessment when submitting a development application and may also require an environmental authorisation under the Environment Protection Act.

"Any development of industrial style facilities would require appropriate air quality modeling to ensure the facility met national standards for air emissions, and would have minimal impact on air quality in the residential areas of Tuggeranong," she said.

"While heavy industry is permitted in Hume, the largest facility in the area, the sawmill, closed in 2007."

The spokeswoman said the Government was working on establishing a second monitoring station for the ACT, but in the north of Canberra, with the preferred location in the Belconnen District.

She said to increase the appeal of the wood heater replacement scheme, its duration has been increased significantly over the last few years and the rebate for gas installations has been increased from \$600 to \$800.

The Directorate also received funding in the 2010-11 budget to develop an increased public awareness campaign which will specifically target wood heaters. That campaign will be run in autumn and winter 2012.

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