Wynnum Citizen Science Air Monitoring Project

Mid project report



Prepared by: Community Engagement, Department of Environment and Science.

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September 2019

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Introduction

In 2018, the Community Engagement team from the Department of Environment and Science (DES) engaged with community group Clean Air Wynnum (CAW) to develop a citizen science project with the focus of air quality monitoring and community engagement. To address community concerns, the Wynnum Citizen Science Air Monitoring Project (the project) was developed in collaboration with CAW and Bayside Creeks Catchment Group with the aim of engaging community to investigate air quality and to improve understanding of air quality monitoring and associated standards. To empower the community, CAW participants were active in project design, sampling methods, and site and device selection with guidance provided by DES air quality experts. By working collaboratively with the community in aspects of project design, methods, site sampling and data analysis, it is also the objective to increase confidence and transparency of DES monitoring processes and environmental regulation. The project aims to address the following questions in the Wynnum area:

- 1) Is the air quality considered good?
- 2) Is the dust present in homes coal dust?
- 3) Is the dust considered a nuisance?

To address these questions, the CAW participants elected to sample particulate matter, dust composition and dust deposition.

The project involves CAW participants using low-cost particle sensors to measure PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀ in real-time and assess against national air quality standards. The participants have also undertaken deposition sampling during November 2018 and May 2019 to assess dust deposition (nuisance), and dust composition analysis using surface wipe and dust deposition samples to determine the types of dust present in Wynnum homes. The project commenced data collection in December 2018 (particulate matter) and will run for twelve months.

This report outlines the project design, methods and results for the Wynnum Citizen Science Air Monitoring Project at the midpoint of the project following seven months of data collection. This report also provides a comparison of data collected by project participants with industry and DES data to determine any correlations or similar trends.



Project design

Monitoring sites

The project area consists of twelve monitoring sites across Wynnum, Wynnum West, Hemmant, Tingalpa and Murarrie that currently house an air monitoring device (Figure 1). Sites were selected by CAW based on their proximity to local train lines and high traffic areas, where there was particular concern for dust pollution and where there was suitable access to a Wi-Fi and power connection.

Five of the twelve sites have undertaken dust deposition sampling during either November 2018 or May 2019 to quantify dust deposition rates and dust composition. Another five sites were selected for surface wipe sampling for dust composition, which was conducted in July (one sample) and November 2019 (six samples).

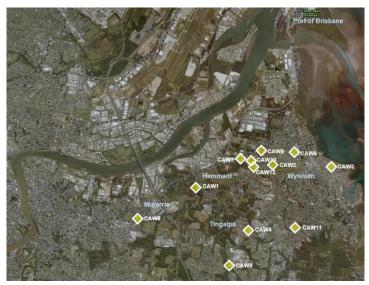


Figure 1: Project area showing twelve device locations in Wynnum and surrounding suburbs.

Air monitoring devices

The project is using two types of low-cost, portable laser particle counters that measure $PM_{2.5}$ and PM_{10} from smoke, dust or other particulate air pollution. Ten devices within the project are PurpleAir devices that use a fan to draw air past a fine laser beam, scattering light according to particle size (Figure 2). This scattered light is detected by a photodiode which categorises particles into different sizes with equivalent diameters of 0.3, 0.5, 1.0, 2.5, 5 and 10 micrometres (μ m). During the sampling period (80 seconds), the particle number concentration for each optical diameter is recorded and then converted to particle mass concentrations in a cubic metre of air (μ g/m³). These concentrations can be viewed in real-time on the PurpleAir webpage¹. Two devices are ArcHUB sensors (Figure 3) that also measure $PM_{2.5}$ and PM_{10} , although do not display data in real-time. Device installation commenced in December 2018, with the last devices installed in April 2019.

While both device types are considered reliable, given their low cost they are not equipped with additional components and gauges commonly attached to high-cost sensors that increase accuracy and ensure differentiation between aerosols (fog) and particles. In foggy conditions, the PurpleAir devices may measure fog (aerosols) as particles and therefore overestimate PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀. High-cost devices are equipped with 'sample heaters' that heat up the air sample and enable the device to differentiate between fog and particulate matter.



Figure 2: PurpleAir device.

¹available from https://www.purpleair.com/map#11.44/-27.4535/153.1606



Figure 3: ArcHUB device.

Particulate matter

A key indicator for air quality is particulate matter (PM), which refers to airborne particles that may be hazardous to human health or cause a nuisance at elevated levels. Adverse health effects are closely associated with particle size; smaller particles pose a greater risk as they are more likely to enter the respiratory system and cause health problems. Airborne particles are therefore commonly measured in two different size distributions, being $PM_{2.5}$ and PM_{10} . These measures refer to particles that are less than 2.5 micrometres (μ m) in diameter and less than 10 micrometres respectively. Fine $PM_{2.5}$ particles are generally a result of combustion processes, whereas PM_{10} particles are course and are generated by either combustion or non-combustion processes. To safeguard human health and the natural environment, national air quality standards help to manage short or long-term air quality issues at local, national and regional levels.

