

Air pollution Inquiry>

Organisation Name:
Your position or role:

YOUR SUBMISSION

Submission:

I am very concerned about the poor quality of Melbourne's air and how it is so often polluted with wood smoke. It seems to be getting worse and councils are not doing enough to control it. I also see the use of recreational backyard fire pits on the increase and so many people don't seem to realise or care that they are not legal in many council areas. I frequent a lot of community social media pages and so often see people asking for firewood and/or giving away rubbishy wood for such use. I saw a post last night where a fellow was offering 'free firewood for fire pits' that had paint on it and claimed he was trying to cut down on his skip expenses whilst renovating.

My concerns with this matter started years ago when my immediate neighbour's wood heater smoke was getting in to my house every day and night. They were elderly and used it from about March to November for up to 18 hours a day. It was so bad I couldn't have my windows or doors open, even on warm days. It was made worse by the son burning contaminated toxic materials and would only become aggressive to me if I asked him to stop. After years of emails the council did very little and I felt fobbed me off by them.

The elderly neighbours have since passed away and the house has changed hands but the heater is over 70 years old. A week before he died the old fellow told me he had found out it the heater was dangerous and he would no longer be using it but that information got lost after he passed away. Now I face an uncertain future of it being used again and still having to live with the smoke getting in to my living room. He had a split system installed but the new owner wanted the wood heater to stay as an added attraction to get new tenants.

I think that as the city is growing and increasingly becoming high density with compact living it is time that regulations were introduced to restrict or stop the use of wood heaters and if houses change hands that the heaters need to be inspected and possibly put out of use if they are old and inefficient.

Some nights the smoke in my suburb gets so bad that it makes me cough, gives me a headache and chest pains. I find this such an invasion of my health and something that could be easily prevented with better regulations. When the neighbours were burning contaminated materials, which would be anything from treated pine to painted wood, I rang the EPA who told me it was a council matter. the council claimed to have little power as wood heaters were not illegal. I suggest they be given stronger powers to control this smoke problem or that the government steps in and does something about it.

Thank you for giving me this chance to pass on my views, [REDACTED]

FILE ATTACHMENTS

File1:

File2:

File3:

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]