

YMCA Geelong – Air Quality Policy

OFFICE USE ONLY

Policy Number	Date Approved	Date Last Amended	Status
YG 196-O	10/01/2026	10/01/2026	APPROVED

1. **AIR QUALITY POLICY**
2. **PURPOSE**

YMCA seeks to provide a safety environment for our people, our members and customers and therefore it is priority to ensure that in period climatic change there a requirement to ensure staff are guide in the decision-making processes to ensure that the safety all is considered. May Air quality may change because of smoke, pollutants, chemicals, or other factors.

3. **SCOPE**

This Policy applies to The Young Men's Christian Association of Geelong Inc. for the purposes of this document we refer to these entities as the YMCA.

4. **POLICY**

YMCA Geelong will monitor the air quality as a key risk to the health and safety of our people, members, participants, and user groups.

We will utilise the Environment Protection Authority (Victoria) AirWatch as the key organisation for information on air quality.

We will determine the safety of our operations and the community based on the Information provided on the air quality in the local area and determine the actions that are required to mitigate the risk to people's health.

4.1 Air quality categories on EPA AirWatch

EPA AirWatch uses five categories to describe the overall air quality at each of our monitoring sites across Victoria.

Our Check air and water quality map gives you current air quality information and forecasts air quality for the next 24 hours.

We use 5 categories to describe the overall air quality at each of our monitoring sites across Victoria:

- Good
- Fair
- Poor
- Very Poor
- Extremely Poor

Poor, Very Poor or Extremely Poor means the level of a pollutant is higher than its air quality guideline or standard. 'No data' means there is no data available.

Advice is general health advice for each category. This includes steps you can take to protect yourself from the short-term effects of air pollution.

The advice is particularly important for people sensitive to air pollution. These are:

- people with a heart or lung condition, including asthma
- people over the age of 65
- infants and young children
- pregnant people
- people with diabetes.

Learn more about how we the EPA monitor air quality through AirWatch.

4.2 Air quality categories and general health advice

EXTREMELY POOR
VERY POOR (Very Unhealthy)
POOR (Unhealthy)
FAIR
GOOD

Good

It's a good day to go outside.

Fair

The air quality is okay, but it could change soon.
It's okay to be outside but watch for changes in air quality around you.

Poor

The air is probably dusty or smoky. [Sensitive groups](#) may experience symptoms like coughing or shortness of breath.

- If you are sensitive to air pollution, spend less time outside in the smoke or dust and follow your treatment plan. Reduce prolonged or heavy physical activity.
- If you are coughing or short of breath, avoid being outside in the smoke or dust.
- Close your windows and doors to keep smoke and dust out of your home.
- If you are worried about your symptoms, see your doctor or call [Nurse On Call](#) on [1300 606 024](#).
- Seek urgent medical help if anyone has trouble breathing or tightness in the chest. Call [000](#) for an ambulance.

Very Poor

The air is probably very dusty or smoky. Everyone could experience symptoms like coughing or shortness of breath.

- Listen to your [local emergency radio station](#) or visit [Emergency Vic](#) for advice.
- The air is very dusty or smoky.

Advice for the general community

- Consider taking one or more of the following steps to reduce your exposure to polluted air:
- Reduce outdoor physical activity, especially if you develop symptoms like coughing or shortness of breath.
- Keep track of conditions and consider closing windows and doors until outdoor air quality is better.
- Use a portable air cleaner with a HEPA filter if you have access to one.
- Use a P2 or N95 mask but seek advice from your doctor if you have a pre-existing heart or lung condition.
- Go to a place with cleaner air – such as an air-conditioned building – if it's safe to do so.

Advice for people sensitive to air pollution

- Take action to reduce your exposure to polluted air, especially if you have a medical condition that is not under good control. Use one or more of these strategies:
- Avoid outdoor physical activity if you develop symptoms like cough or shortness of breath.
- When indoors, close windows and doors until outdoor air quality is better.
- Use a portable air cleaner with a HEPA filter if you have access to one.
- Use a P2 or N95 mask outdoors but seek advice from your doctor if you have a pre-existing heart or lung condition.
- Go to a place with cleaner air – such as an air-conditioned building – if it's safe to do so.
- If you are worried about your symptoms, see your doctor or call [Nurse On Call](#) on [1300 606 024](#).
- Seek urgent medical help if anyone has trouble breathing or tightness in the chest. Call [000](#) for an ambulance.

Extremely Poor

- The air is probably very dusty or smoky. Everyone could experience symptoms like coughing or shortness of breath.
- Listen to your [local emergency radio station](#) or visit [Emergency Vic](#) for advice.
- The air is very dusty or smoky.

