

POLICY

Air Quality

2026



This Policy was adopted by the IDNA Board on 25 March 2026

ILLAWARRA DISTRICT NETBALL ASSOCIATION

GUIDELINES FOR TRAINING AND GAMES WHEN AIR QUALITY HAS BEEN COMPROMISED

1 INTRODUCTION

This document provides guidelines to coaches, parents, players, and club executives regarding the training of players, and playing of netball games, when the air quality has been compromised through pollutants such as pollen, smoke, or other forms of air pollution.

Information and guidelines are based on players of good health, without underlying medical conditions such as Asthma.

The information, although guidelines, should be treated as a worst-case situation. These guidelines are based on what is identified as the Air Quality Index as a way to quantitatively evaluate air quality.

2 AIR QUALITY INDEX

The Air Quality Index (AQI) is an index for reporting air quality. It is an indication of how clean or polluted the air is in areas across New South Wales.

For Berkeley, there are readings taken at Kembla Grange, which gives readings that are quite relevant to the netball courts at Berkeley.

These readings are given hourly. The reports give AQI numbers as well as levels of the major air quality concerns of Particulate Matter (PM), Ozone levels, Nitrogen levels and actual visibility.

There are also readings for Wind Speed, Wind Direction, temperature, and humidity.

Because there is potentially a one-hour lag in the data, there are additional sources for providing Air Quality Index numbers that can be used. A phone app called “AirVisual” gives up-to-date information that is taken not only from government testing stations but also independent testing stations.

The AQI is a quick and easy tool to inform you about:

- Air pollution levels at your nearest monitoring site or region.
- Specific information for people more at risk from exposure to short-term air pollution.
- Simple steps to take to protect yourself.

The AQI does not provide guidance on the effects of long-term exposure to air pollution.

The AQI in NSW is obtained from the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEE) through the following URL:

<http://www.airquality.nsw.gov.au>

3 WHAT THE AIR QUALITY INDEX MEANS

When you look at the AQI for the Illawarra you will see the display of a colour depending on the air quality measured, as per the table below. The AQI will help you understand the current level of air quality.

VERY GOOD	Enjoy activities
GOOD	Enjoy activities
FAIR	People Usually sensitive to air pollution: Do not plan or undertake strenuous outdoor activities
POOR	AIR POLLUTION HEALTH ALERT Sensitive Groups: Cut back or reschedule strenuous outdoor activities
VERY POOR	AIR POLLUTION HEALTH ALERT Sensitive Groups: Avoid strenuous outdoor activities Everyone: Cut back or reschedule strenuous outdoor activities
HAZARDOUS	AIR POLLUTION HEALTH ALERT Sensitive Groups: Avoid all outdoor physical activities Everyone: Significantly cut back on outdoor physical activities

4 MAJOR CAUSES OF POOR AIR QUALITY

Bush fire smoke, plant pollens and dust storms are the three main environmental conditions for which consideration of the air quality to determine if training, selections, or competition should be revised, postponed, or cancelled.

4.1. BUSHFIRE SMOKE

Smoke from bushfires is made up of small particles, gases, and water vapour. The particles are very small – up to 1/30th the diameter of an average human hair – and are not visible to the human eye.

The gases in bushfire smoke include carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds.

4.1.1. Exposure and health effects

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

To access details of current fires and other incidents is to use the phone app “Hazards Near Me NSW, which is the official warning app for New South Wales, which displays information from the Emergency Services.

Specific information regarding fires is also available from the Rural Fire Services web site:

www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/fire-information/fires-near-me

4.2. PLANT POLLENS

Plant pollens can be a significant contributor to air pollution with far-reaching consequences for human health and the environment. The interaction between pollen and gaseous air pollutants can lead to increased allergenicity, exacerbating respiratory issues like Asthma. Fortunately, air pollution as a direct result of plant pollens generally is at its worst during spring and early summer. The health impacts of pollen and air pollution are exacerbated by climate change, which alters the levels and distribution of outdoor pollutants. Rising carbon dioxide levels and higher temperatures result in earlier and longer pollen seasons with greater pollen production.

4.3. DUST

This is usually expressed as particulate matter value. Particulate matter of sizes above 10 is readily visual.

5 TRAINING OR PLAYING

When the AQI is “Very Good” or “Good” there should not be any problems conducting all activities associated with netball.

When the AQI is “Fair” or “Poor”, it is recommended that serious consideration be given to suspending or cancelling any games being played or scheduled and limiting training activities to nonstrenuous skills activities.

When the AQI is “Very Poor” or “Hazardous” it is recommended that all outdoor activities be cancelled or suspended until the AQI improves.

6 POOR AIR QUALITY (Smoke and other hazards)

6.1. Prior to a match or Netball Activity Match Officials should obtain details about local weather conditions from the BOM, www.bom.gov.au.

6.3. Where the air quality readings are fair (67-99) or poor (100-149) it is recommended that consideration be given by Match Officials to suspend or cancel the match or netball activity or modify such until the air quality improves.

6.4. Where the air quality readings are very poor (150-299) or hazardous (200+) it is recommended Match Officials suspend or cancel the match or Netball Activity until the air quality improves.

6.5. Consideration should be based on information obtained from the Current Air Quality website and a local assessment of conditions including indoor venues.

6.6. Where a decision is made to continue a match or netball activity with readings that are fair to hazardous, warnings should be issued to officials, players, and all involved in the match or netball activity at the venue or on an associated website/social media platform, or both.

The warning should provide information that current conditions may pose a health hazard, particularly to those with respiratory or cardiovascular conditions and they should make their own decision regarding participating.

7 (PM) PARTICULATE MATTER

- 7.1. PM_{2.5} are fine particles with a diameter of 2.5 micrometres or less are generated by combustion processes from sources such as vegetation fires, motor vehicles and industrial activities.

These small particles can get deep into the lungs and be absorbed into the blood stream. Short term impacts include difficulty in breathing and worsening of asthma or chronic bronchitis symptoms. They can also cause irritation of eyes, nose and throat.

- 7.2. PM₁₀ are particles in air with a diameter of 10 micrometres or less. They can include dust or sea salt, as well as smaller particles generated from combustion processes such as vegetation fires, motor vehicles and industrial sources.

These particles can pass into the lungs. Short term impacts include difficulty in breathing and worsening of asthma or chronic bronchitis symptoms. They can also cause irritation of eyes, nose, and throat.