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ARMIDALE AIR QUALITY IMPROVES!

The Australian Home Heating Association has some good news for residents of Armidale - air quality relating to wood smoke has improved by 94 per cent over the past 2 years!

During the period of 2004/05 there were just two complaints relating to wood smoke in the Armidale Dumaresq region which is a significant reduction from 2003/04 when there were 34 complaints received. This information is taken from the *State of the Environment Report*¹ and clearly states that there has been a **94 per cent improvement** regarding wood smoke complaints.

The Report states there are an estimated 4,000 wood heaters in use in Armidale City, so receiving just two complaints (0.05 per cent of total usage) proves that wood heaters are a safe way to heat your home providing minimal effect on the environment.

According to the Report; "the highest levels of particular pollution (PM10) and most exceedences ... are associated with bushfires." As the Australian Home Heating Association (AHHA) has often stated - smoke from wood heaters contributes to a minute percentage of poor air quality.

Through education and informative material like their Fact Sheet and Clear Skies DVD, the AHHA encourages the correct operation of wood heaters in order to greatly reduce emissions. Our aim is to keep Australian skies clear while keeping our homes warm.

In order for Armidale residents to keep pollution levels down, the AHHA offers the following tips for correct operation of wood heaters:

- 1. Burn only dry, well-seasoned wood.**
- 2. Allow full air for 15-20 minutes after each addition of wood.**
- 3. Use kindling, newspaper and firelighters to get the fire started.**
- 4. Have your flue cleaned annually by a professional.**
- 5. Don't close air supply totally overnight; a little air avoids a lot of smoke.**

Following these simple guidelines can assist in keeping smoke emissions low while obtaining maximum efficiency and heat output from your appliance. For further information, visit our website or call the Association for a free copy of the Clear Skies DVD or VHS.

¹ Southern New England Tablelands Region, *State of the Environment Report, Supplementary Report 2004/05.*

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For further information or images contact Hannah Hempenstall, Media Officer, Australian Home Heating Association or visit www.homeheat.com.au.

6/26 Stirling Street, Thebarton, SA 5031
T: (08) 8351 9288 F: (08) 8351 9099