

**From:**  
**To:** [Community Affairs Committee \(SEN\)](#)  
**Subject:** DOMESTIC WOODFIRES - WHO NEEDS THEM?  
**Date:** Thursday, 7 March 2013 3:06:56 PM

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Dear Sir,

Herewith I would like to add my concern - to that of many others - regarding the adverse health effects of domestic woodfires.

I live on the Northern Beaches, NSW, enjoying a supposedly healthy climate. We have neither ice nor snow nor temperatures below freezing point at any time of year. I have lived here for more than sixty years, always enjoying good health.....until neighbours installed woodheaters. Now there is a woodheater to the right, one to the left, one diagonally across the road and several at various angles in the other direction, a couple up the hill from my home. So we are literally surrounded by them and ingest copious amounts of woodsmoke each and every winter's day, whichever way the wind blows! I live in a valley-like basin, therefore the smoke has nowhere to go and stays and drifts, accumulating due to inversion layer and topography.

It is well known and documented that woodsmoke is injurious to one's health. The volume of smoke from one chimney equals those from the plumes of hundreds of cigarettes, yet the Health Departments from State and Federal Governments only action to oust tobacco, turning a blind eye to woodsmoke and refusing to acknowledge this is far worse!!

I have never smoked in my life yet have been diagnosed with a health issue which is smoke-related. I have an adult child with an intellectual disability living with me. I also have small grandchildren living elsewhere who periodically come and stay with us, together with their parents.

It is well know and documented that the haze from woodsmoke adds far more to the overall pollution of the atmosphere during the colder months than that of hundreds of cars. Woodsmoke adds billions to the health budget. A study in 2010 by the Environment Department found woodsmoke pollutants could also affect rates of cancer, birth defects and nervous system disorders.

In 2001 a pilot program was started in the Blue Mountains, Cooma, Armidale and Orange, supposedly soon to be implemented in Sydney - that is now twelve years ago and nothing has happened! This program, by the then NSW State Government, made offers of up to \$700 to replace woodheaters with low pollution alternative heating.

However, my GP recently pointed out an article in the "Australian Doctor" of 18 January 2013 which documented a \$2million scheme which WAS implemented, removing woodheaters from Launceston - and the health benefits to residents were astonishing; whereas in Hobart, where nothing was changed in the respect of air quality, mortality rates were unchanged.

The incessant exposure to woodsmoke - which, due it being fine particulate pollution, is able to enter homes via cracks around doors and windows, even if they are closed - is specifically detrimental to the health of the very young, the elderly and the disabled. I have all three categories in my household and do not wish any of them to be exposed to this carcinogen.

I would ask the Federal Government to note the benefits to the Health Budget when this preventable cause of (therefore) unnecessary health issues to us all is finally removed!!!

Yours unfaithfully,