To determine any potential health risk, the project will measure particulate matter over twelve months and assess results against standards outlined in the *National Environment Protection (Ambient Air Quality) Measure* (NEPM)².

The NEPM outlines national standards for PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀ to safeguard human health and are based on 24-hour and 12-month averages (Table 1). While ambient air quality must be compliant with average standards, the NEPM allows for exceedances of the 24-hour averages for exceptional events such as bushfires or continental scale windblown dust that may adversely affect air quality at a particular location.

The concentrations of PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀ are reported in µg/m³ (micrograms per cubic meter of air).

Particulate matter data collection commenced in December 2018, and will continue for twelve months.

Table 1: NEPM criteria for PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀ concentrations.

Particle size	Time period	Standard
PM _{2.5}	24 hours	25µg/m³
	12 months	8 µg/m³
PM ₁₀	24 hours	50μg/m³
	12 months	25µg/m³

²National Environment Protection (Ambient Air Quality) Measure https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2016C00215

Dust deposition

Dust deposition is a measure of how much dust settles over a given area and time under the influence of gravity (dustfall rate) using a dust gauge.

Dust gauges consist of a 2-litre collection bottle and funnel mounted on a PVC stand, designed to collect airborne particles that settle on the internal surface area of the funnel (Figure 4). When samples are collected, insoluble dust is washed from the bottle then filtered, dried and weighed. Dust deposition is measured in **mg/m²/day** (milligrams per square meter per day).

A guideline of **120mg/m²/day** averaged over one month is commonly used as an indication of dust nuisance³.

Dust deposition sampling was conducted at four monitoring sites during November 2018, and four during May 2019. Dust samples collected from the gauges were also analysed under microscope to identify the particle types, and potential sources of dust.



Figure 4: Dust gauge bottle and funnel.

Dust composition

Particle composition analyses using electron or stereomicroscopy assist in identifying particle types and likely sources of dust. Dust samples are examined through a microscope and the proportions of particle types are measured based on their surface area coverage. This analysis method identifies a range of black-coloured particles (e.g. coal, soot and rubber dust), mineral dust particles (e.g. soil, rock, cement and glass), biological particles (e.g. insects and plants) and other general organic particles (e.g. wood, fibres, and plastics). Compositional analyses can also be an indicator of particle source. For example, black-coloured dust may consist of various particle types such as rubber dust from tyre wear, diesel or petrol emissions from transport, coal or mould.

Surface wipe samples were collected in July and November 2018 at five of the twelve sites on various surfaces (e.g. table tops, chairs, eaves etc.). This was done by wiping the surface to collect a sample of the particles that had been deposited to determine the composition of the particles. While the sample does help identify what types of particles have settled, the history of the sample is unknown (i.e. how long it has been there).

Samples collected in dust gauges during November 2019 and May 2019 were also analysed to determine particle types. Unlike the surface wipe samples, the history of these samples are known as they were collected during a specific month.

Samples were analysed independently by University of Queensland Materials Performance Laboratory (UQMP).

³Guideline - Application requirements for activities with impacts to air https://environment.des.qld.gov.au/assets/documents/regulation/era-gl-air-impacts.pdf

Departmental and industry monitoring

Departmental monitoring

The department is responsible for ambient air monitoring and industry regulation of air quality and emissions in Queensland. DES Science Division has an extensive air monitoring network in South East Queensland, consisting of 17 stations, including two stations near Wynnum⁴. Monitoring stations in the bayside area continually measure PM_{2.5}, PM₁₀, nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxide, total suspended particles, and meteorological data. The closest DES monitoring network to the project area is located in Cannon Hill (Figure 5).

Industry monitoring

The Port of Brisbane is located north-east of Wynnum on Fisherman Island, and handles the import and export of products, including coal. The Port of Brisbane (POB) undertakes a real-time air quality monitoring program to measure PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀ concentrations⁵. POB has three monitoring stations with the closest to the project area located on Osprey Drive (Figure 5).

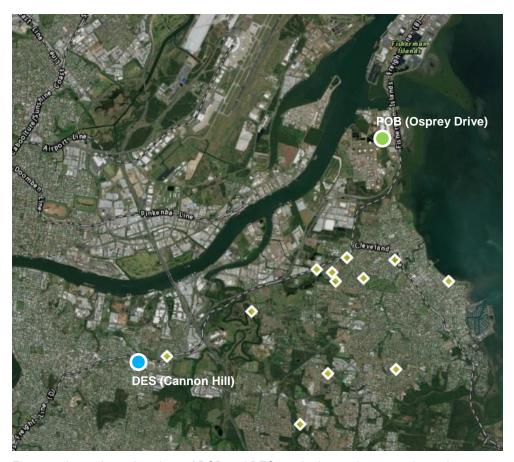


Figure 5: Approximate locations of POB and DES monitoring stations near the project area.

