

LAUNCESTON DOMESTIC WOOD SMOKE PLAN

2026

Acknowledgement of Country

In appreciation of the rich history and cultural heritage of our city, we recognise Tasmanian Aboriginal people as custodians of this land.

We honour the resilience of Palawa people of Lutruwita, who have endured the challenges of invasion and dispossession while steadfastly preserving their heritage, identity, culture and rights.

In the spirit of mutual respect and collaboration, it is our sincere belief that working together with the Aboriginal community, who represent the world's most ancient continuous culture, offers us invaluable opportunities to learn and grow.

Our deepest respects are extended to both past and present Elders, and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people residing in and around Launceston.

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Key resources to aid in review	
Environmental Management and Pollution Control (Smoke) Regulations 2019 (Smoke Regulations)	View - Tasmanian Legislation Online
Smoke Regulations and Wood Heating (EPA)	Smoke Regulations and Wood Heating EPA Tasmania
National Environment Protection (Ambient Air Quality) Measure	National Environment Protection (Ambient Air Quality) Measure nepc
WHO global air quality guidelines: particulate matter (PM2.5 and PM10), ozone, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide and carbon monoxide	WHO global air quality guidelines: particulate matter (PM2.5 and PM10), ozone, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide and carbon monoxide
enHealth Guidance for 1-hour PM2.5 and forecast 24-hour PM2.5 air quality categories and public health advice	enHealth Guidance for 1-hour PM2.5 and forecast 24hour PM2.5 air quality categories and public health advice
EPA - Historical BLANKET Data (PM2.5)	Historical BLANKET Data EPA Tasmania
UTAS - Developing a real-world testing protocol for evaluating particulate and greenhouse gas emissions from Australian wood heaters	Development of the Tasmania Protocol 1.1 (3).pdf

Executive summary

The City of Launceston's Domestic Wood Smoke Plan sets a framework to improve community health and wellbeing by reducing air quality impacts from domestic wood heating. Reducing domestic wood smoke is expected to improve air quality and deliver health benefits to the community.

There is strong and well-established evidence that exposure to wood smoke is associated with many adverse short and long-term health outcomes, particularly affecting respiratory and cardiovascular health although not limited to these areas. In Launceston, air quality is generally good during the warmer months; however, during the cooler months, a combination of local topography, meteorological conditions and emissions from domestic wood heating can result in periods of significantly degraded air quality across the city and surrounding suburbs.

Although domestic wood smoke is not the only contributor to poor air quality, it is a significant and seasonal source of particulate pollution in Launceston, particularly during the cooler months when wood heater use increases and local conditions can limit smoke dispersion. Global research indicates that poor air quality is associated with significant health impacts, including increased rates of illness and premature deaths, with estimated health costs across Tasmania in the hundreds of millions of dollars each year. Air quality monitoring for Launceston indicates that national and internationally recognised particulate matter guidelines are routinely exceeded throughout the cooler months. Further Launceston may not have an even spread of wood smoke, with evidence suggesting some suburbs are significantly more impacted than what current monitoring indicates.

The Domestic Wood Smoke Plan provides a practical, balanced, and evidence-based approach to supporting cleaner home heating choices across the community. The plan seeks to improve local air quality, protect public health, and reduce the impacts of wood smoke emissions, while recognising the important role that wood heating continues to play for many households, particularly during Tasmania's colder months.

The Plan focuses on education, awareness, and supporting residents to make informed decisions about home heating. Through community engagement, information sharing, and targeted supportive initiatives, residents will be equipped with the knowledge and resources needed to operate wood heaters efficiently, improve home energy performance, consider alternative heating options, and reduce unnecessary smoke emissions.

Recognising that household circumstances, heating needs, and financial capacity vary across the community, the plan promotes a range of practical and achievable solutions. This approach supports household choice while encouraging actions that contribute to cleaner air, healthier neighbourhoods, and improved community wellbeing.

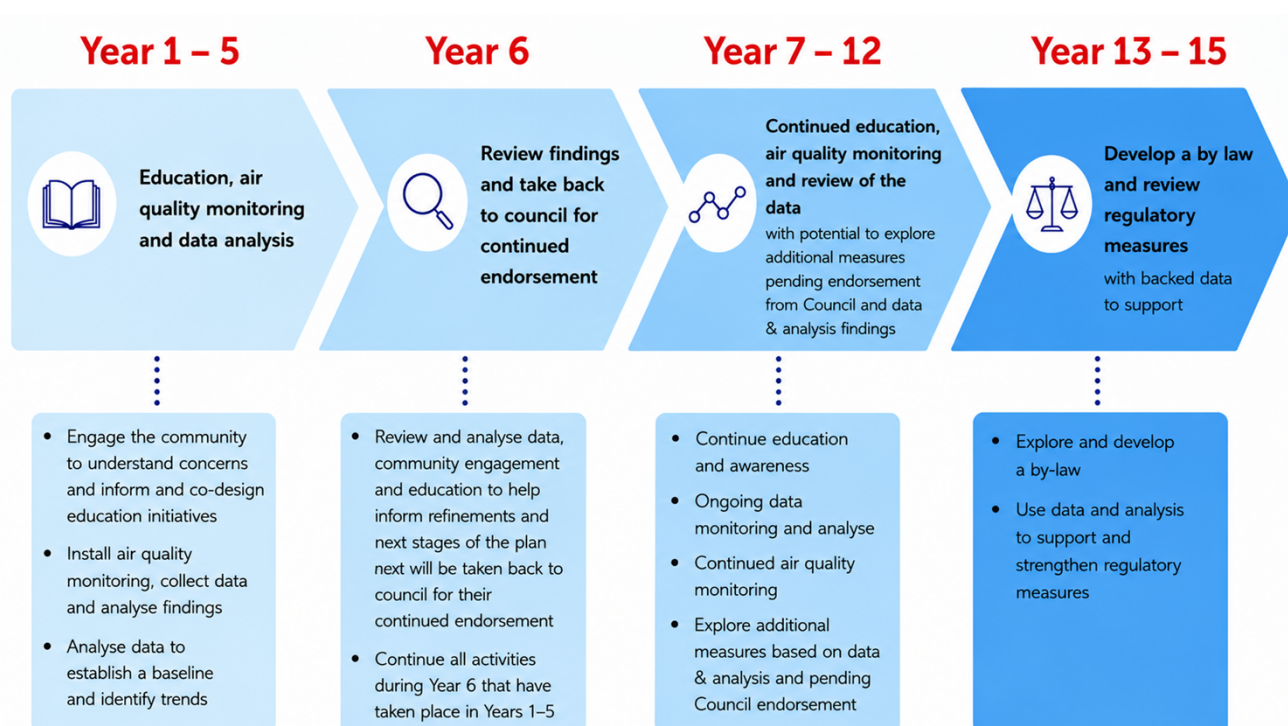
The Domestic Wood Smoke Plan has been developed as a long-term strategy with a 15-year implementation horizon. Delivery will occur through a staged and adaptive approach, beginning with education and support measures and progressing to include targeted regulatory actions and explore new regulatory measures in response to emerging evidence, community feedback, and measurable outcomes. Ongoing monitoring, evaluation, and expanded air quality data collection will inform

