

Smoky days misery

Article from: **MERCURY**

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April 28, 2008 12:00am

BENN Chopping feels like a "little old man with emphysema" during forestry burns, which last week obscured Mt Wellington and Hobart with smoke haze.

The 28-year-old father of one has severe asthma and the early stages of chronic bronchitis.

Autumn, when Forestry Tasmania conducts its burns, is "prolonged misery" for him.

"It's hard to get a deep breath in and I do a lot of coughing and spluttering," he said.

The Glenorchy resident, who is an accounts clerk, said he spent all day coughing and feeling lethargic due to a lack of oxygen on smoky days.

"My workmates comment on it because it sounds like I'm losing a lung," he said.

"There are times at night when I am literally gasping for breath like a fish out of water.

"When I'm like it I don't like going too far from home so I'm not too far from medical help in case it is the big attack."

A Hobart researcher last week warned smoke from controlled burns could be more damaging to humans than car exhaust fumes.

Fay Johnston has begun a four-year research project comparing the health effects of air pollution from deliberate burn-offs, bushfires and woodheaters.

"There is preliminary evidence that woodsmoke could be worse for people's health than exhaust pollution," she said.

"I believe we need to ask whether more stringent rules around burn-offs are necessary simply because of the health effects."

The Menzies Institute researcher and GP said: "You are approaching air quality guidelines when there is a noticeable haze."

In the Sunday Tasmanian, state environmental management director Warren Jones said smoke haze from burnoffs pushed Tasmania close to breaching air standards last week.

Forestry Tasmania updates planned burns daily at www.forestrytas.com.au/planned-burns.

Forestry's fire management manager Tony Blanks said burns were scheduled to minimise public nuisance.



Miserable ... Benn Chopping with his dog Amadeus. The father of one says smoke from forestry burns hits him hard. Picture: LEIGH WINBURN 📷 [Aerial gallery of forest burn offs](#).