

## A Visibility and Total Suspended Dust Relationship

M.C. Baddock<sup>1\*</sup>, C.L. Strong<sup>1</sup>, J.F. Leys<sup>2</sup>, S.K. Heidenreich<sup>2</sup>, E.K. Tews<sup>3</sup> and  
G.H. McTainsh<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Atmospheric Environment Research Centre, Griffith School of Environment,  
Griffith University, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia 4111

<sup>2</sup>Office of Environment and Heritage, Science Division, Gunnedah, New South  
Wales, Australia 2380

<sup>3</sup>Australian Rivers Institute, Griffith School of Environment, Griffith University,  
Brisbane, Queensland, Australia 4111

\*Corresponding author

Tel: +61 7 373 57645

Fax: +61 7 3735 4378

Email: [m.baddock@griffith.edu.au](mailto:m.baddock@griffith.edu.au)

### Abstract

This study reports findings on observed visibility reductions and associated concentrations of mineral dust from a detailed Australian case study. An understanding of the relationship between visibility and dust concentration is of considerable utility for wind erosion and aeolian dust research because it allows visibility data, which are available from thousands of weather observation stations worldwide, to be converted into dust concentrations. Until now, this application of visibility data for wind erosion/dust studies has been constrained by the scarcity of direct measurements of co-incident dust concentration and visibility measurements. While dust concentrations are available from high volume air samplers, these time-averaged data cannot be directly correlated with instantaneous visibility records from meteorological observations. This study presents a new method for deriving instantaneous values of total suspended dust from time averaged (filter-based) samples, through reference to high resolution PM<sub>10</sub> data. The development and testing

35 of the model is presented here as well as a discussion of the derived  
36 expression in relation to other visibility-dust concentration predictive curves.  
37 The current study is significant because the visibility-dust concentration  
38 relationship produced is based on visibility observations made 10-100 km  
39 from the dust sources. This distance from source makes the derived  
40 relationship appropriate for a greater number of visibility recording stations  
41 than widely-used previous relationships based on observations made directly  
42 at eroding sources. Testing of the new formula performance against observed  
43 total suspended dust concentrations demonstrates that the model predicts  
44 dust concentration relatively well ( $r^2 = 0.6$ ) from visibility. When considered  
45 alongside previous studies, the new relationship fits into the continuum of  
46 visibility-dust concentration outcomes existing for increasing distance-from-  
47 source. This highlights the important influence that distance to source has on  
48 the visibility-dust concentration relationship.

49

50 Keywords: duststorm; sandstorm; air quality; PM10; aerosols; TSP

51

## 52 **1. Introduction**

53 The visibility distance at the time of observation is a commonly reported  
54 atmospheric variable in meteorological data. The presence of smoke,  
55 pollution, moisture and suspended mineral dust in the atmosphere can all  
56 result in a reduction in visibility. The impact that dust has on visibility is a chief  
57 cause of the transport disruptions caused by these aeolian phenomena  
58 (Baddock et al., 2013; Tozer and Leys, 2013). For research into aeolian dust,  
59 the degree of visibility reduction associated with dust-related weather codes  
60 has provided fundamental information on the spatio-temporal characteristics  
61 of dust activity. Before the advent of satellite remote sensing, visibility was the  
62 dominant variable used in mapping the distribution of wind erosion and dust  
63 activity (Orgill and Sehmel, 1976; Middleton et al., 1986; McTainsh and  
64 Pitblado, 1987; Goudie and Middleton, 1992).

65

66 Visibility has been widely used in dust studies because these basic data are  
67 readily available from thousands of observation stations in the World  
68 Meteorological Organisation (WMO) network, and are often available for long

69 time series. Values of the concentration of dust in the atmosphere however  
70 represent a more process relevant and precisely quantifiable measure of  
71 mineral dust loading than visibility. For instance, dust concentration is the  
72 form by which off-site air quality is measured and regulated, such as in  
73 maximum concentration for dust particles of all sizes, TSD (Total Suspended  
74 Dust), or size-selective e.g., PM<sub>10</sub> (particles <10 µm) (e.g., Stetler and Saxton,  
75 1996; Neff et al., 2013).

76

77 Estimates of dust concentration can be derived from visibility measurements,  
78 and several empirical relationships that relate concentration to visibility have  
79 previously been put forward (e.g., Chepil and Woodruff, 1957; Patterson and  
80 Gillette, 1977; Ben Mohamed and Frangi, 1986; D'Almeida, 1986; Chung et  
81 al., 2003; Wang et al., 2008). Such visibility-based estimates of dust  
82 concentration have numerous applications in; the mapping of wind erosion  
83 (McTainsh et al., 2008; O'Loingsigh, 2014), the 'ground truthing' of remote  
84 sensing (Wang and Christopher, 2003; Guo et al., 2009), air quality  
85 assessments (Ozer et al., 2006; Dagsson-Waldhauserova et al., 2013), the  
86 validation of dust activity modelling (Shao et al., 2003; 2007), the estimation of  
87 peak loads of large dust storms (Raupach et al., 1994; Chung et al., 2003;  
88 McTainsh et al., 2005; Leys et al., 2011) and for better understanding the  
89 effects of suspended mineral aerosols on the radiative budget (e.g., Sokolik et  
90 al., 2001; Satheesh and Moorthy, 2005).