implementation and enable Council to assess progress, identify areas of greatest need, and determine future priorities and actions.

The Plan supports the City of Launceston's broader commitment to cleaner air, environmental sustainability, and the protection of public health. Regular review points and continued Council endorsement will provide governance and strategic oversight, ensuring the plan remains relevant, responsive, and aligned with community expectations and evolving best practice.

Implementation will be undertaken in partnership with residents, industry stakeholders, health professionals, community organisations, and government agencies. This collaborative approach will help ensure initiatives remain practical, achievable, equitable, and responsive to local needs and community expectations, whilst striving to improve air quality and community health.

By encouraging informed choices and providing practical support, the Domestic Wood Smoke Plan aims to deliver lasting improvements in winter air quality, contribute to healthier and more liveable neighbourhoods, and support positive environmental and health outcomes for current and future generations, while maintaining a focus on fairness, affordability, and community wellbeing.



Air quality guidelines and measures

Air pollution is caused by a range of pollutants and emission sources, and the contributors to poor air quality can vary depending on the location, season, weather conditions and surrounding land uses. Common contributors include particulate matter from combustion sources such as domestic wood heating, planned fuel reduction burns, bushfire smoke, industry, transport emissions, agricultural activities, dust, and other commercial or residential sources. Historic land-use and town planning patterns can also influence exposure, particularly where residential areas, sensitive uses and emission-generating activities are located close together, or where there has been limited opportunity to provide separation, buffers or offsets. In addition, Launceston's valley setting and seasonal weather conditions can affect how pollutants disperse, meaning emissions may accumulate close to where people live, work and gather. Within this broader air quality context, domestic wood smoke is one important and locally relevant contributor, particularly during the cooler months when wood heater use increases and particulate matter levels are most likely to rise.

In Australia ambient air quality is assessed against the National Environment Protection (Ambient Air Quality) Measure (Air NEPM). The Air NEPM establishes the pollutants that must be monitored, prescribes monitoring methods, and sets national standards and reporting requirements. The Air NEPM provides standards for key pollutants, including those relevant to wood smoke, such as particulate matter (PM_{2.5}). The Air NEPM's objective includes achieving air quality that affords adequate protection of human health and wellbeing (National Environment Protection Council, 1998). Importantly when states fail to meet the Air NEPM standards the NEPC does not have any power to take action and there are no real consequences (Zosky et al., 2021). Additionally, the Australian Environmental Health Standing Committee (enHEALTH) emphasises that the Air NEPM does not delineate between "safe" and "unsafe" or "good" and "bad" air quality (enHEALTH, 2024).

The Air NEPM specifies both 24-hour and annual average standards for PM_{2.5}, which is used as a proxy measure for wood smoke exposure. In 2025, these PM_{2.5} standards were revised downward to 7 µg/m³ (annual average) and 20 µg/m³ (24-hour average) (National Environment Protection Council, 1998). While the Air NEPM identifies these standards for Australia the scientific evidence indicates that harmful effects can occur at levels well below these thresholds, and that wood smoke has a non-threshold, non-linear dose-response, meaning even low levels of PM_{2.5} can have disproportionately large health impacts (Brauer, 2022). The World Health Organization (WHO) also publishes air quality guidelines for PM_{2.5} and currently recommends an annual average of 5 µg/m³ and a 24-hour average of 15 µg/m³. These lower guideline values reflect the growing body of evidence supporting that adverse health effects occur at lower PM_{2.5} concentrations than previously recognised (World Health Organization, 2021).

Why Launceston should have a domestic wood smoke plan

The Launceston region experiences good air quality throughout much of the year. However, during the cooler months, periods of poor air quality remain a concern. Launceston is particularly susceptible to poor winter air quality because its valley setting, combined with cold, calm weather, can create temperature inversions that limit air movement and trap pollutants close to the ground. While a range of sources contribute to air pollution, domestic wood smoke becomes a particularly significant contributor during the cooler months, when wood heater use increases and fine particulate matter can accumulate in low-lying areas. In cold, calm weather (common in low-lying

Tasmanian valleys) smoke accumulates and produces localised episodes of poor air quality (Bennett, 2010) (Johnston, 2013).

Wood smoke is primarily measured using PM_{2.5} (Particulate Matter <2.5µm) and includes atmospheric particles with as diameter of less than 2.5 micrometres - about 1/20th the diameter of a human hair. Because these particles are so small, they can penetrate deep into the lungs, enter the bloodstream and contribute to a range of health harms (Huff, 2025). This is particularly important in Launceston, where winter temperature inversions and local topography can trap fine particles close to the ground, increasing exposure during cooler months. Localised monitoring, including the 2017 air quality assessment, indicates that PM_{2.5} impacts are not evenly distributed across the city, with some suburbs experience poorer air quality than others. This uneven exposure is significant when considered alongside local 2022 Census health data showing that parts of the Launceston community experience higher levels of respiratory and cardiovascular vulnerability, including conditions such as asthma, chronic lung disease, heart disease and stroke. Reducing PM_{2.5} from domestic wood smoke becomes an important public health measure that supports cleaner air for the broader community.

