



ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AUTHORITY

24 March 2009

SmokeWatch launched in Mount Gambier

The Environment Protection Authority will launch the SmokeWatch community education program in Mount Gambier today at the town's Civic Centre (10 Watson Tce, Mount Gambier) at 6pm.

Dr Monica Nitschke from the Department of Health will also be present to talk about the health impacts of wood smoke on the community.

The SmokeWatch program aims to reduce wood smoke in the Mount Gambier area by encouraging householders to use their wood heaters more efficiently.

In conjunction with the program, the EPA will be locating an air quality monitoring station in Mount Gambier to gather information on wood smoke pollution in the area.

EPA Chief Executive Helen Fulcher said the winter months are fast approaching and people should be reminded that inefficient wood heaters can produce as much pollution as cars.

"I encourage people to participate in SmokeWatch and take the necessary steps to ensure they are getting the most out of their wood heater.

Ms Fulcher said wood heater users should:

- only burn dry, seasoned wood
- keep the air vents open for 20 minutes after starting and reloading the fire
- keep the fire live and bright, but let it go out at night
- check there is no smoke from the chimney 20 minutes after starting the fire.

"If after taking these steps, significant smoke is still coming from the chimney, people should either contact their local wood supplier or contact the EPA for assistance."

The SmokeWatch program is a collaborative partnership between the EPA, City of Mount Gambier, the Firewood Association of Australia and the Australian Home Heating Association.

Anyone wanting more information on the SmokeWatch program should visit www.epa.sa.gov.au or phone the EPA on (08)8204 2004.