



State urged to strengthen air quality enforcement measures

Victoria should consider stricter air quality enforcement measures and ensure agencies such as the Environment Protection Authority are adequately resourced to police them, a Legislative Council Committee inquiry has found.

The Environment and Planning Committee received 145 submissions and heard from more than 40 witnesses.

“We’re pleased that we found that Victoria’s overall air quality is good,” said Committee Chair Sonja Terpstra, “but there are pockets of pollution that lead to severe health outcomes and we think there’s much more that could be done to address those.”

The Committee has made 35 recommendations addressing a range of issues including the pollution caused by domestic wood heaters and vehicle exhaust and aimed at improving community consultation to mitigate air pollution.

The Committee found that wood smoke from domestic heaters makes a significant contribution to air pollution, particularly in winter.

It has recommended the government develop an education campaign to alert the community to the dangers of exposure to wood smoke.

“The government should assist renters and people from low socioeconomic backgrounds to transition away from wood heaters and towards reverse cycle air conditioning,” Ms Terpstra said.

“We’d also like to see the government consider a rebate scheme to phase out wood heaters from homes in built-up areas. This could be done by helping replace home heating systems when houses are put up for sale,” she added.

The Committee made a range of recommendations aimed at mitigating the impact of motor vehicle pollution, including further promoting the uptake of electric vehicles and a range of measures to reduce vehicle idling, especially near schools.

The Committee has called on the Victorian government to work with their federal counterparts and the transport industry to transition fleets to cleaner and zero emissions vehicles and to prevent the import of cars without idling cut-off technology.

The full report and recommendations are published on the Committee’s [website](#).

Issued: 18 November 2021