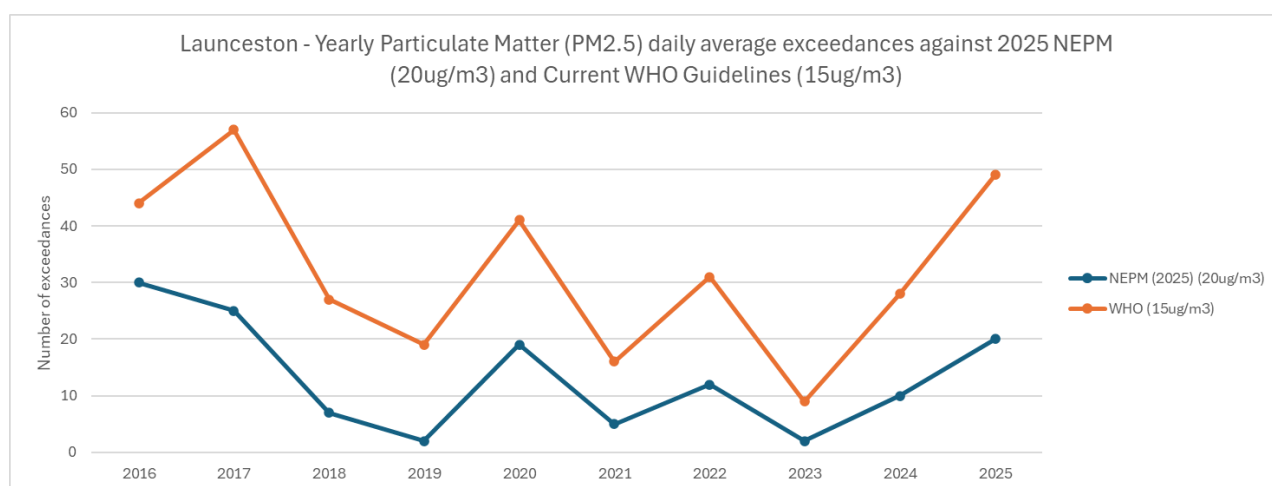


Figure 1: Launceston PM_{2.5} daily average exceedances over a 10-year period

A detailed understanding of Launceston's air quality is limited, as ongoing monitoring is undertaken at only two locations, South Launceston and Ti Tree Bend, by the Tasmanian Environmental Protection Agency (Tas EPA). This monitoring shows that Launceston routinely exceeds the current Air NEPM and WHO 24hr PM_{2.5} (wood smoke) Guidelines over the cooler months (Figure 1) (Environmental Protection Authority Tasmania, 2026).

Short-term peaks in PM_{2.5} increase hospital presentations for respiratory and cardiac conditions, and produce other acute symptoms such as headache, nausea, dizziness and irritation of the eyes, nose, throat and lungs. Short term exposure is also linked to reduced lung function and increased risk of serious health events such as strokes and heart attacks. Long-term exposure to PM_{2.5} is associated with increased risks of developing chronic health concerns such as lung and heart disease. Both short and long-term exposure are associated with worsening some respiratory diseases such as asthma, COPD, leading to increased hospital visits, hospitalisations and premature death (Huff, 2025) (Sacks, 2011).

It is estimated that in 2015 there were 728 premature deaths attributed to wood heater smoke in Australia (Borchers-Arriagada et al., 2024) and the annual cost from wood heater smoke in Tasmania may be around \$293 million which includes over 50 premature deaths. Modelling suggests that the health burden costs from a single wood heater in the Tasmanian community is \$4232 each and every year (Borchers-Arriagada et al., 2020).

Additional data from non-routine EPA mobile monitoring, conducted in 2015 and 2017, highlights that Launceston does not have an even distribution of wood smoke and that some of Launceston's suburbs may experience very different air quality than what is indicated by the existing monitoring stations (Figure 2) (Innis, 2017). This is further reinforced through Tas EPA monitoring that compared the suburb of Ravenswood to that of South Launceston over the cooler months of 2021. This monitoring showed the Ravenswood suburb exceeded the Air NEPM on 23 days compared to South Launceston with 2 exceedances a difference by a factor of 10 (Innis, pers. comm., 14 April 2026). For the year 2025 Launceston breached Australian Air Quality Measures (Air NEPM) daily average exposure for PM_{2.5} on 20 days and the World Health Organisation (WHO) Guidelines over 49 days (Figure 3). Launceston has a history of exceeding these measures and guidelines (Environment Protection Authority Tasmania, 2026).