91

92 The various empirical expressions that relate visibility and dust concentration  
93 have been found to differ between studies (Patterson and Gillette, 1977; Ben  
94 Mohamed and Frangi, 1986; Dayan et al., 2007; Shao et al., 2007; Wang et  
95 al., 2008). For such expressions to be useful in dust-atmospheric studies, it is  
96 important that this variability be understood. Furthermore, so that accurate  
97 estimates of dust concentration can be produced from visibility, it is also  
98 important that the most appropriate expression be applied for a given visibility  
99 observation location. The need to understand the relationship between  
100 visibility and dust concentration as part of wind erosion research has long  
101 been recognised (e.g., Ette and Olorode, 1988; Ackerman and Cox, 1989;  
102 Shao et al., 2003). In particular, two classic studies in the United States, those

103 of Chepil and Woodruff (1957) and Patterson and Gillette (1977) used  
104 empirical fits of observed data to describe the relationship

105

$$106 \quad C_m = A/V^\gamma \quad (1)$$

107

108 with

109

$$110 \quad A = C_m V \quad (2)$$

111

112 where  $C_m$  is total mass concentration,  $A$  is a term related to the effects on  
113 extinction due to particle size distribution,  $\gamma$  a constant and  $V$  is observed  
114 visibility. These studies demonstrate the suitability of the power relationship in  
115 describing the relationship between visibility and dust concentration.

116 Patterson and Gillette (1977) noted the variety in the values of constant terms  
117 put forward to relate concentration and visibility. They attributed the lack of a  
118 single applicable term to variations in dust particle size distributions (PSD)  
119 between both dust events and study areas. PSDs can be highly variable  
120 between wind erosion episodes, and are controlled chiefly by source soil  
121 characteristics, wind erosivity and the distance of observation point from the  
122 eroding source (El-Fandy, 1953, Chepil and Woodruff, 1957).

123

124 It is noteworthy that both the Chepil and Woodruff (1957) and Patterson and  
125 Gillette (1977) studies were based on visibility and dust concentration  
126 measurements made at, or very close to, eroding sources. This constrains the  
127 application of their visibility and dust concentration functions because  
128 worldwide, the most readily available source of visibility data is from WMO  
129 meteorological stations which are impacted by dust, but are not located  
130 directly at the eroding source. An expression describing the visibility and dust  
131 concentration relationship at a greater distance from source will therefore be  
132 more appropriate for these locations. Following terminology from the transport  
133 distance model of Tsoar and Pye (1987), dust within a few kilometres from its  
134 source can be termed local, while >10 km dust can be regarded as regional  
135 (see also Cattle et al., 2009).

136

137 The aim of this study was to produce a relationship between visibility and total  
138 suspended dust concentration for dust events observed at a regional scale  
139 (10-100 km) from source. A new method is presented here for obtaining  
140 instantaneous dust concentrations from time-averaged data, to allow their  
141 correlation with instantaneous visibility observations.

142

## 143 **2. Methods**

### 144 *2.1 Background to methods*

145 The most reliable source of near-surface dust concentration data is field  
146 sampling using active samplers, such as vacuum pump-based devices (e.g.,  
147 Nickling and Gillies, 1993; Nickling et al. 1999), or from networks of high  
148 volume samplers (HVS) (Leys et al., 2008). Such equipment however is  
149 costly, labour intensive to operate and largely impractical for widespread  
150 spatial monitoring of dust, especially in remote areas. A more widely  
151 applicable approach for wind erosion monitoring involves the use of  
152 DustTrak<sup>®</sup> (TSI, St. Paul, MN, USA) samplers (Leys et al., 2008). DustTrak  
153 instruments provide real time dust concentrations, but only for particulates  
154 with an aerodynamic size of  $<10\ \mu\text{m}$  ( $\text{PM}_{10}$ ). This size selectivity makes such  
155 instruments suitable for monitoring air pollution and the associated effects that  
156 fine particles have on human health. While  $\text{PM}_{10}$  is being successfully used  
157 for wind erosion mapping (e.g., Wang et al., 2008), wind erosion events also  
158 entrain coarser particles than this size. As a result,  $\text{PM}_{10}$  does not fully  
159 characterise all dust events, or describe the full size range of suspended  
160 particles contributing to atmospheric mass loadings (Tsoar and Pye, 1987;  
161 Lawrence and Neff, 2009; Neff et al., 2013). It is preferable therefore for  
162 measurements of dust concentration for a given dust event to be calculated  
163 from the entire range of particle sizes present.

164

165 High volume samplers (HVS) collect the total range of particles in the air, but  
166 as the resultant dust concentration is time-integrated over the total sampling  
167 period for which the HVS was operating (generally 24 h), these time-averaged  
168 data have a poor relationship with time-averaged visibility. The focus of the  
169 current study is to use the high resolution time series of  $\text{PM}_{10}$  dust

170 concentration measured with a DustTrak ( $C_{DT}$ ) to calculate the equivalent total  
171 dust concentration measured with a co-located HVS ( $C_{HVS}$ ) for a point in time  
172 ( $C_{HVS_i}$ ), which can then be correlated with the concurrent visibility. The  
173 resultant relationship is referred to from here on as the Visibility-Total  
174 Suspended Dust (V-TSD) model.

