

Launceston Ratepayers' Association Inc.

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The Editor,
The Examiner Newspaper

Dear Editor,

Please publish this letter in your *Letter to the Editor* column.

Climate Change Effects on Launceston Ratepayers.

One of the initiatives in the 5 Year Strategic Plan of the Launceston City Council (that closed for public comment earlier this week) is for LCC to investigate a ban on new wood heaters being installed in Launceston homes by 2011.

Whilst in principle we agree with banning dirty woodheaters, a serious consideration against this action is that many Launceston residents already experience 'heating/fuel poverty' and cannot afford to make the change even with a heater-buy-back scheme. You only have to look at last weekend's papers about the rise in electricity bills and you can see we have a very real problem.

What the LCC should be doing is something proactive to ensure other affordable energy sources are made available to Launceston residents – such as natural gas, and it should work with the State/Federal government to secure funds to allow a greater coverage of the natural gas network in the city, and it should not give money away to buy out old woodheaters.

LCC has also ignored the significant contribution made to air pollution and greenhouse emissions by the list of industrial operators, that continue to pollute. One single polluter emits the equivalent of 2500 woodheaters, more than what LCC has achieved by its buyback scheme so far. But what data is there to measure this, when only one of the city measuring stations is operating, and then nothing is measured during the summer from the Ti-tree Bend Station when the industrial input could be established.

Premier Bartlett has announced his government's draft climate change bill with the ambitious target to reduce Tasmania's greenhouse gas emissions by at least 60% of 1990 levels, by 2020. How will this affect the poverty-stricken, struggling pensioner or low-paid worker in Launceston, already unable to afford adequate heating, food or sustain Launceston's unfair and unjust rating system, let alone fuel a motor car ?

For information concerning heating/fuel poverty, see

www.launcestonratepayers.intas.net.au

Signed

Max Plummer

Hon. Sec / Treasurer, Launceston Ratepayers' Association Inc.

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