



Air quality doubts

By JOHN DOBSON

A PERTH environment group wants peak air pollution levels measured in Kwinana after a recently released study found the town's air quality was the same as the rest of the metropolitan area.

Alliance for a Clean Environment spokeswoman Jane Bremmer told the *Courier* the next phase of the Department of Environment's (DEC) Kwinana Airshed Study should measure peak levels of dangerous and toxic substances rather than longer term average levels. The 2005 to 2010 study, released earlier this month, found the town's air quality was the same as the rest of Perth, despite recording some high levels of carbon compounds attributed to bush fires.

DEC air quality manager Peter Taylor said the levels of air pollutants found were within health guidelines and were not sufficient to cause concern, despite the town's proximity to the state's largest industrial area.

However, Ms Bremmer said the study needed to record the peak levels of toxic substances in the air during a pollution plume rather than record average substance levels over several hours.

"People do not breathe averages," she said. "Independent continuous ambient air monitoring is needed to show the real levels of air pollution."

She said it was "unbelievable" the study found the town's air quality had no effects from the industrial area.

"It is quite unbelievable that the nickel refineries, chemical manufacturers, petroleum refineries and the port do not cause any air quality impacts to the Kwinana Airshed," she said.

Dr Taylor said air pollutants included nitrogen dioxide, particles, carbons, ammonia and volatile organic compounds.

He said the advisory group, which included community, industry and government representatives, was instrumental in providing valuable local knowledge and direction during the study.

Dr Taylor added the DEC would work with the community and industry to continue to measure air quality. A new phase of monitoring will start in July.