175

## 176 *2.2 Site and sampling details*

177 A HVS and a DustTrak instrument, operated by the New South Wales Office  
178 of Environment and Heritage (OEH) and Griffith University, provide two forms  
179 of dust concentration data at Buronga, New South Wales (34.17°S,  
180 142.20°W). The HVS at this site constitutes the longest rural record of dust  
181 concentration in Australia, monitoring dust in the intensively cultivated Mallee  
182 region for over 24 years (Leys et al., 2008). For dust events, the HVS collects  
183 the full range of suspended particles on glass fibre filter papers (Whatman  
184 GF/A with nominal pore size of 1.6  $\mu\text{m}$ ) using a sampling flow rate of about  
185 0.7  $\text{m}^3 \text{min}^{-1}$ . The record of HVS dust event concentration data from Buronga  
186 was examined for the years 2004 – 2007.

187

188 Determination of dust concentration from the HVS is in part governed by the  
189 duration that each filter sampled for. As filter changing is a manual operation,  
190 the sampling time varied for each filter (20-75 hours). This time period  
191 introduces the chance of multiple dust events becoming sampled. In  
192 conjunction with the HVS filter data, 5-minute  $\text{PM}_{10}$  data from the DustTrak at  
193 Buronga were also used in order to measure the timing and duration of the  
194 dust events.

195

196 The dust concentration data gathered at Buronga were correlated with  
197 visibility data from Mildura, Victoria as the nearest Australian Bureau of  
198 Meteorology (BoM) station, located 12 km to the south-west of Buronga.  
199 Visibility data from Mildura came from two datasets; the regular 3-hourly  
200 synoptic observation ( $Vis_{synop}$ ) (excluding the midnight 0000 reading) and  
201 irregular A37 visibility recordings ( $Vis_{A37}$ ), which have a 5 to 30-minute  
202 frequency when available. A37 reports augment the synoptic record and are  
203 typically recorded during notable weather phenomena such as dust events.

204 Whilst it would have been preferable to have the concentration sampling sited  
205 at the same location as the BoM visibility observation, for practical reasons  
206 this was not possible. The siting of instruments and the observer in different  
207 locations creates some challenges and these were taken into account by the  
208 method used for comparing visibility and dust concentration.

209

### 210 *2.3. Deriving instantaneous dust concentration from HVS data*

211 From the HVS filters obtained at Buronga during 2004-2007, a total of 13  
212 filters was used to create a high quality dataset comprising 83 discrete dust  
213 concentrations. The selection criteria producing the 13 filters included: i) TSD  
214 load >100 µg/m<sup>3</sup> and filter run time between 18 and 30 hours, ii) a  
215 continuous 5-minute PM<sub>10</sub> concentration record existed for the HVS sampling  
216 period, iii) the availability of high temporal resolution A37 visibility  
217 observations for the dust event and iv) wind direction during the event from  
218 the south west, to ensure that dust observed at Mildura was measured at  
219 Buronga.

220

221 Given that the DustTrak is limited to recording the PM<sub>10</sub> fraction, the ratio  
222 between PM<sub>10</sub>/TSD was determined for each dust event in order to relate the  
223 high frequency PM<sub>10</sub> concentration to TSD. Calculation of this ratio involves  
224 two assumptions; i) that the PM<sub>10</sub> dust concentration time series is the same  
225 as the TSD time series, and the only difference between the measurements is  
226 the particle size limitation of the PM<sub>10</sub> measurements, ii) that the PM<sub>10</sub> to TSD  
227 ratio is constant over the HVS sample period  $t=0$  to  $t=T$ . Accepting these  
228 conditions, equation 3 defines how the PM<sub>10</sub>/TSD ratio ( $a$ ) relates the  
229 DustTrak and HVS concentrations

230

$$C_{DT_t} = a * C_{HV_t} \quad (3)$$

231

232 where  $C_{DT_t}$  is PM<sub>10</sub> concentration from DustTrak,  $C_{HV_t}$  is TSD concentration  
233 from HVS, and  $a$  is the ratio between the two. This ratio was determined for  
234 each HVS filter paper used, or in other words, for each dust event examined.

235

236 The total mass  $m$  collected on the filter paper for any given time interval  $t=0$  to  
237  $t=T$  is

238

$$m = \int_{t=0}^{t=T} C_{HV_t} * \frac{dV}{dt} * dt \quad (4).$$

239

240 Because the volume of air flow passing through the filter can be regarded as a  
241 constant for each sampling event ( $\dot{V} = dV/dt$ ), re-arranging equations 3 and  
242 4 produces

$$m = \frac{\dot{V}}{a} * \int_{t=0}^{t=T} C_{DT_t} * dt \quad (5).$$

243

244 From the total mass on the filter for the sampling period, the total air volume  
245 sampled, and the time-averaged PM<sub>10</sub> concentration of the DustTrak ( $\bar{C}_{DT_t}$ ) for  
246 the same period, the value of  $a$  can be determined through

247

$$\bar{C}_{DT_t} = a * \bar{C}_{HV_t} \quad (6)$$

248

249 re-arranged to

250

$$a = \frac{C_{DT_t}}{m_{HV}/V_{HV}} \quad (7).$$

251

252 As the object of the study was to relate visibility to dust concentration, an  
253 instantaneous value of TSD concentration at time ( $C_{HV_t}$  at time  $i$ ) was  
254 required. For this, equation 8 was applied

255

$$C_{HV_i} = \frac{C_{DT_i}}{a} \quad (8).$$

256

257 To obtain  $C_{HV_i}$ , first, the measured PM<sub>10</sub> concentration  $C_{DT_i}$  was obtained for  $i$   
258 when an A37 visibility reading existed. One issue with the split-site sampling  
259 and the distance between Mildura and Buronga is the small time difference in