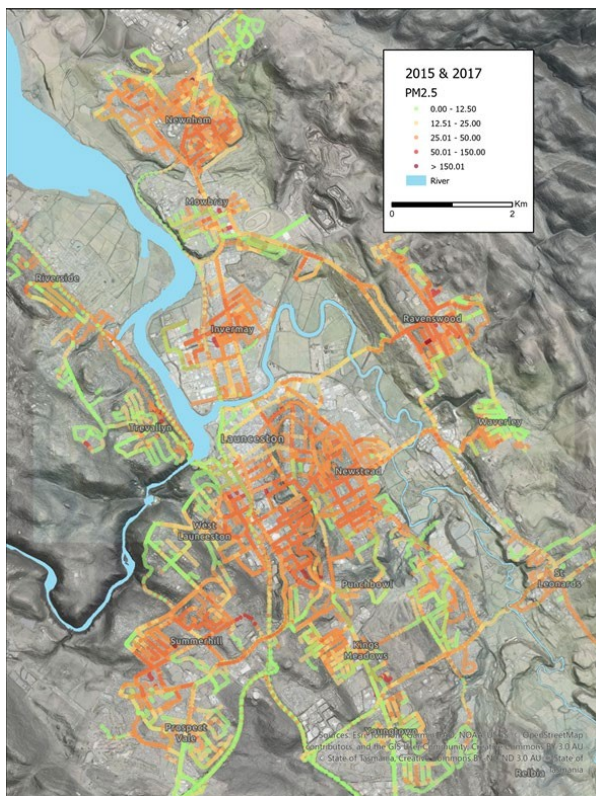


Figure 2: Launceston PM_{2.5} showing discreet pockets of wood smoke

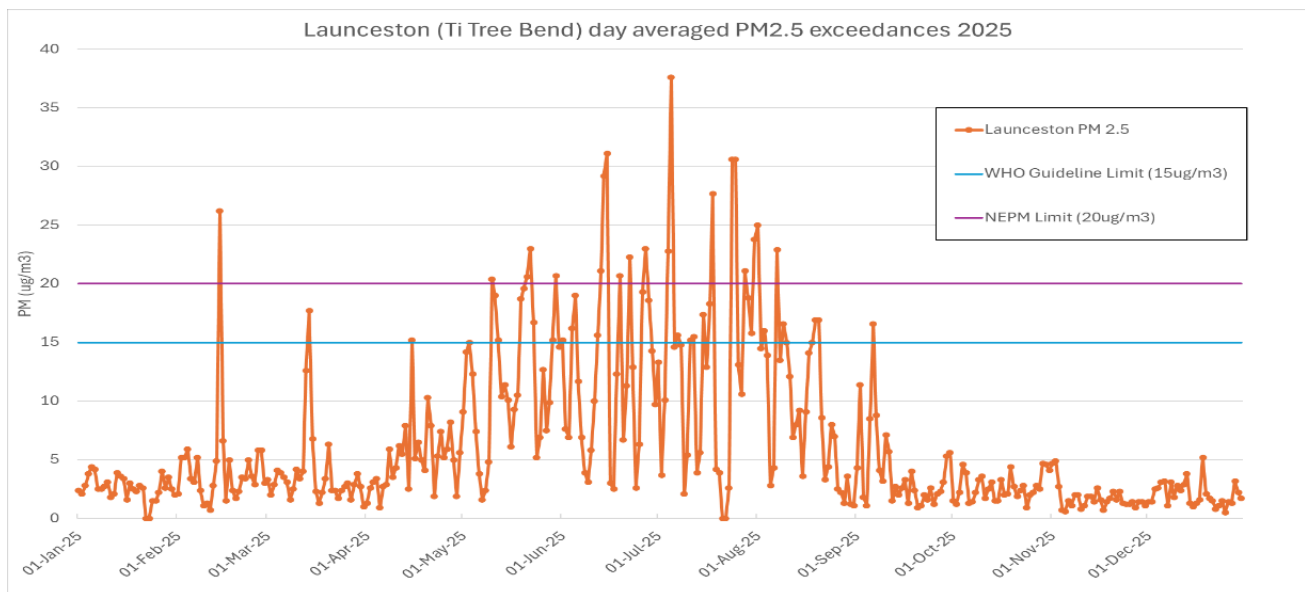


Figure 3 - Day averaged PM_{2.5} with current Air NEPM and WHO Guideline limits - 2025

Despite generally good air quality for much of the year, Launceston continues to experience significant and uneven wood smoke pollution over the cooler months that routinely breaches both National and WHO air-quality standards. Limited monitoring may mask the true extent of the problem, with mobile and suburb-level data revealing hotspots where exceedances occur at rates up to ten times higher than other suburbs. These elevated PM_{2.5} levels may pose a health risks to the community and associated economic costs on the Tasmanian community. Taken together, the persistent exceedances, inequitable exposure across suburbs, and serious health and financial impacts to the Tasmanian community demonstrate a clear and urgent need for a coordinated Domestic Wood Smoke Plan to protect community wellbeing and improve Launceston's air quality.

Plan Scope

Smoke from domestic wood heating impacts people primarily based on their proximity to the emission sources. This Domestic Wood Smoke Plan will focus on the suburban and urban areas of Launceston and townships where wood smoke from nearby properties has the potential to impact people's health (Vardoulakis, 2024). In predominantly off-grid, semi-rural, rural or remote settings, the likelihood that emissions from a single property will affect neighbouring properties is low. In these contexts, exposure to wood smoke is more likely to be confined to the occupants themselves, meaning the associated health risks could be considered an informed personal choice (Victorian Legislative Council Environment and Planning Committee, 2021). This differs markedly from urban environments where emissions from a single property can affect many surrounding households. In such settings, exposure is often involuntary, with neighbouring residents having limited or no capacity to avoid the impacts of wood smoke. In instances where neighbouring properties outside the scope of this Plan are impacted by domestic wood smoke, existing complaints processes through Council can be utilised to manage the risk.

The streets identified in red below (Figure 4), including the urban area of Launceston and surrounding suburbs are to be included within the scope of this Plan. Lilydale and Relbia remain out of scope for the initial phases of the Plan, with further monitoring and data collection to inform future decisions and any proactive approaches.

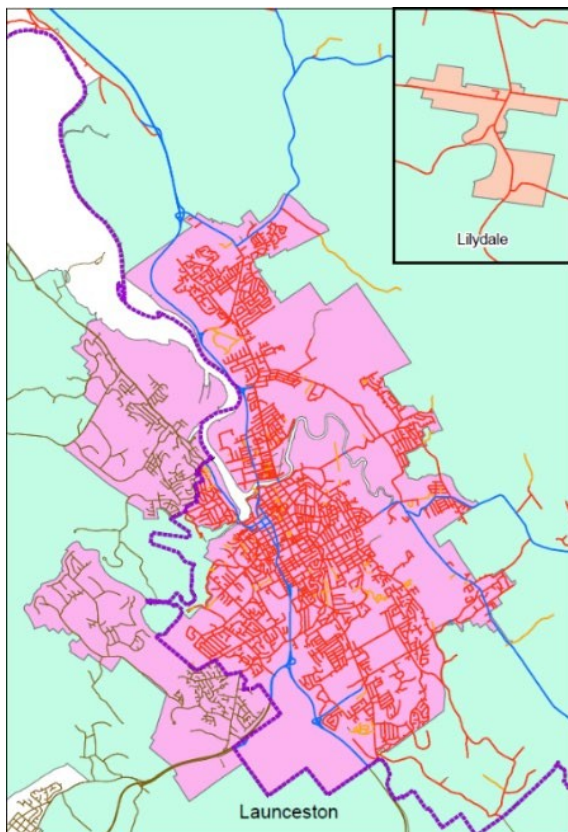


Figure 4: Streets identified in red are included within the scope of the Domestic Wood Smoke Plan (Final image to exclude Lilydale and Relbia).

