



STANDING COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIODIVERSITY  
MARISA PATERSON MLA (CHAIR), ANDREW BRADDOCK MLA (DEPUTY CHAIR), LEANNE CASTLEY MLA

**Inquiry into referred 2019–20 Annual and Financial Reports and Budget Estimates 2020-21  
ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE**

Asked by Mr Andrew Braddock MLA:

OCSE Annual Report P 20.

In relation to: Bushfires, smoke and health

In your report on page 20 you note the impact smoke had on the community and their health, including hazardous air quality levels, and an estimated 31 deaths. Does your office envisage working on how government, industry and community can address the impacts of climate change-related air quality levels, and their effects on health, including how we can better adapt or mitigate the dangers in the future?

DR SOPHIE LEWIS: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:–

The Annual report outlines some of the 2019-2020 air quality and smoke statistics and impacts. Following our 2020 community survey on bushfire smoke, the office published an online storymap on air quality and human health and hosted a webinar for community members.

We have outlined the need for increased investment in the air quality monitoring network in Canberra, including further NEPM stations. We have also suggested that the ACT Government undertake an assessment of air pollutant emissions to update the National Air Pollutant Inventory Data - this was a recommendation of SoE2019, which was 'Not Agreed' in the Government Response.

Our air quality work has also raised issues around communication to the public about air quality and pollution levels, and the need for further research to fill critical knowledge gaps around the impact of air pollution on human health. This requires government, industry and community collaborations.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Environment, Climate Change and Biodiversity

Signature: 

Date: 17/3/21

By the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment, Dr Sophie Lewis