



Media Release
Minister for the Environment and Heritage
Dr David Kemp

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Labor Irresponsible on Pollutants

Labor has deliberately attempted to mislead the public on the state of our air quality. Either that, or it is just incapable of interpreting simple data.

"Labor's environment spokesman, Kelvin Thomson, has taken the results of the National Pollutant Inventory (NPI) completely out of context and has wrongly claimed air pollutants in Australia's cities are increasing," Dr Kemp said.

The facts are these:

- **More companies than ever before are reporting their emissions to the NPI. In 2001-2002, the number of facilities reporting rose 24% - 2948 facilities compared with 2374 the previous year.**
- **In 2001-2002, facilities reported on emissions of 90 substances, 54 substances more than the previous year.**
- **States and Territories have been more actively engaging industry in reporting to the NPI.**
- **These factors mean that we can better understand emission levels, but do not mean the quality of our air is deteriorating.**

Dr Kemp said the *State of the Environment Report 2001* clearly showed urban air quality had generally improved from 1996 to 2001 and that air pollution in rural and regional Australia is also well below levels of concern.

Dr Kemp said Labor's attempt to compare the 8.8 billion kgs of pollutants in the 2001-2002 year with 3.2 billion kgs the previous reporting year is not only meaningless, but very misleading.

"Labor's irresponsible interpretation of the data reported in today's media only serves to misinform the community," said Dr Kemp.

"The State of the Environment Report said carbon monoxide was of concern in only a few specific urban areas, such as the centre of Sydney, and this was a problem because of motor vehicles and not because of industry.

"The truth is that while Labor keeps fumbling the figures, the Howard Government has been leading the national effort on air quality through a range of National Environment Protection Measures, such as the NPI, all of which have been developed since 1998.

"However, with the rising number of facilities and substances required to be reported, extreme care is required when comparing the most recent NPI emissions to those from previous years.

"The Commonwealth has also introduced new national fuel quality standards to reduce pollution through cleaner diesel and petrol and through the use of new automotive technology. It has also established many eco-efficiency agreements with industry to help reduce their impact on the environment."

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