⁴available from https://www.qld.gov.au/environment/pollution/monitoring/air/air-monitoring/network-stations/seq#wynnum ⁵available from https://www.portbris.com.au/Environment/Air-Quality/

Results

$PM_{2.5}$

As at end of June 2019, all daily averages of PM_{2.5} have been within NEPM standards, with the exception of one day that exceeded the standard due to significant fog recorded by the PurpleAir devices, and potentially local fires. (Figure 6).

During December, January, February and April daily averages were very low, generally below 5µg/m³.

Averages slightly greater than 15µg/m³ were recorded during 11-12 March 2019, which coincided with grassfires in the Brendale area, potentially resulting in windblown smoke across the bayside area (Appendix B). A bushfire occurred in Burpengary on March 23 (Appendix B), also potentially contributing to a slightly higher average on this day. Local observations by project participants were also correlated with many acute spikes in individual device readings (Appendix A).

During 14-15 June 2019, the devices measured elevated readings of $PM_{2.5}$ (Figure 6). Elevated readings were liekly a result of a overestimations of $PM_{2.5}$ due to fog, and a large structural fire in Upper Mt Gravatt (Appendix B) on 14 June. Significant amounts of fog were present across the Brisbane area on the 15 June 2019 (Appendix B), elevating $PM_{2.5}$ readings by PurpleAir devices.

Due to the likelihood that the sustained fog on the morning of the 15 June caused the devices to incorrectly measure fog as particles, the average $PM_{2.5}$ is likely to be overestimated and appears to exceed the NEPM 24-hour standard.

PM₁₀

As at end of June 2019, all daily averages of PM₁₀ have been within NEPM standards (Figure 7) and fluctuated with regional events.

Similar to $PM_{2.5}$, elevated PM_{10} concentrations correlated with local events on specific dates (11-12 March, 23 March and 14-15 June). Elevated PM_{10} concentrations on 14 and 15 June 2019 are also likely to be a result of overestimations of $PM_{2.5}$ due to fog ($PM_{2.5}$ concentrations are included in PM_{10} , as they are less than ten micrometres in diameter).

Average PM₁₀ concentrations shown in Figure 7 have been adjusted using a configuration factor to account for potential underestimations of larger particles due to light scattering.

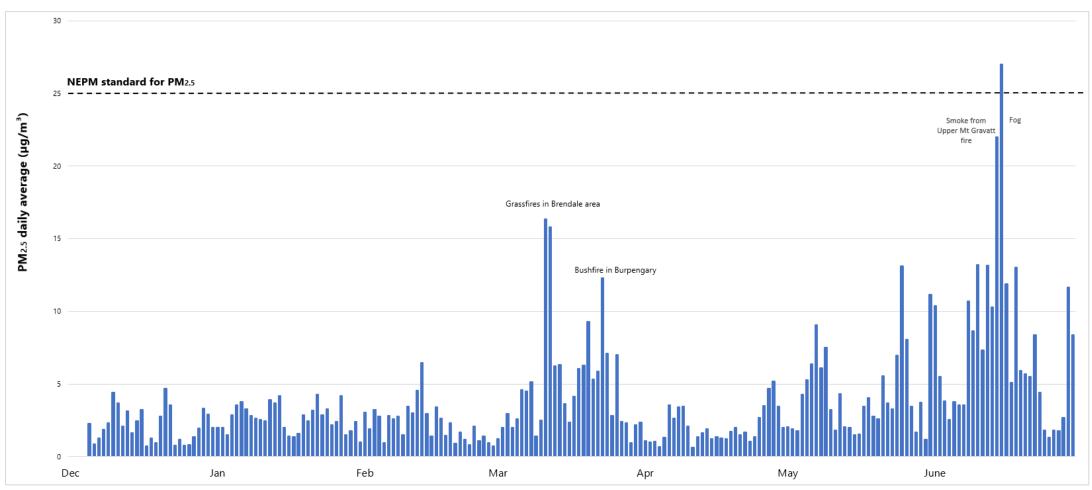


Figure 6: Average daily PM_{2.5} concentrations from December 2018 to June 2019 showing local events that are correlated with elevated readings.

