Monitoring is one of the tools used to improve our understanding of air pollution patterns and trends on the ACT community. The ACT Government has been undertaking ambient air quality monitoring in Canberra since the early 1990’s.

The ACT Air Quality Report 2018 presents the results of ambient air quality monitoring in the ACT for 2018 and assesses the results in accordance with the requirements of the National Environment Protection (Ambient Air Quality) Measure (AAQ NEPM).

A summary of the 2018 monitoring results is:

* Canberra’s air quality was generally good, with no exceedances of the AAQ NEPM standards for carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide or ozone at any of the ACT’s monitoring stations;
* The Air Quality Index (AQI) was in the “very good”, “good” or “fair” category for over 98 percent of the time in Canberra. For more information about AQI, please visit the [Health Directorate website](https://www.health.act.gov.au/about-our-health-system/population-health/environmental-monitoring-air-water/air-quality/air);
* The major impacts on Canberra’s air quality came from the accumulation of particles from hazard reduction burns, dust storms and wood heaters; and
* Due to the prolonged drought conditions in 2018, more frequent dust storms resulted in particle levels, PM10 (particles with a diameter of 10 micrometres or less) in particular, significantly above the standards across Canberra, highlighting the impacts that climate change can have on air quality.

The ACT Government acknowledges that woodsmoke remains the major problem impacting Canberra’s air quality and will continue to implement an integrated program to address this including:

* implementing the ‘Burn Right Tonight’ public education campaign;
* regulating of the sale of firewood and wood heaters, including the introduction of stricter emission and efficiency standards in September 2019; and
* administering the Wood Heater Replacement Program.

In 2019, there will be an increased emphasis on how to clean and correctly operate wood heaters so they can perform efficiently and reduce air emissions.