23rd October 2015

The Hon. Matthew Groom

Minister for Environment, Parks and Heritage

House of Assembly

Parliament House

Hobart 7000

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Dear Sir,

**National Air Quality Standards**

Environment Ministers are expected to adopt new national air quality standards this December.

It is great that PM10 standards are being looked at and tightened by the environment ministers.

However, when it comes to our most damaging air quality problems from a health point of view the science tells us it is PM2.5’s that we should be regulating.

PM10’s lodge in the upper airway. From here in many people they can be expelled by sneezing, coughing and blowing the nose.

PM2.5’s on the other hand travel deep into the lungs and stop there.

Wood smoke has a PM2.5 signature

Associated aerosols are small enough to cross from the lungs into the blood stream. These can carry additional toxins that attach themselves to the fine particulates and can all set up reactions within the body.

We know for example that wood smoke thickens the blood causing DVT’s, PE’s and heart attacks.

With all the current health and scientific evidence before us Australia cannot continue to have just advisory standards for PM2.5’s.

Whilst it is recognised by environment ministers we need tightened PM10 standards, it is more important that we move to compliance standards for PM2.5’s and this has not been recognised by the Ministers.

Tasmania leads the way in most areas for bad health outcomes across the country.

Respiratory disease such as asthma and COPD; non-skin cancers, and cardiac disease, together with hospital admissions for same, are some of these poor health outcomes that have been described for PM2.5 fine particle pollution.

The current advisory standards for PM2.5 need to be tightened and changed to become compliance standards.

Will you actively campaign for this amongst your other environment ministers when they meet next to determine our ambient air quality standards?

Tightening PM10 standards is good and necessary but does not address our ambient air quality problems that are related to PM2.5 sized fractions.

Most states already base their air quality measurements on PM2.5 and we need national standards adopted by their environment ministers to reflect this.

Thank you and I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Clive M. Stott