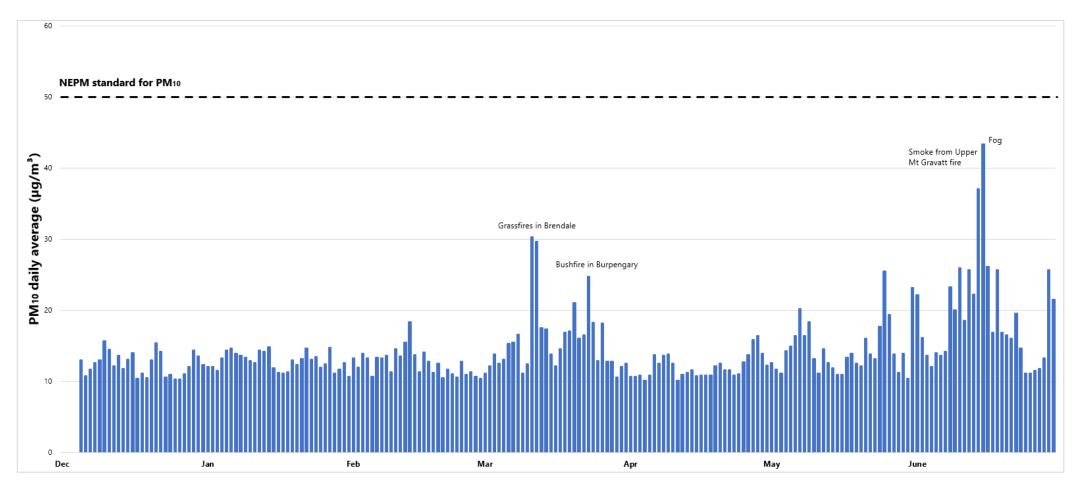


Figure 7: Average daily PM₁₀ concentrations from December 2018 to June 2019 showing local events that are correlated with elevated readings.

Correlations between CAW, DES and industry data

Data collected by CAW follows similar trends and correlations to data collected by nearby DES and industry monitoring stations. Comparisons were undertaken using PM_{2.5} data supplied by POB from their Osprey Drive station and DES at the Cannon Hill station. Data was compared during April-June 2019, when the majority CAW devices were installed.

PM_{2.5} concentrations across all devices follow similar trends (Figure 8), indicating that fluctuations in readings are likely to be influenced by regional particle levels, local events (e.g. fires) and meteorology.

A number of outlying peaks were captured by CAW devices, likely to be due to the difference between high-cost and low-cost devices. Higher PM_{2.5} concentrations measured by the project devices and not departmental or industry stations occurred in June, with the largest peak occurring on the 15 June 2019. The elevated concentration captured by CAW devices on this date is likely to be a result significant fog on the morning of the 15 June. Low-cost devices are likely to overestimate particle levels during foggy conditions as they are likely to measure aerosols as particles. It is therefore likely that the readings detected by the PurpleAir devices during this time are overestimated and not entirely reliable.

The correlations between departmental, industry and project data shows that data collected in the Wynnum area by project participants is valid, and supports data from nearby high-cost monitoring networks. However, the use of the project devices has highlighted the likelihood of overestimations in certain conditions due to the low-cost nature of the device.

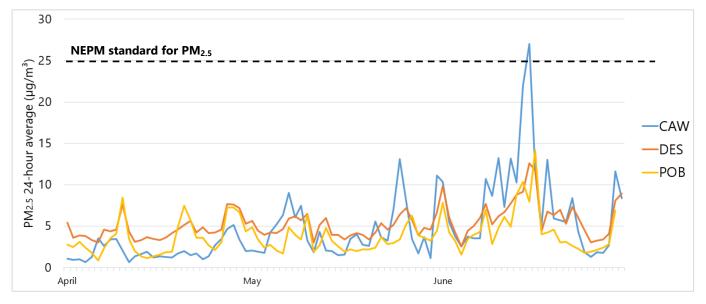


Figure 8: Average PM_{2.5} concentrations measured by CAW, POB and DES during April to June 2019.

Dust deposition

Dustfall rate

Deposited dust is characterised by insoluble solids, ash and combustible matter (Table 2). Insoluble solids refer to the fraction of total particles deposited which are not water-soluble, and are typically responsible for dust nuisance impacts. The guideline of 120mg/m²/day over one month refers to insoluble solids. Ash refers to the insoluble dust fraction that remains after heating the sample (850°C for 30 minutes), and combustible matter refers to the part of the insoluble fraction which is lost on heating the sample.

The average dustfall rate across four gauges during May 2019 was **20mg/m²/day**, and **75mg/m²/day** during November 2018 (Table 2). Dustfall rates did not exceed the guideline of 120 mg/m²/day over one month for dust nuisance.

Figure 9 shows dustfall rates for five sites during November 2018 and May 2019 sampling rounds. Site CAW7 replaced site CAW4 in May 2019.

Table 2: Dustfall rates during	November 2018 (4 si	tes) and May 2019	(4 sites).
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		Dustfall rate (mg/m²/day)				
Month	Gauge location	Ash	Combustible matter	Insoluble solids		
	CAW2	59	27	86		
November	CAW3	46	24	70		
2018	CAW5	52	23	74		
	CAW4	53	14	67		
	Average dustfall rate					
	CAW2	10	7	16		
May	CAW3	12	6	17		
2019	CAW5	10	4	14		
	CAW7	20	13	33		
	Average dustfall rate					

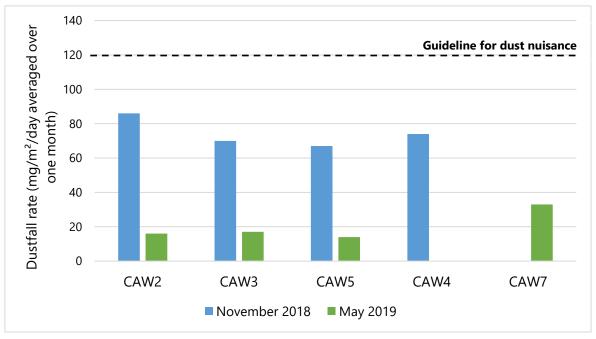


Figure 9: Dustfall rates during November 2018 and May 2019.