Vision and Principles

The City of Launceston Domestic Wood Smoke Plan's vision is to support the community's transition towards cleaner home heating practices and progressively improve air quality outcomes through education, collaboration, informed choice, and evidence-based decision-making.

The principles that underpin this vision and guide the implementation of the Plan are to:

- **Educate and inform** the community about wood smoke, home heating options, and opportunities to reduce emissions through best-practice operation and maintenance.
- **Encourage and support change** towards cleaner and more efficient heating options through targeted programs, partnerships, and incentives.
- **Monitor air quality** to improve understanding of local conditions and provide transparent, real-time information to the community.
- **Provide proactive education and appropriate and targeted regulation** to support compliance with legislative requirements and ensure decision-making is informed by contemporary evidence and local data.
- **Explore future policy and regulatory options**, including the potential development of a by-law, to help reduce wood smoke impacts, support long-term air quality improvements, and protect Council and community investment in cleaner air initiatives.

These principles form the foundation of the Plan and will guide actions over a 15-year implementation period. The Plan adopts a staged and adaptive approach, recognising that meaningful and lasting change is best achieved through long-term community engagement, ongoing evaluation, and evidence-based decision-making.

As an initial milestone, the Plan aspires to achieve and maintain the Air NEPM annual average PM_{2.5} standard of 20 µg/m³ within the first six years of implementation. Achievement of this outcome will provide an opportunity to review monitoring data, assess the effectiveness of implemented actions, and determine future priorities.

Following this review, and subject to continued Council endorsement, the longer-term aspiration for years 7 to 15 is to progressively work towards the current World Health Organization annual average PM_{2.5} guideline value of 15 µg/m³. This reflects the City's commitment to continuous improvement while ensuring that future actions remain practical, proportionate, and responsive to local circumstances, community expectations and emerging scientific evidence and changes to best practices.

The Plan will be regularly reviewed throughout its implementation to ensure it remains relevant, effective, and informed by emerging evidence, technological advancements, and community needs. Through this adaptive approach, the City of Launceston will continue to identify opportunities to improve air quality outcomes and support a healthier, more liveable community for current and future generations.

Community Feedback

Between March and June 2026, the City of Launceston undertook a two-stage engagement process to inform the development of the Domestic Wood Smoke Plan. Figure 4 summarises the feedback from both forms of engagement. Community feedback confirmed that domestic wood smoke is a complex issue requiring a balanced, practical and evidence-informed response. Many participants supported action to improve winter air quality and reduce health impacts, particularly for vulnerable residents and areas experiencing poorer air quality. At the same time, feedback reinforced that wood heating remains an important source of winter warmth for many households, particularly where affordability, housing quality, energy efficiency and reliable alternatives are significant considerations.

Launceston Domestic Wood Smoke Plan

Community Engagement Findings

July 2026



ABOUT THE PROJECT

The City of Launceston's Domestic Wood Smoke Plan sets a framework to improve community health and wellbeing by reducing air quality impacts from domestic wood heating, while recognising the important role wood heating continues to play for many households.

Between March and June 2026, the City of Launceston undertook a two-stage engagement process to better understand community experiences of domestic wood smoke, air quality concerns, and feedback on proposed actions to improve winter air quality in the Launceston urban area.

The engagement also helped further develop and refine the draft Domestic Wood Smoke Plan, ensuring it was informed by local knowledge, community priorities and lived experience.

STRATEGIC GOAL 1.3

Launceston's attractive employment opportunities, enviable lifestyle and our reputation as a forward-thinking city make it the destination of choice for professionals, entrepreneurs and innovators.



OBJECTIVE 1.3(c)

Establish Launceston as a national leader in sustainability through our achievements in circular economy innovation and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.



ENGAGEMENT AT A GLANCE

STAGE 1 – COMMUNITY SURVEY 25 March – 12 April 2026

-  **1,050** contributors
-  **1,150** survey responses
-  **671** additional written comments

Survey responses were received from residents in 40 of the municipality's 52 suburbs, providing insights from a diverse range of urban and rural communities.

STAGE 2 – DRAFT PLAN CONSULTATION 4 May – 14 June 2026

-  **140** contributors
-  **509** written comments
-  **2,511** people viewed the draft Plan

Participants provided written feedback on the draft plan's proposed goals, actions and implementation priorities.



Responses were analysed alongside SEIFA (Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas) data to better understand how socio-economic factors may influence household heating choices, needs and experiences.

Published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), SEIFA scores measure relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage, with lower scores indicating greater disadvantage and higher scores indicating greater advantage.



COMMUNITY SENTIMENT OVERVIEW

During the Stage 2 consultation period, Council received 509 submissions through Council's engagement platform Tomorrow Together, along with 23 emailed submissions.

Feedback demonstrated that the issue of wood smoke generates strong and often competing views within the community. Participants expressed a wide range of views, highlighting the need to balance improvements in air quality and public health with considerations of affordability, practicality and household choice.

A high-level review of submissions found that:

-  **50%** of submissions were broadly supportive of the draft plan and its proposed actions.
-  **12%** of submissions expressed concerns about or opposition to the draft plan.
-  **25%** of submissions contained mixed views or were neutral in nature, often supporting some actions while raising concerns about others.
-  **13%** of submissions provided constructive feedback, suggestions or recommendations to help strengthen the Plan.

