

**Air quality affects everyone. If we pollute our air, the impact can be as immediate as the next breath we take.**

Our air 2018 shows that air quality in New Zealand is generally good and that the overall trend is getting slightly better, with downward trends recorded for some pollutants.

But the report also shows that the situation is not perfect. Some of our activities in certain parts of the country and at certain times of the year, mainly winter, are putting our air quality under pressure.

There are two leading causes of air pollution in New Zealand. Burning wood and coal in winter for home heating causes issues in some areas, and traffic causes problems in some regions all year round.

# Our air 2018

**A summary of the Our air  
2018 environment report**

## Find out more

### Local air quality information

Check [lawa.org.nz](http://lawa.org.nz) or your regional council website for your local air quality information.

### Wood burners

If you are considering replacing your wood burner, check out the Ministry's website for [the list of approved wood burners](#).\* Remember, you will require a council consent to install a new burner.

Alternatively, have a chat with your council about heating options and any subsidies that might be available.

\*If you are in Canterbury, use the wood burner list available at [www.ecan.govt.nz](http://www.ecan.govt.nz).

### Environment reports

This document is a summary of Our air 2018 environment report and is part of the Stats NZ and Ministry for the Environment's ongoing environmental reporting programme.

We want every New Zealander to have robust and trusted information on the state of their environment. The Ministry and Stats NZ report on the state of different aspects of our environment every six months, and our environment as a whole every three years.

For more information on the state of our environment and to read Our air 2018 visit [www.mfe.govt.nz/more/environmental-reporting](http://www.mfe.govt.nz/more/environmental-reporting).

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Ministry for the  
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Minatū Mō Te Taiao



# Key findings

## from Our air 2018

As part of our ongoing environmental reporting programme, Stats NZ and the Ministry for the Environment have produced Our air 2018, a report on New Zealand's air quality. This document summarises the report.

### Key sources of air pollution in New Zealand

- Burning wood and coal for home heating in winter is the leading cause of poor air quality.
- Vehicle emissions are also an important cause of poor air quality in many places.



### Particulate matter

- Winter PM<sub>10</sub> levels have dropped since 2007 in 17 of 39 monitored areas.
- In 2015, home heating caused 25% of the human-generated PM<sub>10</sub> emissions and a third of PM<sub>2.5</sub> particles annually.



### Health impacts

- Particulate matter in the air can cause shortness of breath and coughing or more severe health effects, such as heart or lung disease.
- Models show that PM<sub>10</sub> contributed to 8% fewer premature adult deaths in 2016 than in 2006 as more people live in areas with less pollution.



### Light pollution

- Most of our skies are pristine. But light pollution in cities means that 56% of Kiwis can't see the Milky Way.
- Light pollution could affect mātauranga Māori and cultural practices, natural ecosystems and biodiversity.



### Other pollutants

- Arsenic levels in our air peak in winter when people burn treated wood for home heating.
- Sulphur dioxide from shipping is an emerging pollutant in cities with ports.



### Vehicles

- Vehicles were the main source (39%) of the estimated human-generated nitrogen oxides in our air in 2015.
- Despite more vehicles on the road, we found a decreasing trend in nitrogen dioxide concentrations between 2004 and 2016.

