

Fact sheet: Support health and environment by stopping wood smoke pollution in our neighbourhoods

The people of NSW need affordable heating *and* healthy air. But in so many of our towns and suburbs our air is polluted by wood smoke.

We want the next NSW state government to take sensible actions to reduce wood smoke pollution.

Wood smoke is harmful to health - causing illness and premature death even at low levels, including [asthma](#), [strokes](#), [heart attacks](#), [lung cancer](#), [dementia](#) and [adverse pregnancy outcomes](#). The estimated cost to Australia's health system is [\\$3.4 billion per year](#).

Wood smoke pollution is significant - being the largest single source of human-generated fine particle pollution across NSW. In Sydney it contributes [46% of pm2.5 pollution annually](#), more than vehicles (20%) and industry (19%). This is despite only 5-10% of NSW households using wood heating.

Wood burning contributes to [global warming](#). Wood burning emits climate pollutants and raises atmospheric CO₂. For an equal amount of heat or electricity, wood burning [releases more CO₂](#) than burning gas, oil and even coal.

The current government policy to educate wood heater users to 'burn better' is ineffective. [Research](#) shows all wood heaters produce fine particulate pollution at harmful levels, regardless of burning method or modern heater design. [New Zealand research](#) found that for every **new modern wood heater** per hectare there was increased risk that a young child would end up in emergency.

There are already rebates programs in other states and territories (ACT, Victoria and Tasmania) to help low income people to switch to healthier heating - we want the NSW government to introduce a similar program to help more people switch.

Did you know?

- The draft NSW Clean Air Strategy <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/air/clean-air-strategy/draft-nsw-clean-air-strategy-public-consultation> (2021) found domestic wood heaters were the largest source of human-generated fine particle pollution across Sydney (pg.17), contributing to 46% of pollution, more than vehicles (20%) and industry (19%). This is despite only 5-10% of households using wood heaters.
- Wood burning may arguably be considered carbon neutral but it is not climate neutral. Wood burning emits short-lived climate pollutants and raises atmospheric CO₂. For an equal amount of heat or electricity, wood burning releases more CO₂ than burning gas, oil and even coal.
- Wood smoke pollution is also a major contributor to illness and premature death in our community, including asthma, strokes, heart attacks, lung cancer, dementia and other cancers. Australia-wide, the estimated cost to our health system is \$3.4 billion per year.

For more information visit the website C4cleanair.net.au