STAGE 1 SURVEY: WHERE WE HEARD FROM

RESPONDING SUBURBS BASED ON HIGHEST NUMBER OF RESPONSES

Suburb	Number of responses	Own a wood heater	Use wood heating as primary source	SEIFA Score
Trevallyn	104	65	45	1034
Launceston	86	63	49	1002
West Launceston	80	49	36	1016
South Launceston	75	50	38	969
Newstead	62	34	18	1010
Invermay	58	35	28	888
East Launceston	55	42	30	1049

RESPONDING SUBURBS BASED ON LOWER SEIFA SCORES

Suburb	Number of responses	Own a wood heater	Use wood heating as primary source	SEIFA Score
Rocherlea	8	6	6	592
Ravenswood	25	21	20	718
Mayfield	12	8	7	741
Waverley	23	14	12	794
Mowbray	45	28	24	846
Newnham	51	39	32	871
Invermay	58	35	28	888

KEY FINDINGS FROM THE SURVEY

- The survey received 1,150 responses from residents across 40 suburbs.
- 750 respondents reported having a wood heater.
- 581 respondents reported using a wood heater as their primary source of heating during winter.
- Responses were received from communities across a broad range of SEIFA scores, including some of the municipality's more disadvantaged areas. This reinforces feedback about the importance of heating affordability, cost-of-living pressures and practical transition pathways.

KEY FINDINGS FROM THE CONSULTATION



WOOD HEATING REMAINS IMPORTANT

Most survey respondents rely on wood heating during winter. Among respondents, 69–70% reported having a wood heater or open fireplace, and 77% of those households use wood heating as their primary source of winter warmth.

Daily use during winter was common, and most respondents were not considering replacing or removing their wood heater in the next 12 months.



AIR QUALITY AND HEALTH

While many respondents rated winter air quality as good, some reported concerns about smoke impacts.

Respondents described experiencing smoke odour, needing to keep windows and doors closed, reduced enjoyment of outdoor areas, and health impacts such as coughing, eye irritation and asthma flare-ups.



COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

The most supported actions focused on:

- Education about health impacts and correct wood-heater operation
- Practical financial assistance for switching to cleaner heating options
- Real-time air-quality information and alerts
- Improved compliance with existing smoke regulations



WHAT WE HEARD: COMMON THEMES ACROSS BOTH STAGES OF ENGAGEMENT



BALANCING HEALTH AND AFFORDABILITY

Balancing health and air-quality outcomes with household affordability.



EDUCATION FIRST

Providing education before introducing new regulations.



SUPPORTING TRANSITION

Supporting households through incentives and practical transition pathways.



INFORMATION & MONITORING

Improving access to air-quality information and monitoring.



A BALANCED APPROACH

Taking a balanced approach that recognises different community circumstances.



CONCERNS ABOUT GOVERNMENT OVERREACH

Concerns from some community members about government overreach and potential restrictions on household heating choices.



TRANSPARENCY MATTERS

Concerns about perceived bias or a pre-determined outcome. Importance of transparency and ensuring community feedback is reflected in decisions.

Across both stages of engagement, common themes included support

for education and awareness, improved access to air-quality information, targeted action on high emitters and repeat non-compliance, and practical transition pathways that are affordable and achievable. Participants also emphasised the importance of transparent decision-making, ongoing use of local air-quality data, continued community engagement, and collaboration with government agencies, health professionals, industry, universities and community organisations. Some participants raised concerns about potential restrictions on household heating choices, while others considered the proposed approach too gradual and sought stronger or faster action to address health impacts.

The feedback received has directly informed the final Plan. In response, the Plan places greater emphasis on staged implementation, clear communication, expanded monitoring, evidence-based decision-making, targeted education and compliance activities, and ongoing review before any further regulatory measures are considered. It also recognises the need to consider household circumstances, socio-economic factors and practical barriers to transition, rather than relying on a single or blanket solution.

Overall, the engagement process demonstrated strong community interest in improving air quality, while also confirming that domestic wood smoke is a polarising issue and that wood heating remains highly valued by some community members as an effective, familiar and affordable form of winter heating. Although the survey represents only a portion of the community, the responses highlight the need for greater education, localised air-quality awareness and clear communication to support the community through any transition. Feedback also showed that concerns about moving away from wood heating are closely linked to Launceston's local housing context, including older or poorly insulated homes, heating affordability, energy reliability and the practical costs of change. The Plan has therefore been shaped as a long-term, adaptive framework that seeks to improve winter air quality and protect public health, while recognising that transitioning to cleaner heating forms part of a broader healthy homes conversation and must remain practical, proportionate, transparent and responsive to local evidence, household circumstances and community expectations.

Action Plan - How Council will improve air quality in Launceston

In conjunction with feedback received from the community, a review of other similar programs and available scientific literature the following actions have been identified as areas where Council may best be able to improve air quality. These actions include community engagement and education, incentives, air quality monitoring, smoke education/regulation patrols and new regulatory measures such as by-laws. The tables on the following pages provide further detail on the core proposed actions outlined below.

The 15-year Plan is to be rolled out over stages with the initial 5 years focusing on education, incentives, monitoring and regulation. As the Plan progresses to subsequent stages the focus will move toward a regulatory approach (education will still be provided but at a revised capacity) with smoke patrols focused on enforcement of Smoke Regulations and the exploration of implementing a by-law.

