

## NEWS

# Measuring air quality

BY TOLI PAPADOPOULOS

AIR specialists, scientists and industry experts from around the nation gathered at Deloraine to discuss the important issue of woodsmoke, demonstrating a device aimed to measure smoke concentration.

The three-day workshop, which began on Tuesday, allowed air specialists to look at the range of issues and strategies used to tackle smoke pollution.

It also presented an opportunity to demonstrate the Travel BLANKET, a mobile air monitoring instrument used to measure air quality and pollutant levels in different locations. The device transmits air pollution levels in real time, and experts say it will allow researchers and governments to better understand which communities are most at risk.

EPA Tasmania senior scientific officer Dr John Innis said the Travel BLANKET was small enough to fit in the car, and used a GPS monitoring system to measure smoke levels, wind and temperature. About 34 BLANKET

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**Dr John Innis**

Stations have been established across the state, which provide real-time reporting of smoke levels to EPA websites, and complement the work of the mobile device.

“What we can do with this is see if there are hollows or valleys where there's more smoke than other areas, so we get an idea of what people are being exposed to.

“We still need our stations because they measure 24 hours a day.”

Dr Innis said similar devices were being used by



Ellis Cox, John Innis, Elizabeth Somervell, John Todd in front of a map of real time air quality data collected in Hadspen, and the travel blanket device.

other protection authorities around the country and in New Zealand. He said cold calm nights create a temperature inversion, which can trap the smoke and have adverse effects.

Dr Innis said work last year allowed identified smoke distribution 'hot spots' in

Launceston last year, which included Ravenswood and Mayfield.

“We're getting a better understanding of the smoke distribution, also helpful in understanding what people are getting exposed to in those areas,” he said.

Edith Cowan University

Adjunct Professor John Todd said the Travel BLANKET could inform future policy. National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research air quality scientist Elizabeth Somervell said the device would allow communities to better understand their environment.