



**Media Release 13 June 2007**

## **WOOD HEATING IS GOOD HEATING: THE FACTS**

Wood heater users have been bombarded with negative reports via the media over the last few winters concerning wood smoke and depletion of wood resources. However the public has not been given the full story.

There are many contributors to poor air quality, the AHHA does not dispute that old, poorly operated wood heaters contribute to pollution, however what most reports fail to recognise is that so do all heating appliances. There is no such thing as pollution-free heating.

Modern certified wood heaters contribute very little in the way of pollution if they are used correctly and have the added benefit of renewable resourcing. The AHHA is a supporter of Landcare and has invested in sustainable farm forestry plantations so that future wood heater users can source their wood in an environmentally friendly manner.

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.

Furthermore, new wood heaters are clean burning producing up to 80% less emissions than older style wood heaters and open brick fireplaces – models manufactured since 1992 must comply with Australian Standards AS/NZS 4013, and the AHHA encourages consumers to replace wood heaters manufactured prior to this date. Certified wood heaters contribute lower greenhouse emissions than electric or natural gas powered heaters and are considerably less expensive to run.

Wood burnt properly in a modern certified wood heater produces no more carbon dioxide than if that same wood were left to decay on the forest floor.

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All wood heaters available in Australia today are an environmentally sound option for consumers who love a roaring wood fire and are in support of renewable resourcing.

The relationship between damp houses, asthma and other ailments is well documented. The benefit of wood heating, unlike most other forms of domestic heating, is that wood heaters generate enough heat so that some heat is actually absorbed by the house structure, a properly heated home will significantly reduce dampness.

People should not underestimate the significant health benefits of living in a warm, dry indoor environment, especially when the outside is cold, damp or humid.

Consumers should be provided the right to choose the best home heating solution. The exclusion of certified clean burn wood heaters in previous buyback schemes in Tasmania has slowed down improvements in wood smoke levels.

Buyback schemes need to provide the option to consumers and include certified clean burn wood heaters along with an education program.

Consumers who prefer wood heating could upgrade their old wood heaters for certified ones – meeting the needs of both consumers and environmental concerns.

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