

6 AIR QUALITY

ISSUE

The air quality in parts of Timaru and some other urban and rural areas is degraded.

Explanation

Adverse air quality is apparent over parts of the District especially during winter. In urban areas where air quality is most degraded there is potential for adverse effects on health. Burning of stubble, scrub and tussock in rural areas can create a smoke pall which can reduce visibility.

The management of air quality is a Regional Council function under the Resource Management Act. However in preparing the Plan the Council was made aware that air quality is an important issue for many people in this District. The District Council can have a role on air quality management through its control of the location of different land uses, by promoting policies to the community, by assisting the Regional Council in carrying out those policies, and by having its own bylaws controlling local nuisance effects.

OBJECTIVE

- (1) Reducing the adverse effects associated with land uses that affect air quality and to improve air quality throughout the District.

Principal Reason

To address community concerns for improved air quality.

POLICIES

- (1) To discourage all non domestic activities which discharge gas and/or particulates to the air from locating in residential and other sensitive areas.

Explanation and Principal Reason

To maintain and enhance air quality in these areas.

- (2) To encourage noxious activities to mitigate their effects or to locate in less sensitive* areas.

Explanation and Principal Reason

To provide opportunities for noxious activities to locate in the District while protecting adjacent sensitive activities.

* “Sensitive” areas of the District include: residential areas, areas where large numbers of people gather, and areas with conservation values.

- (3) To prevent urban residential development from encroaching upon areas where discharges to air have a significant adverse effect.

Explanation and Principal Reason

Separating incompatible activities helps to reduce the adverse effects produced by industrial activities. Under the Resource Management Act those responsible for causing the adverse effect are responsible for avoiding, remedying or mitigating that effect.

- (4) To control the location of land use activities producing adverse effects on air quality, from locating in close proximity to residential activities or where large numbers of people gather.

When considering applications for resource consents Council shall consider the cumulative effect of similar existing and potential operations when deciding whether the proposed location is acceptable.

Explanation and Principal Reason

Provides some means of controlling the location of land use activities where they adversely impact on air quality and takes into account other activities producing similar adverse effects.

METHODS

- (1) Including rules in the District Plan requiring activities that impact on air quality to locate in areas less sensitive* to degraded air quality, such as industrial areas and rural locations (which are not closely settled or have areas with high natural values) (see Rules for Rural 1 and 2 Zones and Industrial Zones).

Principal Reason

Concentrates those activities producing adverse effects in specified areas strategically sited to reduce the impact of any adverse effects on other sensitive activities.

- (2) Supporting Canterbury Regional Council promotion of standards or services which reduce the impact of activities that adversely affect air quality, e.g. provision of public transport, vehicle emission standards.

Principal Reason

Reduces the impact of the adverse effects of these activities on neighbouring activities.

- (3) Establishing separation of commercial/industrial areas where discharges occur adjacent to sensitive areas.

Principal Reason

Provides additional protection to adjacent activities from noxious activities.

- (4) Consider those rural activities, where adverse odour or other air quality effects can occur, subject to a resource consent and/or performance standards, so that the impact on the neighbourhood, (including the potential cumulative effect of similar operations), must be taken into account in deciding whether the proposed location is acceptable.

Principal Reason

Provides opportunities for activities where adverse effects can occur to establish in suitable locations providing conditions on resource consents can be met. In many cases joint consideration of land use consents by the Council and discharge consents administered by the Regional Council will be required.

- (5) Use education and advocacy to promote opportunities for improving air quality and also providing guidelines to alert the public (particularly those building new homes or altering existing homes) to the opportunity to install approved burners, alternative heating systems, and other energy efficient measures which help improve air quality.

Principal Reason

To increase public awareness of the adverse effects of emissions including those produced by domestic wood/coal fire furnaces/open fires and the opportunities for avoiding or reducing such adverse effects.

- (6) Using bylaws to address nuisance smoke produced from residential properties.

Principal Reason

To address nuisance effects of smoke from burning of domestic rubbish in residential areas.

ANTICIPATED ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOME

- (1) Maintains or improves air quality in residential and other sensitive areas of the District.
- (2) Localises adverse impacts on air quality.

MONITORING

- (1) Compliance with rules, conditions of resource consents, bylaws and other relevant legislation.
- (2) Review the results of the Canterbury Regional Council's monitoring of air quality.
- (3) Assess effectiveness of policy in eight years.