Dust composition

Surface wipe samples

Seven surface wipe samples were taken at five sites during July and November 2018. Mineral dust and black rubber dust were identified in the highest average proportions (Figure 10).

Five out of seven samples consisted mostly of **mineral dust from soil or rock (34-71%)**. Soil or rock dust can be a result of events such as roadworks or windblown dust from unsealed roads. The remaining two samples mostly consisted of a combination of soil or rock dust with either rubber dust or fibres. Rubber dust was also a significant component in four samples (25-40%), with small proportions detected in all other samples. Black rubber dust from tyre wear is common near roadways, and can be windblown into residential areas. Under microscope, rubber dust (elongated, irregular black particles) can be differentiated from other black coloured particles such as coal.

No significant coal particle proportions were detected, with only trace amounts (less than 1%) of coal identified in samples at a Wynnum Esplanade property. As the history of this sample is unknown, it is possible that these trace amounts of coal have been present on the surface for a number of years, and not a recent deposition.

Small proportions of insect and plant debris, cement dust and fibres were also detected across samples, which is common in domestic environments.

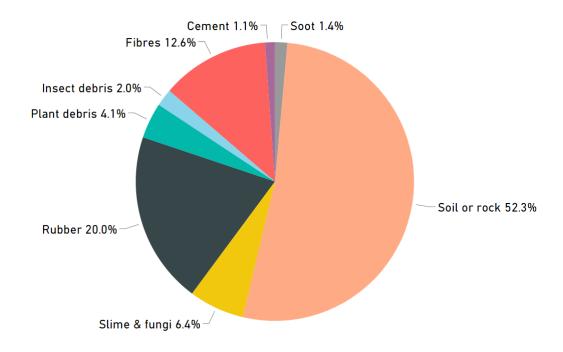


Figure 10: Average particle types of seven surface wipe samples across the Wynnum area.

Table 3: Compositional analysis for seven surface wipe samples across five sites.

PART	ICLE IDENTITY	PERCENTAGE (%)							
CATEGORY	PARTICLE TYPE	CAW2	CAW3	CAW3	CAW4	CAW5	CAW5	CAW8	Average
	Coal	-	Trace	Trace	-	-	-	-	0
BLACK	Soot	Trace	-	Trace	Trace	Trace	Trace	10	1.43
	Black rubber dust	40	35	Trace	25	30	5	5	20
	Mineral dust (Soil/rock)	25	50	65	70	51	34	71	52.29
INORGANICS	Mineral dust (fly ash)	Trace	-	-	-	-	Trace	-	0
& MINERALS	Mineral dust (cement)	-	4	Trace	-	-	-	4	1.14
	Glass fragments	Trace	-	Trace	-	-	-	-	0
	Slime & fungi	15	7	10	Trace	-	3	10	6.43
BIOLOGICAL	Insect debris	5	2	Trace	2	2	3	Trace	2
	Plant debris	10	2	7	3	2	5	Trace	4.14
	Wood dust	Trace	Trace	Trace	Trace	Trace	Trace	-	0
GENERAL ORGANIC TYPES	Fibres	5	Trace	18	Trace	15	50	Trace	12.57
	Paint	-	-	-	-	Trace	-	-	0
	Plastic fragments	Trace	Trace	Trace	-	-	-	-	0

Dust deposition samples

Dust composition was analysed for four samples collected in dust deposition gauges during November 2018 and May 2019. Particle types identified in both dust deposition sampling rounds were similar in nature and are consistent with types common in domestic environments.

During November 2018, the majority of each sample consisted of **mineral dust from soil or rock (>70%)**, with small amounts of plant and insect debris, rubber dust, slime and fungi occurring in all samples (Figure 11). Minor to trace amounts of coal were detected in samples, with an average of 2% across the four dust gauge samples. These minor amounts of coal are potentially a result of windblown soil dust already containing trace amounts of coal from ground surfaces outside the rail corridor and surrounding areas.

Samples from May 2019 also consisted mostly of **soil or rock dust (59%) and black rubber dust (22%)** (Figure 12). Other particle types present in the samples were insect debris (11%), plant debris (5%) with minor proportions of fibres, slime and fungi. Trace amounts of coal were detected in three out of the four dust gauge samples.

A small proportion of copper sludge was identified in all gauge samples, although is not present in the air environment but is formed from a copper sulfate algaecide added to the gauge to prevent the growth of algae. For this reason, the copper sludge particle component was removed from the averages shown in Figures 11 and 12 (other particle averages were proportionally recalculated). Proportions of copper sludge found in each sample are presented in Tables 4 and 5.