Advice for the general community

- **Take action** to reduce your exposure to polluted air using one or more of these strategies:
- Stay indoors as much as possible with windows and doors closed until outdoor air quality is better.
- Use a portable air cleaner with a HEPA filter if you have access to one.
- Use a P2 or N95 mask.
- Go to a place with cleaner air – such as an air-conditioned building – if it's safe to do so.
- If you're concerned about symptoms, call Nurse-on-Call on 1300 60 60 24 or see your doctor.
- If you or anyone in your care has trouble breathing or tightness in the chest, call triple zero (000) for an ambulance.

Advice for people sensitive to air pollution

- **Take action** to reduce your exposure to polluted air using one or more of these strategies:
- Stay indoors with windows and doors closed until outdoor air quality is better and reduce indoor activity.
- Use a portable air cleaner with a HEPA filter if you have access to one.
- Use a P2 or N95 mask outdoors but seek advice from your doctor if you have a pre-existing heart or lung condition.
- Go to a place with cleaner air – such as an air-conditioned building – if it's safe to do so.
- Actively monitor symptoms and follow the treatment plan recommended by your doctor.
- If you're concerned about symptoms, call Nurse-on-Call on 1300 60 60 24 or see your doctor.
- If you or anyone in your care has trouble breathing or tightness in the chest, call triple zero (000) for an ambulance.

5. PROCEDURE STEPS

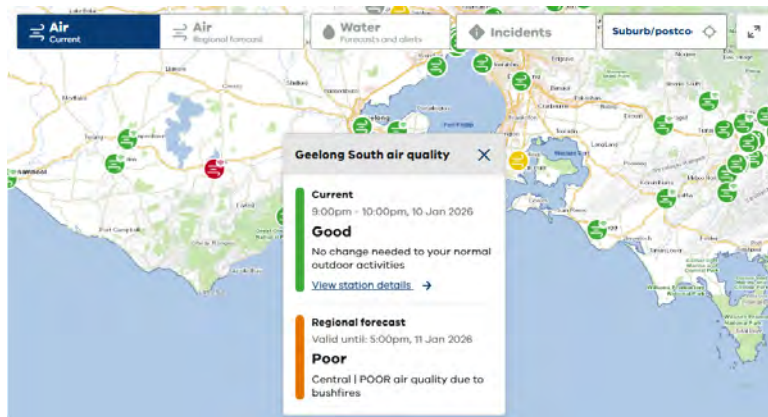
5.1 Awareness

Manager and or Duty Manager are required to be aware of the air quality and ensure that Duty Manager phone or Managers phone or computer has the Vic Emergency App installed or saved as a bookmark or visit <https://www.epa.vic.gov.au/check-air-and-water-quality?type=airForecast>

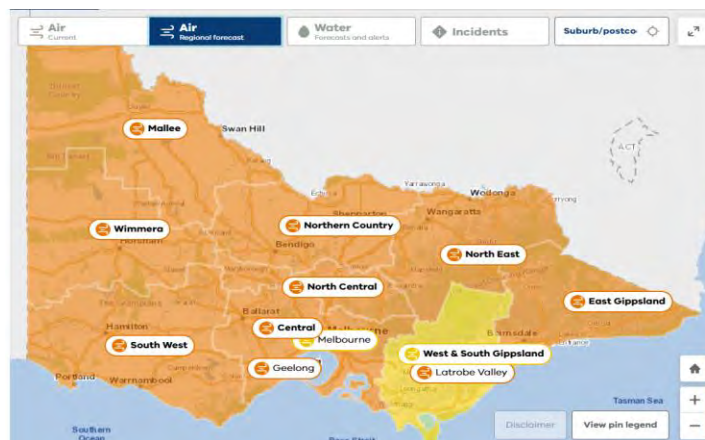


Click – to view the current rating

To drill down there are two air quality stations, Geelong South and Drysdale. Click on the colored icon on the map.



Click – to view for the coming 24hrs



5.2 Staff consult the Vic Emergency App and EPA Air Watch to determine the conditions and make a local assessment.

5.3 Utilising the YMCA Geelong Air Quality Matrix to determine the actions that are required to mitigate the risks to people's health and safety.

