



Melbourne air quality drops after smoke spreads across city from Tasmania bushfires

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Melbourne's air quality has dropped to unhealthy levels in some areas after smoke from the Tasmanian bushfires has travelled across Bass Strait.

MAP: Melbourne 3000



Heavy smoke from the blazes in Tasmania's North West spread across Gippsland yesterday and moved into Melbourne early this morning, causing the air quality to drop.

The Environment Protection Agency has rated the air quality in Geelong and Footscray and Alphington as being unhealthy for children, the elderly, pregnant women and those with heart or lung conditions.

However officials said the air quality across the city was expected to improve throughout the day.

Senior forecaster Scott Williams said the smoke was at its worst at 3:00am, but it had now started to disperse.

"It'll dissipate during the day but some of that smoke continues to push north-westwards," he said.

"It's even got up as far as Bendigo and Mangalore. As the day heats up, any residual smoke should disperse fairly well."

He said the smoke spread was unusual.

"I can only remember smoke from Tasmanian fires coming to Melbourne and Victoria substantially on one other occasion and that was back in January 2001," he said.

"I think from recollection the fires were on King Island rather than the Tasmanian land mass so certainly it has happened but it's rare."

Topics: air-pollution, environment, bushfire, health, melbourne-3000, alphington-3078, footscray-3011, geelong-3220