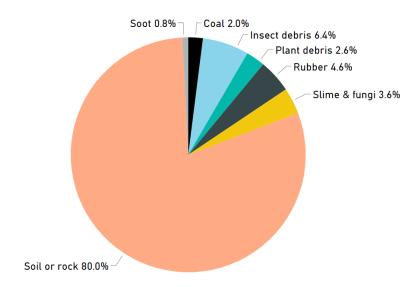


Figure 11: Average particle types of dust deposition samples collected in November 2018.

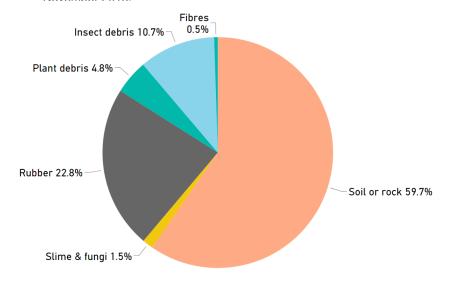


Figure 12: Average particle types of dust deposition samples collected in May 2019.

Table 4: Compositional analysis for four dust gauge samples collected in November 2018, inclusive of copper sludge.

PARTICL	PERCENTAGE (%)					
CATEGORY	PARTICLE	CAW2	CAW3	CAW4	CAW5	Average
	Coal	4	1	3	Trace	2
BLACK	Soot	2	Trace	Trace	1	0.75
	Black rubber dust	9	5	2	2	4.5
	Soil or rock dust	70	80	83	79	78
INORGANICS & MINERALS	Fly ash	Trace	-	-	-	0
	Copper sludge	3	2	2	3	2.5
	Slime & fungi	5	3	3	3	3.5
BIOLOGICAL	Insect debris	5	7	5	8	6.25
	Plant debris	2	2	2	4	2.5
	Wood dust	-	-	Trace	-	0
GENERAL ORGANIC	Fibres	Trace	Trace	Trace	Trace	0
	Paint	-	Trace	-	-	0
	Plastic fragments	Trace	-	Trace	Trace	0
*Trace amounts re	efer to proportions less	than 1%.				

Table 5: Compositional analysis for four dust gauge samples collected in May 2019, inclusive of copper sludge.

PARTICL	PERCENTAGE (%)					
CATEGORY	PARTICLE	CAW2	CAW3	CAW5	CAW7	Average
	Coal	-	Trace	Trace	Trace	0
BLACK	Soot	Trace	Trace	Trace	Trace	0
	Black rubber dust	55	7	8	20	22.5
	Soil or rock dust	30	78	68	58	58.5
INORGANICS & MINERALS	Fly ash	-	Trace	Trace	-	0
	Glass fragments	-	-	-	Trace	0
	Copper sludge	1	2	2	2	1.75
BIOLOGICAL	Slime & fungi	3	-	3	Trace	1.5
	Insect debris	7	10	10	15	10.5
	Plant debris	4	4	8	4	4.75
	Plant debris (char)	-	-	-	Trace	0
GENERAL ORGANIC	Fibres	Trace	Trace	1	1	0.5
	Plastic fragments	-	Trace	-	Trace	0

Conclusions

Data collected by CAW participants shows that air quality in the bayside area is of good quality, and fluctuates in response to regional influences, local events and meteorology.

Raw data collected during the first seven months showed no exceedances of $PM_{2.5}$ standards, with the exception of 15 June 2019 where readings were elevated by overestimations due to significant fog, and potentially local fire events. There were no exceedances of the PM_{10} standards.

Variations across CAW, DES and industry data highlights the differences between low-cost and high-cost devices under various conditions. Comparisons between project data and data collected by DES and local industries demonstrates strong correlations between devices and with regional particle levels, despite some overestimations by CAW devices.

Dust deposition samples showed that dustfall rates fell below the guideline for dust nuisance during both November 2018 and May 2019 rounds. Samples collected from deposition gauges and surface wipe sampling also identified particle types common in domestic areas such as soil or rock dust, plant and insect debris and rubber dust from tyre wear.

PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀ monitoring will continue until December 2019 to provide a twelve-month assessment of air quality in the Wynnum area.

Appendix A

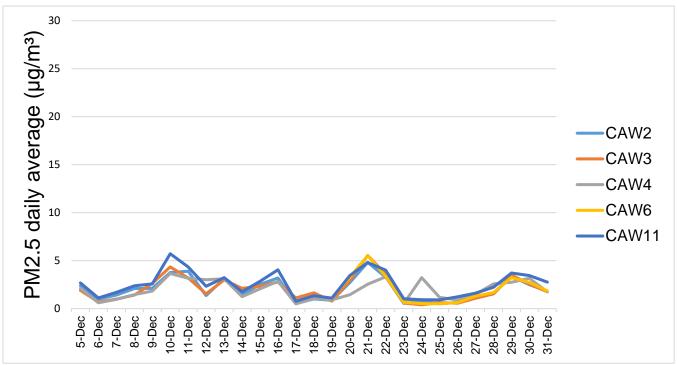


Figure A.1: Average daily PM_{2.5} concentrations during December 2018.