260 the onset of dust between the two locations (Figure 1). As this effectively  
261 represents a time lag between the sites, the time difference was calculated  
262 and applied to the lagging station to ensure that A37 visibilities and PM<sub>10</sub> data  
263 corresponded with one another. For instance, in Figure 1, the drop in visibility  
264 marking the event onset occurred at 18:13 at Mildura, when windspeed was  
265 42 km/h and wind direction 220°. At Buronga, downwind of Mildura and to the  
266 NE, the peak PM<sub>10</sub> concentration was 11 minutes later, an acceptable time  
267 lag given the Mildura wind data and the 12 km distance between the sites. Per  
268 equation 8, the PM<sub>10</sub> concentration at *i* was divided by the PM<sub>10</sub>/TSD ratio (*a*)  
269 to yield an instantaneous TSD concentration for the time of the visibility  
270 reading.

271

272 >>Figure 1 here

273

#### 274 *2.4 Testing the V-TSD model*

275 In order to validate the V-TSD expression, a comparison was made between  
276 values of dust concentration estimated from the model and those directly  
277 measured by the HVS. From the HVS filters obtained at Buronga during 2002  
278 and 2003, a total of 22 filters was used as a test database, with each one  
279 representing an individual dust event. The use of this time period, which was  
280 prior to the years used to develop the V-TSD model, ensured the test dataset  
281 was independent of that used to formulate the model. To incorporate a range  
282 of dust concentrations in the testing (i.e., different dust event intensities), of  
283 the 22 events, four filters were randomly chosen from events with  $C_{HVS} > 300$   
284  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  to represent relatively intense dust conditions, seven filters for  
285 moderate dust concentration (100-300  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ ) and eleven filters with  $< 100$   
286  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ .

287

288 For each test event, the  $Vis_{synop}$  values during the HVS sampling period were  
289 used to determine visibility. Given that  $C_{HVS}$  represents the dust concentration  
290 over the extended period that the HVS sampled, multiple three-hourly  $Vis_{synop}$   
291 values existed for each dust event. To account for this, the V-TSD modelled  
292 dust concentration was calculated for an event by substituting each visibility  
293 into the V-TSD model and then weighting the result by the time period that the

294 visibility represented. This was achieved through multiplication of the  
295 estimated concentration by the time interval (e.g., three hours). The time-  
296 weighted concentration values were summed and divided by total event  
297 duration to produce the modelled concentration ( $C_{VTSD}$ ).

298

### 299 **3. Results**

300 The extended duration of individual dust events typically provided multiple  
301 high-frequency A37 visibilities at different times throughout each event.  
302 Equation 8 could therefore be applied to a range of visibilities and therefore  
303 dust concentrations ( $n = 83$ ) from the 13 events of 2004-2007. Best fitting this  
304 data produced the V-TSD model (Figure 2) represented by the relationship  
305

$$C_{VTSD} = 4050 * Vis^{-1.016} \quad (9)$$

306

307 where  $C_{VTSD}$  is total suspended dust concentration ( $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ ) and  $Vis$  is visibility  
308 (km). The power form for the expression was adopted because comparable  
309 earlier studies produced expressions of this form, also with power functions  
310 close to 1 (Chepil and Woodruff, 1957; Patterson and Gillette, 1977; Wang et  
311 al., 2008), and the  $r^2 = 0.79$  of equation 9 reveals a relatively strong  
312 correlation.

313

314 >>Figure 2 here

315

316 Section 2.4 detailed how a dataset was produced in order to test the  
317 predictive ability of the V-TSD model. When dust concentrations calculated by  
318 equation 9 ( $C_{VTSD}$ ) were plotted against the measured HVS dust concentration  
319 ( $C_{HVS}$ ) for 22 independent dust events from 2002-2003, a positive linear fit  
320 resulted with an  $r^2 = 0.60$  (Figure 3).

321

322 >>Figure 3 here

323

### 324 **4. Discussion**

#### 325 *4.1 The V-TSD model*

326 The aim of this study was to examine the relationship between TSD  
327 concentration and visibility for the Mildura/Buronga location. Although the  
328 correlation between TSD and visibility is relatively strong, in some sections of  
329 the plot the strength of the relationship is weaker (Figure 2). Between 3 and 6  
330 km visibility, concentrations generated by the V-TSD model were greater than  
331 the line of best fit. This is most likely a consequence of overestimation of  
332 visibility by observers for this range of distance, and is exacerbated by the  
333 relatively few observations at visibilities between 1 and 3 km. For visibility  
334 observations of 7 km and above, dust concentrations were variable, but  
335 typically under  $1000 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ . At these distances, the variation in the recorded  
336 concentration values for a given visibility must partly reflect the subjectivity of  
337 visibility estimation at such range in conditions with reduced dust loading.

338

339 The V-TSD model is based on the consideration that it is the complete particle  
340 size range of suspended dust that exerts a fuller influence on visibility (El-  
341 Fandy, 1953). However, as the DustTrak instrument also provided direct  
342 measurements of  $\text{PM}_{10}$  concentration, a useful comparison can be made  
343 between the relationship of  $\text{PM}_{10}$  concentration with visibility, and that of TSD  
344 from Figure 2. Using instantaneous  $\text{PM}_{10}$  concentrations in place of the  
345 modeled TSD values, the weaker correlation with visibility that the size  
346 selective dust concentration results in, compared to the full particle size  
347 range, is evident (Figure 4). In fact, the contribution that large ( $>\text{PM}_{10}$ ) dust  
348 particles make to total dust concentrations in the Colorado Plateau region of  
349 the U.S. has recently been demonstrated by Neff et al. (2013). Given the  
350 relative prevalence of  $\text{PM}_{10}$  monitoring devices however, for instance, as part  
351 of air quality monitoring networks, the relationship between visibility and the  
352 concentration of dust limited to  $\text{PM}_{10}$  size is still of appreciable utility for wind  
353 erosion studies (Chung et al., 2003; Dayan et al., 2007; Wang et al., 2008;  
354 Leys et al., 2011).