			Stage and year of implementation																	
Commitment/ Initiative	Develop		Stage 1					Stage 2					Stage 3							
	Deploy / implement		1 yr	2 yr	3 yr	4 yr	5 yr	6 yr	7 yr	8 yr	9 yr	10 yr	1 yr	2 yr	3 yr	4 yr	5 yr			
	Review & realign																			
COMMITMENT 1: Community engagement and education - develop and deliver a community engagement and education plan (Inc. health education, wood heater operation, maintenance and fuel education etc.)																				
COMMITMENT 2: Air Quality Monitoring - Site, deploy and manage air quality sensor network and rollout suburb specific real time air quality visual interventions (up-lit trees or facades)																				
INITIATIVE 1: Explore incentives to facilitate change for cleaner air quality																				
COMMITENT 3: Proactive Education (Smoke education patrols primarily focussed on education). Undertake action under the Smoke Regulations for persistent or deliberate non-compliance over the cooler months.																				
COMMITMENT 4: Proactive Regulation (Smoke patrols primarily focussed on regulation and compliance with the Smoke Regulations over the cooler months)																				

INITIATIVE 2: Investigate and develop a by-law and supporting processes to reduce the number of wood heaters emitting smoke and limit further installations within the Launceston urban area					
COMMITMENT 5: Investigate wood smoke complaints from the community					
COMMITMENT 6: Collaborate with stakeholders - Community, State/Federal Government bodies, NGO's, Business and other relevant parties to form partnerships.					
INITIATIVE 3: Advocate for changes to State Planning Scheme, Federal and State Legislation and Australian Standards to improved air quality					

Commitment 1- Community Engagement and Education

Community engagement and education are vital aspects of any plan to reduce domestic wood smoke. This was reinforced through community consultation with education being the most important action identified that Council should act upon. Prior to actions being taken, the community should be informed of how the program will impact them and the resources and incentives that will be available. Education alone has shown little influence on reducing wood smoke from domestic wood heating; however, it is an important tool to include to complement and work alongside the actions Council can implement to facilitate change. Council will focus on developing and promoting educational material in the following key areas:

Wood heater operation and health focused educational material

In Tasmania wood smoke educational material has generally focussed on wood heater operation and maintenance to reduce smoke emissions. Whilst this is still important, additional educational material will be developed to inform the public about the significant health impacts of wood smoke.

The EPA provides educational material to the public through the Burn Brighter This Winter program. Council has historically distributed these resources to the community as required. It includes important information about how to operate a wood heater correctly. This will continue to be an important resource to provide to the community alongside the Domestic Wood Smoke Plan.

Visible intervention (Light tree or façade)

Council will implement suburb specific 'visual' interventions, such as an illuminated tree or building façade, that will be up-lit a colour corresponding to real time air quality. This provides an avenue to highlight the real time air quality for individual suburbs and elevate this information within the community in a way that many people can access. This real time air quality information can also be made available through other platforms such as dashboards or on the Councils website.

Schools, community and sporting groups education intervention

Council will engage with schools and community and sporting groups across the Launceston urban area to promote awareness of wood smoke and its health impacts through information sharing, educational resources, and collaborative activities.

Council community presence

Council will engage the community through face-to-face events to deliver education material, promote incentives, keep the community apprised of the Plan's progress and improve understanding of the impacts of wood smoke. Council will also explore citizen science opportunities and other community-led approaches that enable residents, schools, community groups and local organisations to participate in air-quality awareness activities, share local observations and help build community advocates and leaders for cleaner air across Launceston.

Wood heater and firewood retailers

Council will engage with wood heater retailers, firewood suppliers and wood yards to provide educational resources that can be shared with customers at the point of purchase and through ongoing business channels. This will include information on correct wood heater operation and maintenance, the importance of using dry, seasoned and untreated wood, and practical guidance on storing firewood so it remains dry and suitable for burning. Council will also explore opportunities to work with retailers and suppliers to promote consistent messaging, support customer understanding of low-smoke practices, and investigate appropriate ways to recognise or promote suppliers who can demonstrate the provision of dry, quality firewood.

Proactive Education

Proactive education is a key component of the Domestic Wood Smoke Plan and is essential to reducing wood smoke in Launceston. Throughout the cooler months, smoke patrols will be used as an opportunity to engage with the community, promote awareness of wood smoke impacts, and provide relevant educational resources and support.

The City of Launceston will support residents by offering guidance and resources to assist with compliance, including advice on wood heater operation, maintenance, fuel management (e.g., storage of seasoned firewood) and where multiple instances of non-compliance or deliberate breaches of the Smoke Regulations are identified, enforcement action may still be undertaken in accordance with the current Environmental Management and Pollution Control (Smoke) Regulations 2019

Commitment Table - Community engagement and education

No.	Commitment 1 - Community engagement and education
C1.1	Develop a community engagement plan including the identification of educational resources required to inform and educate the community on: 1. the health impacts from wood smoke, 2. how to operate and maintain a wood heater correctly, 3. residents and business legislative requirements (Smoke Regulations and Building Act). 4. firewood and wood heater retailer educational resources
C1.2	Design and procure education resources (media resources, videos, pamphlets, door hangers, fridge magnets etc.)
C1.3	Deliver the community engagement plan
C1.4	Collaborate with stakeholders and local schools and community groups around engagement and education
C1.5	Explore the option of community champions, people or organisations that are interested in helping Council promote air quality. Champions could house a visual intervention or monitor at their property. This could be schools, community groups, businesses or members of the public

C1.6	Investigate and develop alternative methods to provide air quality information to the community
C1.7	Investigate and apply for grant opportunities to support air quality education initiatives
C1.8	Educate community on Healthy Homes

Commitment 2 - Air Quality Monitoring & Initiative 3 - Advocacy

Monitoring is an essential part of a successful domestic wood smoke plan and will provide an understanding of air quality and ongoing PM_{2.5} levels used to evaluate the program against. Monitoring and the ability to provide air quality information back to the community ranked highly in actions the community thought Council should undertake to help reduce domestic wood smoke. To assist in understanding, localised air quality monitoring is proposed through the installation of a network of air quality sensors located throughout Launceston and surrounding urban suburbs. This will be supported by mobile air quality sensors used to monitor hot spots or complaint areas.

Implementing air quality monitoring may provide the evidence needed to understand local conditions, inform targeted action, and ensure that our community has access to transparent, reliable information about air quality. This monitoring may strengthen our ability to influence state and federal policy while taking practical steps to improve local environmental conditions.

