

## **STATEMENT: AUSTRALIAN BUSHFIRES AND AIR QUALITY**

As certain areas of Australia are experiencing unprecedented levels of bushfire activity, Paddle Australia is monitoring the situation carefully in the lead up to numerous domestic competitions.

Paddle Australia is specifically monitoring the air quality in areas where upcoming competitions will be held. The health and wellbeing of all of our members (athletes, staff, officials and volunteers) is paramount.

The Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) recently released a position statement concerning air quality and exercise.

[https://ais.gov.au/position\\_statements#smoke\\_pollution\\_and\\_exercise](https://ais.gov.au/position_statements#smoke_pollution_and_exercise)

As suggested in the AIS statement, Paddle Australia will be using Air Quality Index (AQI) as a guide in determining whether upcoming competitions should proceed, be modified, or, in extreme circumstances, be cancelled due to potential health risks to those involved. These decisions will be made in conjunction with local competition organisers, recognising that paddling competitions are diverse in nature and that local conditions and circumstances will vary.

Particular caution is required for those individuals who are already susceptible to upper airway irritants (e.g. asthmatics). Similarly, consideration will need to be given to the potential impact of conditions on technical officials and volunteers, who may be engaged in assisting with competitions over lengthy periods of time.

Paddle Australia staff will also be monitoring air quality in determining whether to amend High Performance training programs in the coming weeks.

On behalf of Paddle Australia, we hope that there will be some respite from these bushfires in the very near future and our thoughts are with those who have been impacted by these devastating fires. We would also like to thank the tireless work of all those who are fighting these bushfires.

If you would like to donate to the relief effort, please do so via the [Australian Red Cross here](#)