355

356 >>Figure 4 here

357

358 *4.2 Comparison of the V-TSD model with other studies*

359 Patterson and Gillette (1977) commented that expressions for estimating dust  
360 concentration from visibility would vary between studies, explaining that the  
361 relative concentration of large particles exerts a strong influence on the  
362 visibility-dust concentration relationship. They stated that different soil  
363 conditions as well as the distance that the dusts had been transported would  
364 control the proportion of large particles present to affect visibility. Further  
365 insights into the nature of these controls upon the visibility-dust concentration  
366 relationship can be gained by comparing the curves of previous studies with  
367 the V-TSD relationship of equation 9 (Figure 5).

368

369 >>Figure 5 here

370

371 To explain the divergence between Chepil and Woodruff's (1957) expression  
372 and that of their own work, Patterson and Gillette (1977) postulated that  
373 different soil conditions between the studies produced different dust PSDs.  
374 They suggested that the drought conditions during Chepil and Woodruff's  
375 (1957) monitoring period (1954 – 1955) produced more erodible soils which  
376 resulted in increased dust particle size. This in turn produced higher dust  
377 concentrations for a given level of visibility, an effect evident in the  
378 displacement of the Chepil and Woodruff line in Figure 5. Patterson and  
379 Gillette also correctly assert that the difference in these empirical relationships  
380 was not due to distance from source because sampling in both studies was  
381 conducted very close to, or directly at, the eroding surfaces. Conversely, they  
382 show that the lower dust concentrations measured in the study by Bertrand et  
383 al. (1974) arose because the dusts were sampled approximately 2000 km  
384 from source.

385

386 While the particle size characteristics of dust have been found to relate to the  
387 particle size of the source soil (e.g. Gillette and Walker, 1977; Alfaro and  
388 Gomes, 2001) the influence that the parent soil has on the PSD of dust is  
389 strongest near to source, directly above the wind-eroded surface from where  
390 the dust is entrained (Tsoar and Pye, 1987). Furthermore, the entraining wind  
391 strength has been argued to affect the PSD of dust, with the influence of this  
392 factor again dominant near to source (e.g., Gillette and Walker, 1977), though

393 this theory is not without challenge (see Kok, 2011). For both these factors,  
394 their influence on dust PSD would be greatest closer to entrainment because  
395 with downwind transport, larger particles preferentially settle out so  
396 differences in PSD will be reduced with distance from source (Pye, 1987).

397

398 In the present study, it is significant that the dust sampling at Mildura/Buronga  
399 was not conducted immediately 'at source'. Wind erosion mapping based on  
400 meteorological observations of dust show that the cultivated sandy soils of the  
401 Mallee region 10-100 km SW of the Mildura/Buronga site is the main source  
402 region for the examined dust events (McTainsh and Pitblado, 1987). At this  
403 distance, the PSD of sampled dust would be relatively finer than at-source  
404 due to coarser particles settling out closer to source (Tsoar and Pye, 1987).

405 As finer particles have a greater relative influence on visibility impairment than  
406 on mass concentration, the reduction of visibility by a given dust concentration  
407 is greater at a point further from source. The differences between our V-TSD  
408 expression and those of Chepil and Woodruff (1957) and Patterson and  
409 Gillette (1977) therefore probably result more from the effect of distance-from-  
410 source, than parent soil particle size or eroding wind conditions (Figure 5). A  
411 similar result is also seen in the work of Shao et al. (2003; also Shao and  
412 Wang, 2003). In their study, the effects of distance from source were  
413 accommodated by using two expressions of the dust concentration to  
414 visibility relationship; one for cases above a threshold visibility of 3.5 km  
415 (assumed to be distant dusts) and the other for below 3.5km visibility (local  
416 dusts).

417

418 Distance from source effects may also be demonstrated by values of  $A$   
419 (equation 2), as the term used to characterise the effects of the suspended  
420 PSD on optical extinction. Patterson and Gillette (1977) explain that  $A$  should  
421 be lower for observations made at greater distance from source, again owing  
422 to the reduced contribution to visibility attenuation from larger sized particles  
423 when further from source. The findings here show good agreement with the  
424 range of  $A$  values presented by Patterson and Gillette. The  $A$  outcomes for  
425 measurements predominantly at eroding field sources were  $5.6 \times 10^{-2} \text{ g m}^{-3}$   
426 km in Chepil and Woodruff (1957) and  $2.0 \times 10^{-2} \text{ g m}^{-3} \text{ km}$  for Patterson and

427 Gillette (1977). The lower average of  $A$  ( $4.6 \times 10^{-3} \text{ g m}^{-3} \text{ km}$ ) from the current  
428 study of regional erosion reflects the fact that observations were made at a  
429 greater distance from source ( $< \sim 100 \text{ km}$ ). In the case of distantly sourced  
430 dust, Patterson and Gillette (1977) estimated  $A = 1.4 \times 10^{-3} \text{ g m}^{-3} \text{ km}$  for  
431 observations made approximately 2000 km from source using data of  
432 Bertrand et al. (1974). This result further reinforces the significance of  
433 distance from source for expressing the effect of dust on visibility.

