



Media Release - 8 March 2006

## GET SMART AND BREATHE EASY

Are you concerned about wood smoke and the effect it has on your neighbourhood? Then get smart say the Australian Home Heating Association (AHHA).

Understanding why your heater is smoking excessively and fixing the problem can be simple and cost less than you may think say the AHHA. By following some basic rules you can reduce your wood heater's smoke emissions dramatically.

Studies show that smoke emissions have reduced considerably in Launceston since users of wood heaters were provided with education material on correct operation of their appliance. Some consumers chose to update their old wood heaters and this, combined with better operation skills, contributed greatly to the refined air quality. However, the AHHA would like to see continued improvement and offer some advice on how to achieve this.

Modern clean burning wood heaters are up to 80 per cent more efficient than older models or open brick fireplaces, so updating your wood heater can reduce particulate emissions greatly. Models manufactured since 1992 must comply with Australian Standards AS/NZ4013, and the AHHA encourages consumers to replace wood heaters manufactured prior to this date, ensuring any new purchase complies with current standards (look for the Australian Standards, AHHA and Landcare logos).

With the cooler weather not far away, now is a good time to have your flue checked and cleaned as this is vital to the safe and efficient running of your appliance. Another necessity is stock up on seasoned firewood. Purchasing your fuel from a reputable supplier can ensure you obtain properly dried firewood that will produce far less smoke than green or wet wood. Gathering green wood can lead to increased smoke as the fire has to burn off trapped water before the logs can really catch light.

If you do collect your own firewood make sure you store it undercover in a crisscross fashion and allow it dry for at least 12 months to let some of the moisture evaporate.

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**For further information or images contact Hannah Hempenstall, Media Officer,  
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As a community it's important to keep particulate levels down as much as possible, but using seasoned firewood is also a far better option when it comes to saving money and producing less greenhouse gas emissions, compared with other types of fuel like gas or electricity<sup>1</sup>.

Reloading is another important measure for smoke reduction. Each time you reload your wood heater you need to open the air vents for 15-20 minutes to help the bigger logs catch light and gather enough heat to burn. Overnight burning is an issue that some people are not sure of but the basic rule is add your last log about 40 minutes before retiring and don't close the air vent completely. By feeding a small amount of air into the fire you will avoid unnecessary smouldering. It's really that simple.

So, by updating old wood heaters and ensuring correct operation, residents of Tasmania should be able to heat their homes efficiently and inexpensively with minimal impact on the environment. All it takes is some wood heater know-how and a conscious effort to use the wood heater correctly.

The AHHA have produced an informative 10 minute DVD which can educate wood heater users on how to make the most of their heater while caring for the environment. The DVD can be obtained by contacting the Australian Home Heating Association.

<sup>1</sup> Comparison of Residential Heating Costs and Greenhouse Gas Emissions for Firewood, Gas and Electricity by Dr John Todd, June 2005.

### **5 TIPS FOR BETTER BURNING**

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

### **EXTRA SAFETY FROM THE TASMANIA FIRE SERVICE**

1. Place a metal mesh guard in front of open fires to protect against flying sparks and embers.
2. Have your heater installed to Australian Standards specifications by a professional installer.
3. Always position clothes, newspapers, kindling and other flammable materials a minimum two metres from any heater.
4. Store matches and lighters away from children.
5. Have your flue installed professionally.

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