

REGULATORY AND NON-REGULATORY SOLUTIONS TO AIR QUALITY PROBLEMS IN MOUNT GAMBIER, AUSTRALIA

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The South Australian Environment Protection Authority is considering a range of legislative and economic instruments to improve the air quality in Mount Gambier through the establishment of an Air Quality Control Region. Air quality in this major regional centre has exceeded the numerical particle standard cited in the Australian National Environment Protection (Ambient Air Quality) Measure (NEPM) for PM10. New national reporting standards for PM2.5 and air toxics will pose additional challenges for the South Australian Environment Protection Authority. Mount Gambier's air quality is impacted by a reliance on solid fuel home heating, and the predominance of plantation forestry harvesting and timber processing in the region. While there is a low level of community concern, under Commonwealth legislation, the State Government is responsible for achieving the health based NEPM targets. Current South Australian air quality legislation is under review. This review provides the opportunity to consider the establishment of an Air Quality Control Region for Mount Gambier. This regulatory tool can enable the integration of a suite of new and existing tools including load based licensing, civil penalties, emissions trading and tailored emission limits. Based on a maximum capacity for the region it aims to establish a framework to achieve the current national standards and manage any future development. This paper will discuss the process to establish an Air Quality Control Region and integrate it with new and emerging legislative instruments in South Australia. It will also discuss some of the challenges being faced in assessing and establishing the framework.