434

435 By adding our new visibility-dust concentration curve developed for regional  
436 dusts (i.e., dust transported and observed some 10-100 km from source) to  
437 two previous visibility-dust concentration curves from at-source (Figure 5), it is  
438 now possible to more accurately estimate dust concentration using the  
439 visibility data from a much larger number of WMO stations. Our V-TSD  
440 relationship applies to the greater proportion of stations located in regions  
441 experiencing dust transport, but not located directly at the source of dust. By  
442 enhancing our capability to estimate dust concentration away from source  
443 areas, improved concentration estimates will allow for better and more  
444 complete; mapping of wind erosion (O’Loingsigh et al., 2014), comparison of  
445 ground data with remote sensing aerosol products (e.g. MODIS Deep Blue  
446 (Ginoux et al., 2012)), validation of dust emission models, and, the estimation  
447 of peak loads of large dust storms, within the region an order of 10-100 km  
448 downwind from source.

449

450 In addition, the methodology demonstrated here provides a means of further  
451 expanding the suite of visibility-dust concentration curves by using HVS,  
452 DustTrak and visibility data from WMO stations in other wind erosion settings.  
453 For example, medium distance dust concentrations could be estimated  
454 without the need to conduct dedicated field experiments of the type originally  
455 carried out by Patterson and Gillette (1977).

456

## 457 **5. Conclusion**

458 This study is an outcome of an ongoing, long term, synergistic dust monitoring  
459 program in rural New South Wales, Australia (Leys et al., 2008; McTainsh et  
460 al., 2008). The study applies a novel methodology to data from high volume

461 sampler and DustTrak dust monitoring devices to derive instantaneous values  
462 of total suspended dust concentration from time-averaged values. By relating  
463 high frequency meteorological visibility reports to the derived at-a-time  
464 concentrations, an empirical relationship between observed visibility and  
465 measured dust concentration was produced. Whereas previous studies were  
466 based on field experiments dedicated to exploring the relationship between  
467 visibility and dust concentration, the current study presents an innovative way  
468 of utilising existing datasets to quantify this relationship.

469

470 The new model for visibility and dust concentration from the Mildura/Buronga  
471 location demonstrates the effect that distance from source has on the nature  
472 of the relationship. Prominent previous studies produced expressions based  
473 on observations made at, or very close to, the eroding soil source. The current  
474 study, by using visibility and concentration measurements made further from  
475 source (10-100 km) demonstrates the influence of particle size, in this case,  
476 reduced particle size of the dust as a result of this regional distance from  
477 source. The new visibility-dust concentration expression is therefore more  
478 appropriate to visibility data from those observer stations regional to source  
479 areas. This makes the expression applicable to a larger number of WMO  
480 stations.

481

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486 records from the BoM and maintaining the DustTrak. We also thank the input  
487 of the editor regarding an early draft of the manuscript, and the constructive  
488 comments of two anonymous reviewers.

489

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666 **Figure Captions**

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668 Figure 1: The 5-minute  $PM_{10}$  dust concentration record from the DustTrak at  
669 Buronga and visibility (A37 records) at Mildura for the dust event of December  
670 12<sup>th</sup> 2005. Note inverted visibility on secondary vertical axis. Dashed lines  
671 mark the onset of the event as detected by each monitoring technique. The  
672 displacement of the plots arises because the dust event reached Mildura  
673 before Buronga (see Section 2.3).

674

675 Figure 2: The relationship between visibility and total suspended dust for the  
676 Mildura/Buronga sampling location, expressed as the V-TSD model ( $n = 83$ ).

677

678 Figure 3: Measured total suspended dust concentration by HVS ( $C_{HVS}$ ) and  
679 modelled total suspended dust concentration by V-TSD ( $C_{VTSD}$ ) for 22 dust  
680 events experienced at Buronga, NSW during 2002-03 (see Section 2.4).

681

682 Figure 4: The relationship between visibility and  $PM_{10}$  dust for the  
683 Mildura/Buronga sampling location ( $n = 83$ ).

684

685 Figure 5: Comparison between the V-TSD model and other selected  
686 expressions relating dust concentration and visibility, from Chepil and  
687 Woodruff (1957) (C&W) and Patterson and Gillette (1977) (P&G).

