

# Professor Morawska develops air quality protocol for QUT

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International air quality expert Distinguished Professor Lidia Morawska, in liaison with QUT's Facilities Management, is developing a protocol to undertake air quality auditing of the internal spaces of QUT facilities.

Professor Morawska said the assessment aimed to ensure excellent air quality, which would ensure a lower risk of infection of airborne viruses including COVID-19, as well as other benefits for QUT staff and students.

"Better air quality means lower concentration of indoor generated pollutants, in particular carbon dioxide, which means better performance and better health," Professor Morawska said.

The assessment will investigate how ventilation across QUT can be improved, implement any required changes to existing buildings and develop a set of guidelines for ventilation design in new QUT buildings. It will also assess the current levels of ventilation within QUT buildings and benchmark that against contemporary research in ventilation regarding the spread of airborne pathogens

"This is about analysing the indoor air quality, of which ventilation is a critical factor, and monitoring it in different spaces and under different loads," Professor Morawska said.

“We hope this process will be a model for other organisations to follow.

“The air conditioning system across QUT already has the ability to monitor air quality in real time, but the complexity is in analysing air quality in multi-zone areas, and with surges in the traffic flow of people at different times.

“We will be monitoring the air-quality in a real-world situation. This is a model of collaboration between researcher and the facility management engineer practitioners, and through both areas of professional expertise will ensure excellent indoor air quality.”

Professor Morawska commenced the assessment of air quality on buildings across the Gardens Point and Kelvin Grove campuses in the second half of last year, developing a practical auditing protocol for air quality performance in air conditioned spaces.

The first state of the review identified sites for pilot studies to verify testing protocols.

Professor Morawska said the commencement of semester one, with students and staff on campus after the holiday break, would now allow complete monitoring of air quality in the pilot study sites.

Professor Morawska said air quality assessments such as this needed to be done when rooms were at their maximum occupancy and continued as seasonal change resulted in differences in air conditioning.

“We are working toward the longer goal of ensuring the air quality across all QUT buildings is excellent,” Professor Morawska said.

The air quality protocol will continue in semester two this year with ventilation design concepts to be adopted in all new and refurbished QUT buildings. The protocol will also identify strategies for rectifying air quality in any non-compliant buildings.

QUT Registrar Leanne Harvey said QUT welcomed working on this project with Professor Morawska, who had led the international science community on identifying that COVID-19 was airborne and [the need for a paradigm shift in ventilation to address air quality](#).

“Professor Morawska is a world leader in this space, as recognised by her inclusion in [Time’s annual list of most influential people in the world last year](#), and QUT is very happy to be working with her to improve air quality for QUT staff and students and to demonstrate the real-world implementation of QUT research,” Ms Harvey said.

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