

Caitlin Connally

From: Toby Dacy [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, 24 April 2021 10:43 AM
To: airpollutioninquiry
Subject: Air quality submission

Environment and Planning Standing Committee – Legislative Council
Parliament House, Spring Street
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002

Dear Committee members

Submission to the Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into the Health Impacts of Air Pollution

I write in support of the call to phase out wood burning in residential areas.

I am concerned for people with health conditions who are affected by wood smoke.

I call on the Inquiry to recommend phasing out of wood burning in residential areas for the following reasons:

- Wood heater smoke is a major source of air pollution: 2006 Port Phillip region data shows air pollution from human sources consists of 32% wood heater smoke, 28% vehicles and 22% industry.
- Only about 10 percent of people use wood heaters, but they affect the health of other 90 percent who don't.
- The damaging health impacts of particle pollution (PM2.5) from wood smoke are significant and well known including that for every new modern wood heater per hectare there is a 7% increase that a child under 3 years will end up in emergency; the health costs of wood heater smoke *in Victoria alone* is estimated as \$8 billion over the next decade. Australia-wide the estimated cost is \$3.4 billion per year or \$4000- \$5600 per wood heater per year.
- People on low incomes are most at risk as they are more likely to have health conditions and live in areas with higher numbers of wood heaters/wood burning. Children are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of smoke.
- The Victorian Auditor General report 2018 found that EPA's limited air quality monitoring is misrepresenting air pollution levels in Victoria including failing to detect localised air pollution impacting residential areas.
- Studies have shown that wood heater standards do not reduce emissions. In real life wood heaters produce far higher emissions - individuals can burn damp or painted wood and allow heaters to smolder overnight.
- Local council responses to wood smoke have proven to be ineffective. Wood heater/fireplace use often occurs in evening or weekends when council officers are unavailable. The burden of monitoring smoke levels falls on neighbouring residents, often resulting in conflict and disputes, and little to no reduction in smoke levels.
- Burning wood contributes to speeding up global warming and climate change.
- The public are uninformed about the health harms, resulting in increasing numbers of heaters being installed.

I ask that the Inquiry recommend the following:

1. **No new wood heaters:** Legislation to prevent wood heaters/fireplaces being installed and remove existing wood heaters/fireplaces upon the sale of a house. This costs the taxpayer nothing and helps to clear our air.
2. **Replacement scheme:** Introduce a scheme to phase out existing wood heaters/fireplaces and ensure they are replaced with sustainably sourced electric heating (cost efficient heat pumps), with the help of a rebate scheme.

Support the above with a widespread public education campaign - about the risk to health posed by wood smoke.

Sincerely
Tobias Dacy