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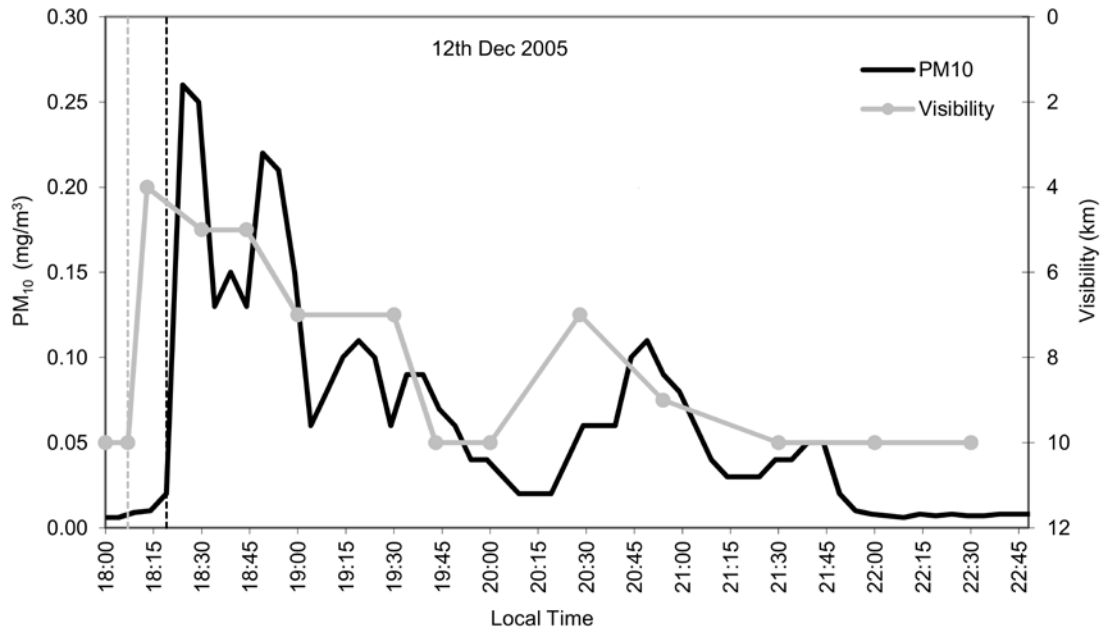
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699 Figure 1

