

REDUCING EMISSIONS FROM WOOD HEATERS

Why are emissions associated with wood heaters a problem?

Emissions from wood heaters contain particulate matter and other pollutants. These emissions can be a significant contributor to ambient levels of air pollution during winter months. In some areas due to their geographical features, this is particularly so when a colder air layer lies over a warmer air layer (inversion layer).

Particulate matter is associated with health effects in humans, especially respiratory and cardiovascular effects and was classified as a human carcinogen by the International Agency for Research on Cancer in 2013.

Is there a national approach to minimising wood heater emissions?

In April 2014, Australian Environment Ministers agreed to work towards establishing a National Clean Air Agreement by 1 July 2016 to ensure that the community continues to enjoy clean air and addresses impacts on human health and the environment.

Consistent with this approach, Ministers also requested the finalisation of a number of key existing projects aimed at improving air quality standards and reducing emissions, including a Decision Regulation Impact Statement (RIS) on options to reduce emissions from wood heaters.

Commonwealth, State and Territory governments are currently working to finalise the Decision RIS. The work will reflect the new Standards for wood heater efficiency (AS/NZS 4012:2014) and emissions (AS/NZS 4013:2014) developed by Standards Australia in 2014, in consultation with industry and government.

- Further information on the history of the project to reduce emissions from wood heaters([link is external](#)).

What can I do about reducing wood smoke?

Factors that can contribute to the amount and type of emissions produced by wood heaters include:

- fuel moisture content
- wood heater operation
- maintenance and cleanliness of the wood heater and flue

Usually the major reason for excessive emissions is due to poor wood heater operation.

If you use a wood heater, you can make a difference to the quality of the air you breathe by ensuring your wood heater is burning brightly before you reduce any air controls. Overnight burns should be avoided, as these tend to smoulder and pollute the neighbourhood.

Source: <https://www.environment.gov.au/protection/air-quality/wood-heaters>