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Feedback on POEO (Clean Air) Regulation 2022

I would like to provide feedback on the lack of changes to the POEO (Clean Air) Regulation 2022 to address wood fire heater emissions.

This current legislation, with respects to wood fire heaters, does not reduce the air pollution from this heating source. On a 10 minute walk around my neighbourhood, I returned home with my clothes and hair reeking of smoke produced by 3 houses in the area including my neighbour.

There seems to be a belief that the current wood fire heaters standards result in less emissions. However based on my own personal experience, I can confirm this is a fallacy as my neighbour installed their heater in 2021 under the new wood fire heater standards and I am continually exposed to high volumes of smoke from their wood fire heater.

My Council also used the current Australian Standard to support my neighbour's installation even through it was sending smoke directly into **open** structures on my roof and therefore into my home. According to my Council, based on the current Standards, having a pre-existing **vented** skylight and flued rangehood extractor "did not preclude the installation of the neighbours wood fire heater in the current location" and therefore it is now my issue that the smoke is entering my home through these external structures.

Also there seems to be some belief that wood fire heater smoke pollution only occurs in winter however my neighbour already started burning in late March therefore the exposure to smoke pollution is much longer (and the same is reported online by other individuals).

Reading the EPA's Impact Statement it clearly details the health and environmental impacts of wood fire heater emissions thereby indicating the need for more stringent legislation to protect the community instead of just maintaining the status quo.

Proposal to amendments to the POEO (Clean Air) Regulation 2022:

1. introduction of yearly licensing on wood fire heater ownership. These license fees could then be put towards health and environmental costs from exposure to the toxins in wood smoke and habitat removal (as detailed in the EPA's Impact Statement) rather than funded by tax payers (for whom the majority do not have a wood fire heater).
2. The legislation currently only covers the requirement for new wood fire heaters to meet the Australian Standard however there is no mechanism to measure that the Standard is actually reducing emissions in the 'real world'. Mobile air monitoring devices that can be located at the actual point of a wood fire heater install should be legislated to confirm whether the defined levels in the Standard are being met. This would also help support Councils to identify a pollution event due to wood fire heater emissions in a specific neighbourhood.
3. Emissions are higher when there is a concentration of wood fire heaters in a single area. Current Standards does not take this into account. There should be restrictions on how many wood fire heaters should be allowed to be installed within a residential area especially in urban areas where homes are very close together.

4. Neighbours should have the right to object to the installation of wood fire heaters on a residence. Wood fire heater smoke has a more detrimental impact to the young, elderly and those with pre-existing health issues however these individuals have no rights to object and instead see their health exacerbated from the smoke produced by neighbouring wood fire heaters.
5. Mandate the replacement of all older wood fire heaters to the latest standard (as a minimum). There is no use implementing a Standard to reduce wood heater emissions if households can continue to retain their current old heaters which continue to pollute their community.

I do hope more is added to this legislation with regards to wood fire heaters to ensure clean air.

Regards

Lucy

(NSW resident)