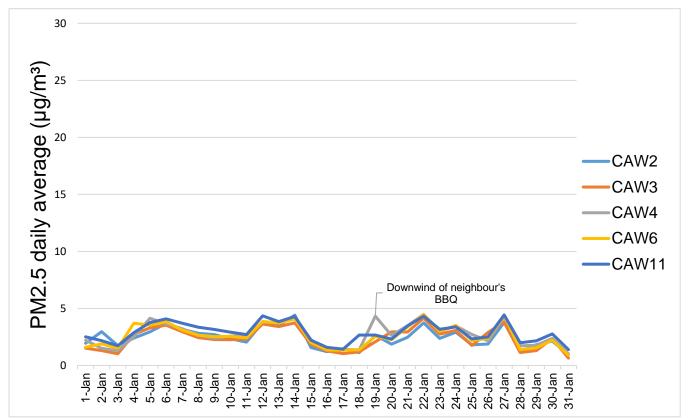


Figure A.2: Average daily PM_{2.5} concentrations during January 2019.

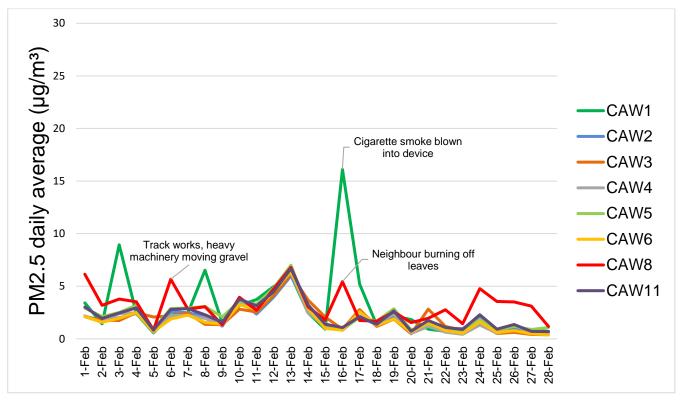


Figure A.3: Average daily PM_{2.5} concentrations during February 2019.

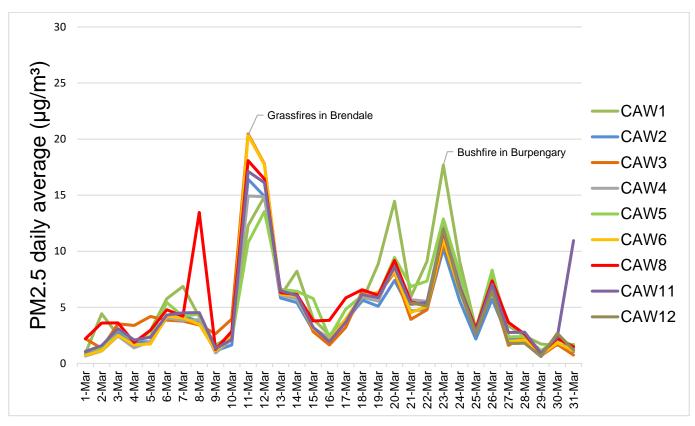


Figure A.4: Average daily PM_{2.5} concentrations during March 2018.

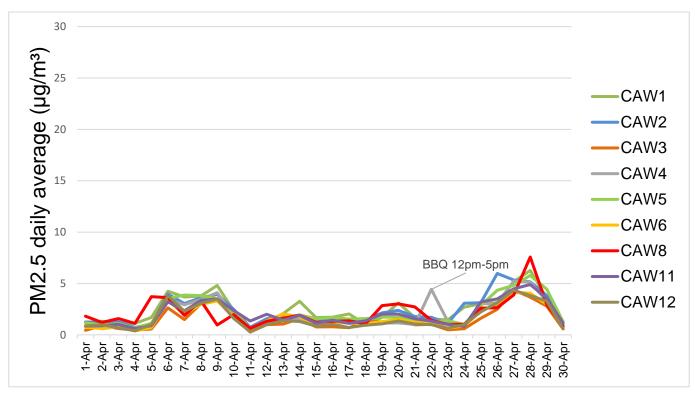


Figure A.5: Average daily PM_{2.5} concentrations during April 2019.

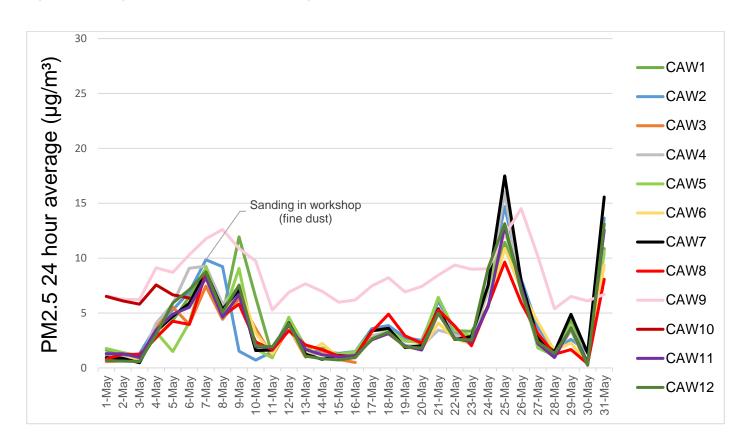


Figure A.6: Average daily PM_{2.5} concentrations during May 2019. CAW10 in for repairs from 7 May 2019.

