

Letter to the Editor

1/8/2008

ASTHMA

“The rate of asthma continues to rise [in Tasmania}, with a higher proportion of people affected by the disease than in the rest of the country.” (Mercury 31st July 2008 and Seven’s Nightly News 30/7/08)

No wonder, when Tasmanians have been exposed to smoke from forestry industries burns for years. Look at it this year, it was the worst on record and even the Minister for Environment (Michelle O’Byrne) has confessed the trials that her Department subscribed to have been a failure. This is little comfort to people (children included) who may have developed deliberate breathing difficulties for life.

Sadly, we are seeing the delayed result of this smoke inhalation right now. Think back to that unexplained cough, becoming sensitive to triggers that didn’t worry you before, or bouts of breathlessness.

Remember your health doesn’t just get better when forestry decide not to burn.

Passive cigarette smoking is being blamed by the Asthma Foundation. Passive forestry smoking is a much more realistic cause for the rise in the number of affected people, and the worst part is, all this smoke is unnecessary. There are other smokeless ways that forestry can manage their plantations.

13.2% of Tasmanians are suffering now. How many more can our hospitals or stretched health budget cope with?

It is not up to people ‘to manage their asthma condition’; it is up to the forestry industries to stop burning.

Clive Stott
Grindelwald
www.cleanairtas.com