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WOOD HEATING MAKES GOOD SENSE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

New homes could benefit from having woodheaters installed say the Australian Home Heating Association (AHHA).

A report compiled by Dr John Todd for the AHHA shows that wood heaters produce far less greenhouse gas emissions than other fuel types. For architects designing energy efficient homes this could come as great news, as burning firewood from a sustainable source has a hugely positive effect on carbon dioxide (CO₂) levels.

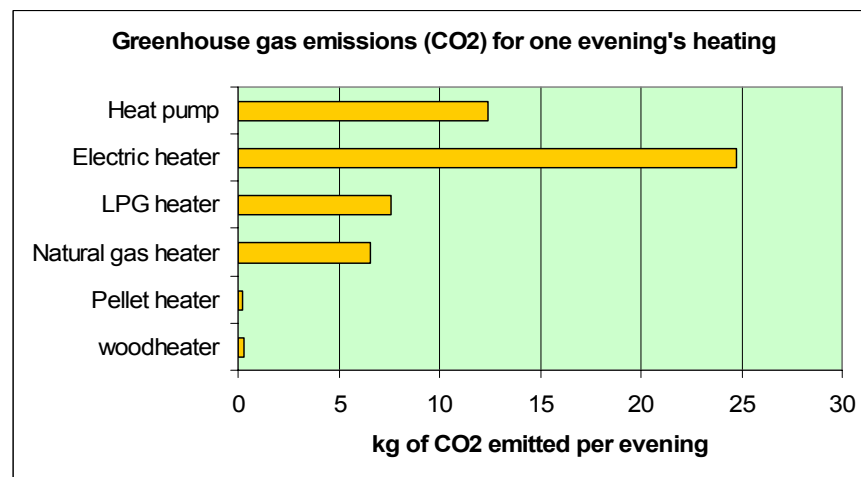


Fig 4.2 Greenhouse gas emissions (CO₂) for one evening's heating from Comparison of Residential Heating Costs and Greenhouse Gas Emissions for Firewood, Gas and Electricity by Dr John Todd, June 2005.

According to Todd's report, one tonne of firewood, burnt in a 65 per cent efficient woodheater will deliver approximately 10,000MJ of heat. In comparisons calculated by Todd, he has assumed that the same amount of heat is delivered from each of the other fuels types (LPG, electricity and natural gas). The above graph shows quite dramatically how low the greenhouse gas emissions are for firewood and wood-pellets provided the firewood is from a sustainable supply.

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

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Todd's report also emphasises that each household changing from firewood to either gas or electricity will substantially increase greenhouse gas emissions. With woodheaters experiencing an annual decline of around 3 per cent per annum, the yearly increase of greenhouse gas emissions for these houses alone is 173,000 tonnes of CO₂ (assuming the same heat input per household). This is not good for the environment.

Replacement heating fuel	Extra CO ₂ emitted per year for each household that switches from wood to another form of heating
Natural gas	2.7 tonnes per year extra CO ₂
LPG	3.2 tonnes per year extra CO ₂
Electricity	10.6 tonnes per year extra CO ₂
Electric heat pump	5.3 tonnes per year extra CO ₂

Table 4.3 When one household changes from wood heating to another type of heating, greenhouse gas emissions increase by the quantities shown here¹.

If one way to lower greenhouse emissions is simply by installing a modern, clean burning wood heater, it makes sense for energy-conscious architects to incorporate them into their designs and help the environment, alongside other energy saving options like high performance glazing, adequate insulation and efficient lighting appliances.

Of course, as well as the climate change advantage associated with firewood use, woodheaters also offer high heat output, a comfortable mix of radiant and convective heating plus the obvious aesthetic appeal. The benefits are endless!

With modern wood heaters meeting strict emissions Standards, plus the proof that they are less harmful to the environment than other fossil fuels, we could do a lot worse for the future of our planet than revert back to the most ancient style of heating - with fire.

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

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