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KEEP YOUR COMMUNITY ALIVE - WITH WOOD HEATING

For most city dwellers, flicking a switch to turn on the heat isn't given a second thought. But for those who live in regional and remote Australia, sustainable living is a higher priority. And it's not just to do with the dollars involved - it's about buying local and supporting your neighbour - which is why wood heating makes so much sense.

Of the 20 million Australians in this country, over 33% live regionally¹ - that's a lot of Aussies looking for a sustainable, natural and affordable method of heating their homes. Wood heating ticks all the boxes and is a healthy choice for anyone seeking an efficient means of heat.

Small and family run firms make up the majority of the wood heating industry. There's the fuel merchant, chimney sweep, retailer and the list goes on. Most of the people involved aren't making millions of dollars; they rely on local support and the efficiency of this ancient heating method to stay in business.

The aesthetic appeal is simply a bonus when you compare the benefits of a wood heater versus other heating appliances. An important factor when you live in the country is the possibility of keeping the house warm when power lines are down or other energy supplies fail. With wood - you'll never have to worry.

Country living has its own set of values but no matter where you live, cost is an important factor for any household budget. As the graph [fig 1.2] shows, wood heaters offer a much lower running cost than almost every other fuel type². These figures are based on a national average cost of firewood (\$158/tonne). But for many regional Australians with access to their own firewood, the cost is simply the time it takes to collect the fuel, making wood heating the best value by far.

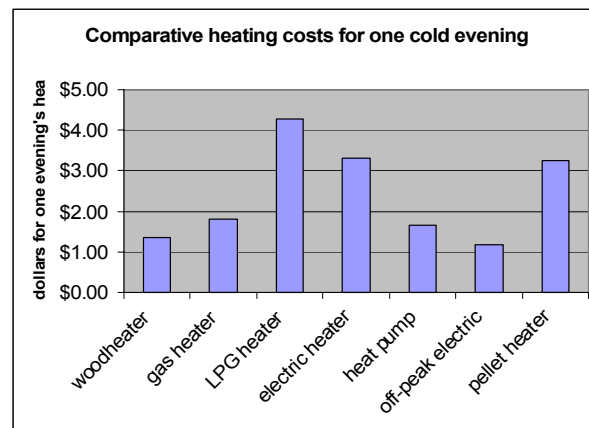


Fig 1.2 NSW heating cost comparison for one evening
- Dr John Todd 2005

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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

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And when it comes to the actual heat involved, wood heaters come out on top - again. The amount of heat needed to warm an average living space for one evening is roughly 25kW. To generate that much heat you would need to run two electric fan heaters on high for five hours or burn about 9kg of firewood in a wood heater in an evening². Really, you only need to stand in front of a roaring fire to know which feels best, but the science is there to help you make an informed choice.

So if you're wondering how to beat the cold this winter - think about the benefits of a roaring fire: there's the low cost of fuel; the ability to stay warm during a storm; and of course, your friendly neighbour who delivers the wood. He'd really appreciate your support.

¹ ABS Regional Population Growth, Australia 3218.0 2004-05

² Comparison of Residential Heating Costs and Greenhouse Gas Emissions for Firewood, Gas and Electricity by Dr John Todd 2005.

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