

City News Letters 10 July 2025

I trust the professors on wood heating

The latest contribution to the wood heater and pollution debate by Vi Evans (letters, CN July 3) cannot go unanswered.

In her letter she makes reference to the research in Australia's leading medical publication, the Medical Journal of Australia, by a group of eminent environmental health researchers in 2023, who Ms. Evans says, "do not appear to have any significant reputations".

: For a start, Prof Fay Johnston has more than 30 years' experience as a public health physician and environmental epidemiologist. She currently heads the environmental health research group at the Menzies Institute for Medical Research and leads the Centre for safe Air, a National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Centre of Research Excellence. She has received national and international recognition for her work including being named a global woman leader in fire science in 2018.

Prof Sotiris Vardoulakis has more than 25 years' experience in public health. He has advised national and local governments and international organisations, including the World Health Organization and the United Nations on the health effects of climate change, air pollution and extreme events, and on sustainable development. He is currently Director of the NHMRC Healthy Environments and Lives (HEAL) National Research Network and is Professor of Environmental Public Health at the University of Canberra Health Research Institute.

Prof Geoff Morgan is an epidemiologist with more than 30 years' research experience and development of environmental health policy and education. His current work includes epidemiological studies into the health effects of smoke from various sources including bushfires and wood heaters.

When it comes to wood heater pollution and my health and that of my family and neighbours, I trust the word of professors Johnston, Vardoulakis and Morgan over and above that of the wood-heating industry.

Darryl Johnston, Tuggeranong