



\$700k for cleaner air project

A \$700,000 centre will be established to monitor air quality in Darwin.

For the first time, the levels of nitrogen oxides, sulphur dioxide, carbon monoxide and ozone will be measured.

Natural Resource Minister Len Kiely says monitoring will help the Government control pollutant levels in Darwin and assess potential developments.

The funding comes two years after a study showed bushfire smoke made it harder for Darwin asthmatics to breathe.

Dr Fay Johnson and Professor Ross Baillie from the Menzies School of Health Research said the number of

asthmatics using relievers increased 12 to 25 per cent with each increase in air-borne particles, even though levels remained below national limits.

The proportion of those starting courses of steroid tablets for asthma management increased up to 54 per cent.

Mr Kiely said the Government was already monitoring for pollutants from bushfires.

"We are aware that pollutants from burning during the dry season can impact on the health of the community, particularly those already susceptible to respiratory problems," he said.

"The whole point in

establishing this program is so we can understand pollutant levels and manage them appropriately before they have any impact on the community."

Jan Saunders from the Asthma Foundation NT hopes the monitoring will help asthmatics.

"We need a warning over the radio that smoke is going to drift over from bushfires or advertise that controlled burns will take place in certain areas," she said.

Mrs Saunders said people who knew the Dry affected their respiratory problems should see their doctor and make sure their treatment plan was current.