

Scheme to reduce wood smoke

By Naomi Fallon

AS wood smoke season approaches again, the ACT Government has encouraged Canberrans to replace their old wood heaters with a more environmentally friendly option.

Minister for the Environment, Climate Change and Water Simon Corbell launched the 2011 wood heater replacement program last week.

The program – a partnership between the ACT Government and ActewAGL – encourages people to remove, recycle and replace their wood heater with a new mains-supplied natural gas heater.

The rebate for replacing wood heaters with ducted gas systems remains at \$800 and \$600 for new flued gas installations.

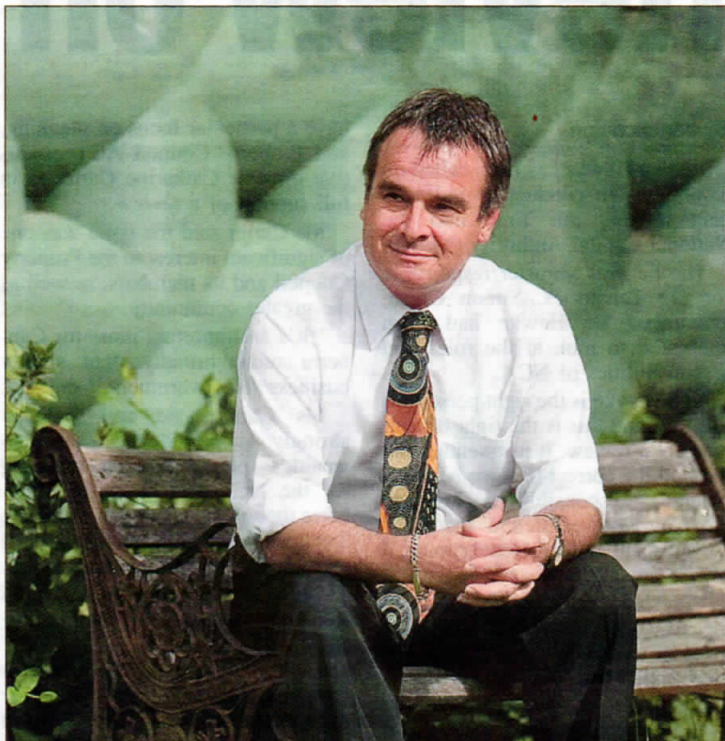
“Wood smoke has a detrimental impact on air quality in the ACT, particularly in the Tuggeranong Valley, and this program is an important way that individual households can help to protect our environment,” Mr Corbell said.

Mr Corbell said wood smoke levels had steadily declined in Canberra over the last decade.

Since the launch of the Wood Heater Replacement program in 2004, 894 wood heaters have been replaced.

“Despite this positive trend, we continue to have a winter particle pollution problem due to emissions from wood heaters used for home heating, mostly in the Tuggeranong area,” Mr Corbell said.

Tuggeranong Community Council president Darryl Johnston, who has been an advocate for the



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program in the past, said it was great to see it continue.

“It’s in fact one of the most generous buyback programs in Australia,” he said.

Mr Johnston said the only downside was that the program did not give people a rebate if they chose to transfer to electricity.

“I would like to see it expanded so people that aren’t on the gas grid – and there are a lot of them – can take advantage of it,” he said. “If

they had the choice of electricity, they could get rid of their wood heaters and transfer over to a reverse cycle system or an electronic heat pump system.”

Mr Johnston said other wood heater buyback programs in Australia gave people the option of gas or electricity.

“Many people in Tuggeranong who would take advantage of this program can’t because they’re not on the grid,” he said.