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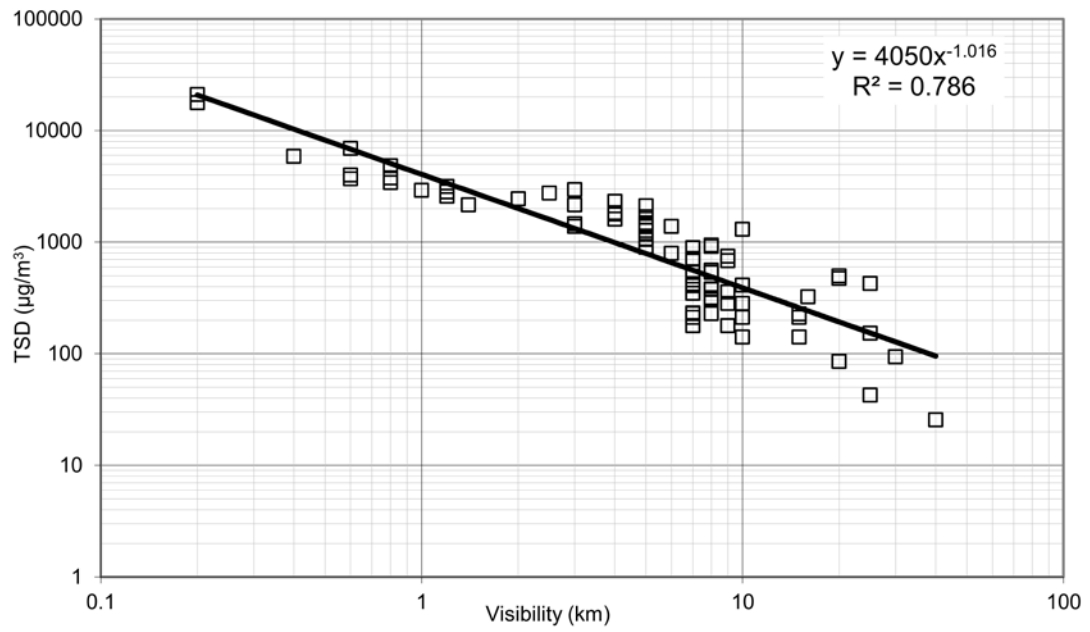
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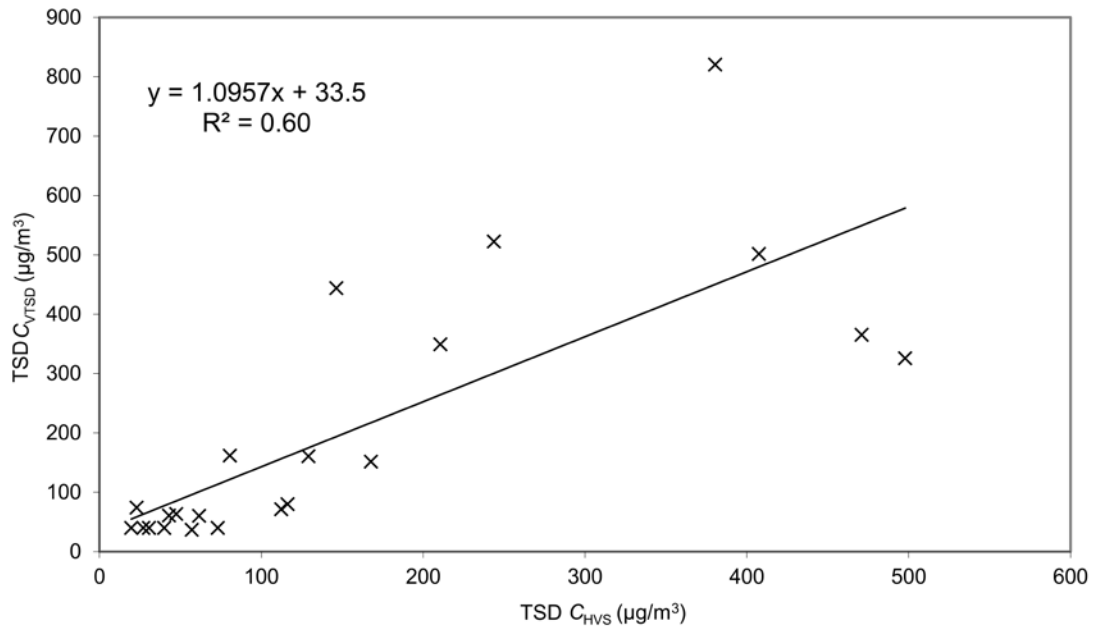
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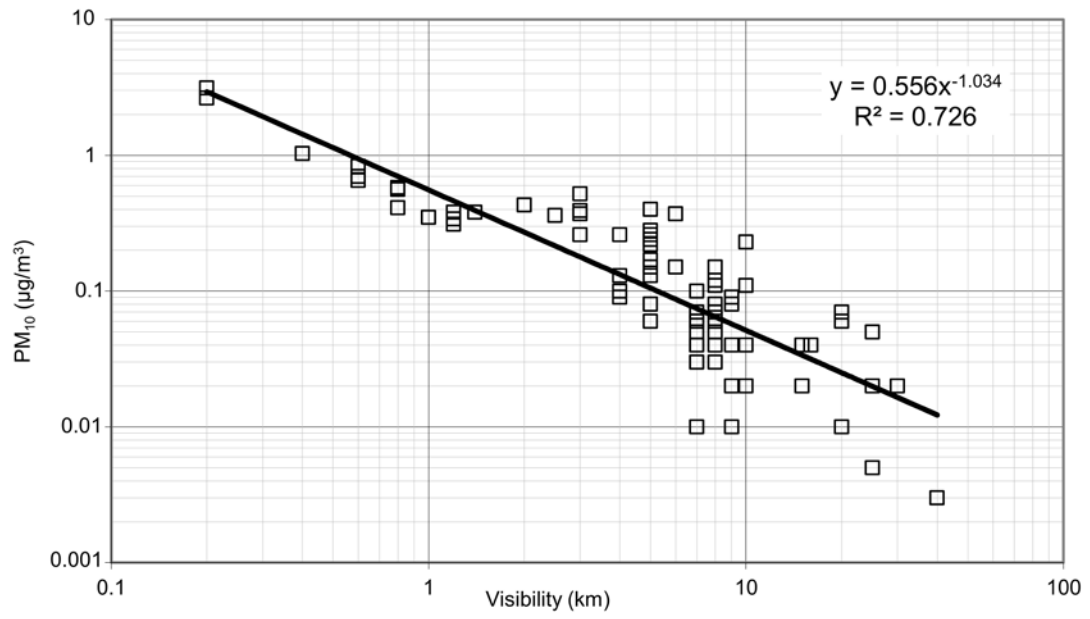
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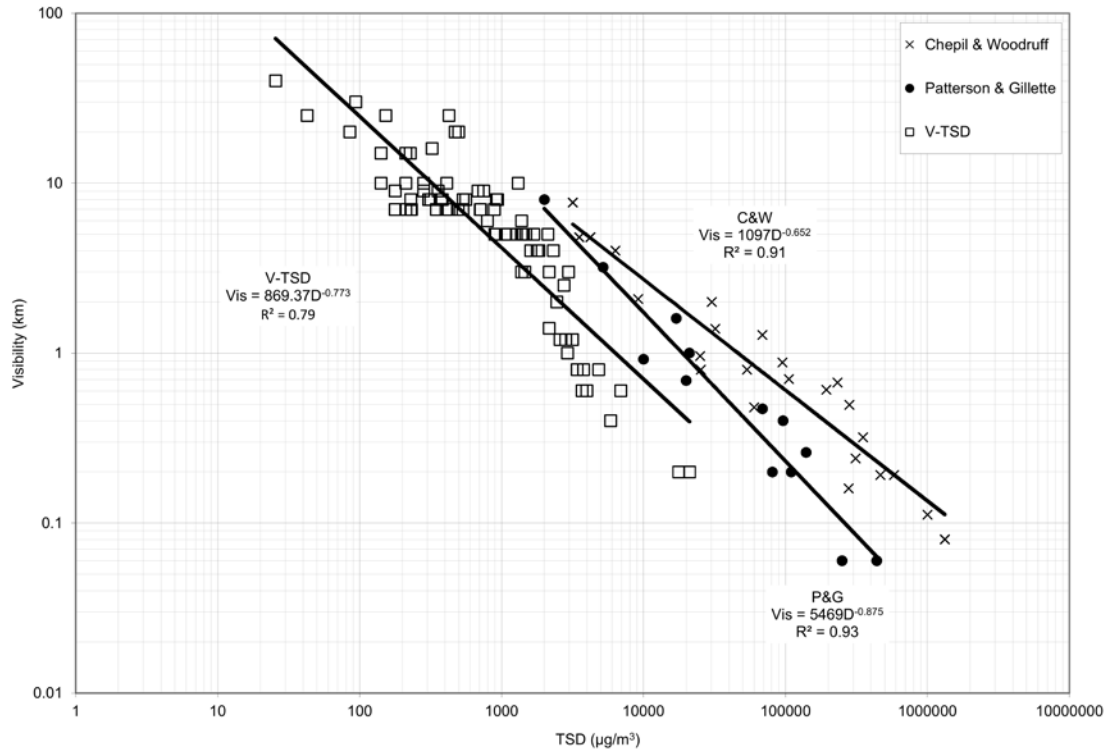
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787 Figure 5