



MEDIA RELEASE

Council supports moves to cut winter wood smoke pollution

The Tuggeranong Community Council (TCC) welcomes any boost to initiatives aimed at reducing and eventually eliminating winter wood smoke pollution in the Tuggeranong Valley.

Council President, Darryl Johnston was commenting on moves to expand the ACT Government's Wood Heater Buyback Scheme and educate the community on the environmental health impacts of wood smoke pollution.

Mr Johnston said winter wood smoke pollution continues to be a major problem in Tuggeranong. He said many neighbourhoods regularly suffer from high to extremely high levels of air pollution that seriously impacts on public health.

"Tuggeranong must be considered a special case. Because of its topography wood smoke builds up in the Valley and is regularly trapped under a layer of cold air. Tuggeranong then becomes a cauldron of toxic air pollution," Mr Johnston added.

"The ACT Government should also seek federal government assistance to boost its wood heater buyback scheme to provide greater financial incentives to residents to transfer to cheaper, cleaner, greener and more efficient forms of heating. A successful federally funded wood heater buyback program has significantly reduced wood smoke pollution in Launceston Tasmania.

He said that according to the National Pollution Inventory more than two thirds of Canberra's air pollution was generated by the burning of wood for domestic heating. It also identified wood smoke as the major source of pollutants that are considered carcinogenic to humans.

"Australian and international experts, including the Asthma Foundation, the Australian Lung Foundation, federal and state departments of health and environment warn that indoor and outdoor wood smoke pollution has a serious impact on public health. They say wood smoke contains many of the same dangerous chemicals found in cigarette smoke, it can trigger asthma attacks and can lead to the hospitalisation of the very young, the elderly and those with existing heart and lung conditions."

Mr Johnston said the Council supports all efforts to encourage residents to transfer to cheaper, cleaner, greener and more efficient forms of heating. It has also called for the burning of wood for domestic heating to be banned in all built-up areas of the Valley by 2016.

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