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Dear Sir/Madam,

To address the EPA Clean Air Consultation Paper 2017 we (my significant other and I) wish to submit the following and to bring to your attention awareness of the significant detrimental effects we have suffered to our health (and finances) over the past 6 years as a result of the growing popularity in burning wood fired heaters, in addition to other wood burning devices.

We note that despite being used by less than 5% of households in Sydney as the main form of heating, the Clean Air for NSW Consultation paper shows that residential wood heating emits more PM2.5 in Sydney than any other human activity. However the only proposal put forward is to adopt what is misleadingly called "updated Australian/NZ standards". These 'standards' have been rejected outright by New Zealand.

The NSW Chief Medical Officer Dr Kerry Chant has deemed wood heaters so detrimental to human health she supports banning and phasing them out in all built-up urban areas.

The burning and combustion of firewood (and charcoal) produces voluminous quantities of the most health-hazardous pollutant in our air (responsible for more premature deaths than any other pollutant), that being PM2.5 pollution - fine particles less than 2.5 millionth of a meter which penetrate the deepest recesses of our lungs where they can then enter the bloodstream and transport toxins to every organ of the body including the brain.

Our personal experience fully backs Dr Chant's calls for governments to implement strict controls over wood burning and we will demonstrate this by giving our personal account of how we have been adversely affected by wood smoke in recent times. In 2013 after years of suffering from wood smoke inhalation and the subsequent detrimental effects on health I was forced to sell my then recently renovated and much loved home on Sydney's Northern Beaches at a cost of over \$40,000. This was on the advice of numerous medical practitioners in an effort to protect my health. Not only was I then surrounded by private homes burning fires at night in winter (post electricity hikes) but I was also in the path of a newly established wood and charcoal burning meat cooking restaurant of a large capacity from which for us the fumes and pollutants were intolerable. The pollutants penetrated into my home and despite myriad attempts there was no way to keep it out. For three years (from 2010 to 2013) I was forced to relocate while trying to find a solution. Subsequently I was eventually forced to sell my home and move to a less 'hazardous' location. The stress was enormous.

Having been forced to move from my previous home of 22 years 4 years ago to a new home which I believed was 'safer' our local Pittwater Council recently accepted a DA from a large hotel chain (The Newport) just 300m from my new home to not only install two large wood fired pizza ovens which burn continuously but to also burn outdoor fire pits over the winter months, this in a previously deemed 'smoke-free' zone. The smoke and pollution from this hotel over the winter months in 2016 was distressing to say the least and impacted my (our) health considerably. I also noted three days ago there is YET ANOTHER wood fired restaurant about to open its doors in Newport village, once again putting us in the 'firing line.'

Another important point to note is that we have in recent years observed an increasing number of home wood heaters being operated not just in June and July over the colder months but also from April to October, even on nights when the temperatures are hovering around a comfortable 18 degrees. It seems clear that residents are now not necessarily burning wood fires to keep warm, but burn them instead for ambience, and because of the current misguided prevailing perception that it is trendy, fashionable, and 'sexy' (heading of a Manly Daily newspaper) to burn fires.

**I wish to emphasize, NO ONE should ever be forced to have to spend tens of thousands of dollars to sell their home and move house in an effort to protect their health from their neighbour's wood smoke.**

At the same time we have seen a recent explosion in the display and sale of not only outdoor fire pits, but outdoor wood-fired pizza ovens as well as wood fired barbecues. In recent years these devices have been heavily promoted not only in department and hardware stores but also through the media, particularly television shows. In addition there has been an explosion in the popularity of wood-fired pizza and meat cooking restaurants and it seems Sydney now has at least two or three of these in every suburb, adding to the overall burden of air pollution.

There seems to be an enormous amount of ignorance surrounding the use of wood burning devices and the subsequent effects on health, not only for the user but for many of the surrounding residents.

**The question must be raised: if individuals now by law must not subject any other individual or persons to their cigarette smoke (second hand smoke) because of the risks this poses to human health, how is it that individuals are permitted to smoke out entire neighbourhoods for a much longer period of time when wood smoke is recognised as being 12 times more toxic than cigarette smoke? This inconsistency in our laws is glaringly obvious and must be addressed.**

To address the growing problem of wood smoke pollution now pervasive and ever present in our suburbs Governments and the EPA must initiate a public awareness campaign on the damaging effects of wood smoke on human health. Programs and advertisements to educate the public of the health risks of burning wood fires similar to those launched to promote public awareness of the damaging effects of cigarette smoke through the media ie television and newspapers should be implemented. Education programs about the harmful effects of wood smoke on human health should also be introduced throughout primary and secondary schools.

Other measures should include:

- Strict regulations pertaining to the sale and use of outdoor fire pits and similar wood burning devices, such that these devices can only be utilised in regional areas, in less populated locations. Permits to use these devices should be compulsory.
- The sale of outdoor fire pits/wood fired pizza ovens/wood fired barbecues could/should be phased out and terminated.
- Installation of new wood heaters should be banned in all urban areas.
- The proliferation of wood fired restaurants/commercial businesses in urban areas should be discouraged and halted. Filtration systems used by these commercial businesses are clearly inadequate.