YMCA GEELONG AIR QUALITY MATRIX

Yes Responses=5 No Response=2 N/A =0

AIR QUALITY CATEGORIES	What is the Air Quality forecast by the EPA AIRWATCH	Outdoor worker or Programs are scheduled for outdoors	Travel required car/bus or public Transport	Does your indoors spaces have operational evaporative cooling? (ie: drawers air from the outside)	Are there any known Medical Conditions of staff /participants - asthma or respiratory conditions?	Are there Children under 14 years in the program or facility	Are there Adults over 60years in the program or facility	Is there visible or smell of smoke/gas/ fumes or odours inside the offices or facility?	Are participants or staff exercising?	Total Risk Score
5- EXTREMELY POOR	5									
4-VERY POOR	4									
3-POOR	3									
2-FAIR	2	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
1-GOOD	1	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

SCORE 35-45-

- Consider cancelling the program or excursion if alternative indoor activities with filters air cannot be sourced.
- Ensure Staff are working indoors.
- Restrict physical activity outdoors and move them indoors and if air quality indoors is compromised (visible/smell) stop exercise immediately.
- Inform staff and patrons with medical conditions such as Asthma or other respiratory conditions to stay at home.
- Wear P2 or N99 face masks. Ensure plenty of drinking water is onsite.
- Turn reverse cycle air conditioners and ceiling fans on and limit evaporative coolers as they draw air from outside which is unfiltered.

25-35

- Modify the program and stay indoors as much as possible.

0-25

- Process with normal activities and monitor the EPA Airwatch reports and Vic Emergency APP

5.4 Communicate Updates

Site Management is responsible to ensure that Staff/Participants and Members are updated on the decision made to public safety because of the air quality via email, sms, social media and websites in a prompt and efficient manner and provided suitable notice to changes impacting programs for example;

Air quality update - Wednesday 15th January 2020.

The forecast for today's air quality due to the bushfires is <POOR> across the Geelong region in some parts it may even get too <EXTREMELY POOR>

YMCA Geelong number one priority is the safety of our staff and our participants.

What this means:

- The air is probably very smoky or dusty here
- Many people might have symptoms like coughing or shortness of breath

Therefore, the following action plan should be considered and put in place for today's conditions;

1. Limit outdoor activity of staff and participants

2. Anyone working outdoors or in the outdoors for prolonged period must wear face masks rated P2 or N99

3. Anyone with asthma or respiratory or medical conditions are advised to stay at home if the air quality inside our buildings is impacted.

4. Ensure air conditioners inside the building are turned to fan only or recirculation, so they are not drawing external air into the buildings.

5. If possible, change programming to facilities that the better air quality.

6. Eliminate travel on roads as visibility will be less than 500m.

7. If necessary, managers to determine if your site cancels programming and contact all enrolled participants and staff directly, social media and sms.

- Listen to your local [emergency radio station](#) or visit [Emergency Vic](#) for advice
- Avoid being outside in the smoke or dust
- Close your windows and doors to keep smoke and dust out of your home
- If you think the air in your workplace is uncomfortable, consider going to an air-conditioned room or other facilities like a library or shopping centre for a break if it's safe to do so
- If you are [sensitive to air pollution](#), follow your treatment plan
- If you are worried about your symptoms, see your doctor or call [Nurse on Call](#) on [1300 606 024](#)
- Seek urgent medical help if anyone has trouble breathing or tightness in the chest. Call 000 for an ambulance

Current air quality at Geelong South

5:00 am - 6:00 am, Wed 15th January

Very Poor ▼

Based on PM_{2.5}
Air quality at this site is very poor

Air quality forecast

Valid until: 5:00 pm, Wed 15th January
2020

Geelong
Hazardous ▲

Very Poor to Hazardous air quality is forecast
for Wednesday

6. DEFINITIONS

EPA	Environment Protection Authority

7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Department/Role	Responsibility
CEO	Ensure Air Quality Policy is in place and approved and reviewed with Risk oversight
Centre / Program (Managers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centre / Program (managers) are responsible for the following; • Implementation of Air Quality Policy • Ensuring their staff and participants are informed of the policy and implications to operations. • Communicating with Staff and Participants any changes to operations due to air quality issues.
Employees	Responsible for adhering to the requirements of the Policy including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Reviewing the policy ▶ Following all requirements of the management staff responsible for implementing the policy ▶ Communication with staff teams and participants changes to programming and operations due to poor air quality.

8. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

[About EPA AirWatch](#)

[People sensitive to air pollution](#)

[How we calculate air quality categories](#)

[How we forecast air quality](#)

[Accreditation of EPA air quality monitoring](#)

[Smoke and your health](#)

9. DOCUMENT HISTORY

Approved by: CEO

Meeting date: 06/01/2020

Resolution Number:

Effective date: 06/01/2020

Review date:10/01/2026


Policy Owner: Shona Eland, CEO

Contact Details policy owner: Email: geelong@ymca.org.au; Ph: 5221 8344

Amendment history:

Version	Date	Author	Change Description
V1	06.01.2020	Shona Eland	Developed Air Quality Policy
V2	10.01.2026	Shona Eland	Updated Clause 4.2 - Change Hazardous to Extremely Poor and Moderate to Fair Clause 5 Procedure inserted screen shots of the current and forecast

As adopted by the YMCA Geelong on 10/01/2026



Chief Executive Officer YMCA Geelong Inc.