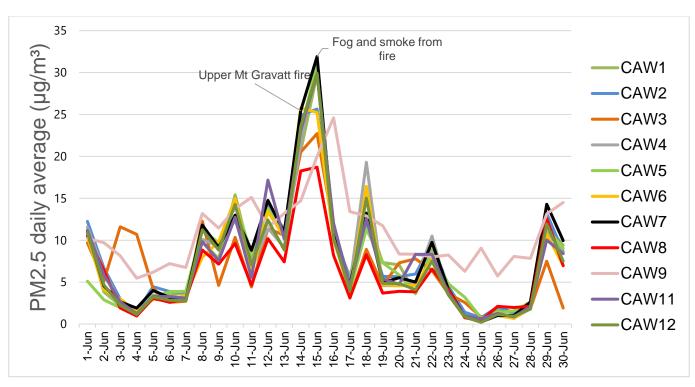


Figure A.7: Average daily PM_{2.5} concentrations during June 2019. CAW10 in for repairs during June 2019.

Appendix B

Brendale - grass fire as at 9.20am Wed 13 Mar

13th March 2019 9:20 AM

** Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) crews are no longer required on scene at this incident **

Farlier.

Brendale – grass fire as at 3.15pm Tue 12 Mar

Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) crews are on scene at a grass fire burning near Old North Road, South Pine Road and Kremzow Road at Brendale. Crews are working to contain the fire, which is posing no threat to property at this time. Smoke may affect the area, so motorists are advised to drive with caution and to conditions. Smoke may also affect residents in nearby areas. If affected, close windows and doors and keep respiratory medications close by. If residents are concerned their property is under threat they are advised to call Triple Zero (000) immediately.

Farlier...

Brendale - grass fire as at 2.45pm Tue 12 Mar

Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) crews are on scene at a grass fire burning near Bald Hills Road and Strathpine Road, Brendale. Crews are working to contain the fire, which is posing no threat to property at this time. Smoke may affect Old North Road and South Pine Road, so motorists are advised to drive with caution and to conditions. Smoke may also affect residents in nearby areas. If affected, close windows and doors and keep respiratory medications close by. If residents are concerned their property is under threat they are advised to call Triple Zero (000) immediately.

Figure B.1: Brendale grass fire report on 13 March 2019 (Source: Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, https://newsroom.psba.qld.gov.au/Content/Home/Home/Article/Brendale-grass-fire-as-at-3-15pm-Tue-12-Mar/-2/-2/14681)

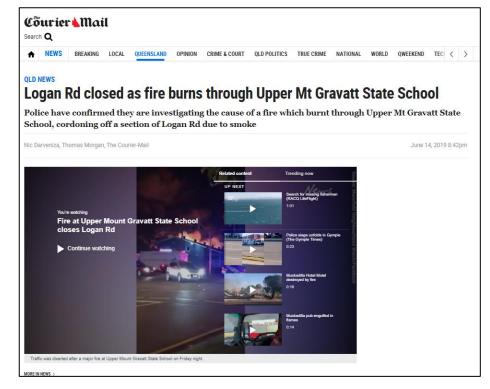


Figure B.2: Upper Mt Gravatt structural fire report on 14 June 2019. (Source: Courier Mail, https://www.couriermail.com.au/subscribe/news/1/?sourceCode=CMWEB_WRE170_a_GGL&dest=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.couriermail.com.au%2Fnews%2Fqueensland%2Flogan-rd-closed-as-fire-burns-through-upper-mt-gravatt-state-school%2Fnews-story%2Fbf316bf8f068d7cf290982211dac05e5&memtype=anonymous&mode=premium)

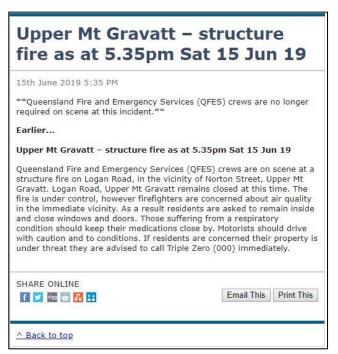


Figure B.3: Upper Mt Gravatt structural fire report on 15 June 2019. (Source: Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, https://newsroom.psba.qld.gov.au/Content/Home/Home/Article/Upper-Mt-Gravatt-structure-fire-as-at-5-35pm-Sat-15-Jun-19/-2/-2/14718)



Figure B.4: Significant fog over Brisbane area on 15 June 2019. (Source: Bureau of Meteorology Twitter, https://twitter.com/bom_qld?lang=en)