Friday 15 March 2019

BUSHFIRE SMOKE PROMPTS HEALTH WARNING

Murrumbidgee Local Health District (MLHD) is urging people, especially those with respiratory conditions such as asthma, to limit their time spent outside as poor air quality continues in parts of the District.

Air quality readings in Albury and Wagga indicate poor quality air, likely due to bushfire smoke drifting into the area.

Director Public Health Tracey Oakman said people with asthma and other lung conditions should not engage in vigorous exercise and, if possible, stay in air-conditioned premises where filtration systems can help to reduce smoke particles in the air.

“Smoke may aggravate existing heart and lung conditions and cause irritated eyes, coughing and wheezing,” Mrs Oakman said.

“Symptoms can occur for several days after smoke is inhaled, so people with chronic respiratory conditions need to be vigilant with their treatment programs.”

“People with asthma or a lung condition who develop symptoms such as shortness of breath, coughing or wheezing, should follow their Asthma or Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) action plan.

“If symptoms do not settle, seek medical advice. If you are on home oxygen treatment, continue as prescribed and if breathlessness worsens, contact your doctor.”

“Healthy adults may also feel the effects of fine particles the can irritate the lungs, so it’s wise to reschedule or cut back on prolonged or strenuous outdoor activities when smoke levels are high.”

Fine smoke particles are known to affect the human breathing system. The smaller or finer the particles, the deeper they go into the lungs.

These particles can cause a variety of health problems, such as itchy or burning eyes, throat irritation, runny nose and illnesses such as bronchitis.

Smoke particles can also aggravate existing lung conditions, such as chronic bronchitis, emphysema and asthma.

In case of emergency always remember to dial triple zero. For more information, visit the NSW Health web page on bushfire smoke at:

ends

Media note: For interviews, please contact MLHD Director Public Health Tracey Oakman on mobile 0429 378 845.