The advocacy initiatives included in the following table are also relevant to this section, as they support the broader air quality monitoring and future regulatory themes of the Plan. Local air quality data will provide an important evidence base to inform Council's advocacy for stronger wood heater emission standards, improved testing protocols and future regulatory reform. In addition, advocating for air pollution, including wood smoke, to be recognised as a public health issue strengthens the rationale for ongoing monitoring, transparent reporting and future policy responses that are focused on protecting community health and improving long-term air quality outcomes.

Commitment Table - Air quality monitoring

No.	<i>Commitment 2 - Air quality monitoring</i>
C 2.1	Investigate potential locations and purpose of air quality sensor deployment (desktop).
C 2.2	Procure and deploy air quality sensor monitoring network into the community.
C 2.3	Manage air quality monitoring network.
C 2.4	Determine if calibration is required for the air quality sensor network and apply the 'calibration' formula. Undertake ongoing calibration with EPA reference instruments.
C 2.5	Ongoing monitoring and reporting of Air Quality data
C 2.6	Locate suitable sites for visual interventions (up-lit trees or facades). One or two sites to be identified in the first year to coincide with the initial air quality monitoring rollout. Continued exploration of suitable sites across the first 5 years of the plan.
C 2.7	Arrange for the installation of visual education interventions (timeframe e.g. 1 or two each year).
C 2.8	Meet the WHO PM2.5 air quality target as the Domestic Wood Smoke Plan goal. Aspiration to adopt the Air NEPM by Year 6 and work towards achieving WHO Guidelines by the end of the Plan
C2.9	Review and monitor air quality data across suburbs and townships to identify additional areas that may warrant inclusion within the scope of the Plan

Initiative Table - Advocacy

No.	<i>Initiative 3 - Advocacy</i>
I 3.1	Work with stakeholders and industry bodies to advocate to State and Federal Governments for the inclusion of the UTAS Tasmanian Protocol for wood heater emission testing within the Australian Standards for wood heater emissions.
I 3.2	Advocate for air pollution, including smoke, to be treated as a health issue and not an environmental / pollution issue.

Initiative 1 – Community Incentives

At this stage, Council is not proposing to offer direct financial incentives as part of the Plan. Instead, Council will explore alternative approaches that encourage behaviour change and support emissions reduction through education, awareness and community engagement initiatives. This may include working collaboratively with retailers, suppliers and industry stakeholders associated with wood heaters, firewood and related products to identify opportunities that promote lower-emission practices and technologies. The aim is to encourage voluntary uptake of cleaner heating solutions and behaviours that deliver outcomes similar to those typically achieved through financial incentive programs. These initiatives will be monitored and refined over time, informed by community participation, stakeholder engagement and the effectiveness of the measures in supporting the Plan's objectives.

Council will explore the potential role of financial incentives in supporting households to reduce emissions from domestic wood heating and transition, where appropriate, to cleaner and more efficient forms of home heating. Any future incentive program would need to be informed by localised air quality data, socio-economic factors, community feedback and evidence of what is most likely to achieve meaningful reductions in wood smoke. As financial incentives may involve the use of community funds to support changes at individual properties, any proposal would be subject to detailed cost-benefit analysis and further Council consideration before implementation. This will ensure that any investment is practical, equitable and well targeted, and that it delivers the greatest overall benefit for the Launceston community through improved air quality, public health outcomes and long-term value.

Initiative Table - Incentives

No.	Initiative - Community Incentives
I 1.1	Educate the community on the availability of third-party loan schemes.
I 1.2	Council explore and develop an in-home visit or consultation service that supports the community in ways to improve their wood heater use
I 1.3	Ongoing development of initiatives to encourage behavioural change
I 1.4	Explore financial incentives to support behavioural change
No.	Initiative - Stakeholder

I 1.5	Explore stakeholder engagement and support to assist community in alternate ways to heat their homes (electricity, solar, pellet heating, gas heating suppliers etc)
I 1.6	Initiative 1.2 will include exploring how retailers could be involved/incorporated into this initiative

Commitment 3 & 4 - Proactive regulatory education and regulatory measures & Initiative 3 - Advocacy

Proactive education is essential to identify households emitting wood smoke above the limits set in the Smoke Regulations and was highlighted through the community survey as an area where Council could help reduce wood smoke. Smoke patrol officers will patrol the Launceston community identifying residences that are breaching the Smoke Regulations. This approach will focus on one off and repeated breaches of the Smoke Regulations. This process involves identification, education, warnings, and potential regulatory action. Properties that are non-compliant with the Smoke Regulations will be provided a warning, education, wood heater inspection and correspondence reaffirming the resident's obligations under the Smoke Regulations. Subsequent breaches may incur an infringement.

Proactive education / regulation will have two stages, the first prioritising education over regulation. This will provide residents time to uptake education and incentives. The second stage of the Plan includes proactive regulation and will transition to a regulatory focused approach. Council will also continue to respond to wood smoke complaints from the community through existing processes and will provide education and regulation where appropriate.

The advocacy actions included under Initiative 3 support Commitments 3 and 4 by recognising that Council's ability to reduce domestic wood smoke is partly influenced by the broader regulatory framework set by State and Federal Government. While Council can undertake proactive education, smoke patrols and compliance activities under existing legislation, longer-term improvements may require changes to State legislation, national air quality policy and the way wood heater emissions are regulated. These advocacy actions have therefore been included to ensure Council can use local evidence, monitoring data and implementation experience to advocate for stronger and more effective regulatory tools that support improved air quality and public health outcomes for the Launceston community.

Commitment Table - Proactive regulatory education and regulatory measures

No.	Commitment 3 - Proactive regulatory education
C 3.1	Undertake smoke education patrols over the cooler months (education focus). 1 five years
C 3.2	Analyse air quality monitoring data and Census health data to develop community engagement initiatives for more vulnerable population groups
C 3.3	Collaborate with firewood suppliers and wood yards to promote community education on appropriate firewood selection, storage and use, including the importance of burning dry, seasoned and untreated wood.
No.	Commitment 4 - Proactive regulatory measures
C 4.1	Undertake smoke patrols over the cooler months
C 4.2	Undertake proactive regulation of hot spot areas identified through suburb specific monitoring
C3.2	Develop and maintain a Launceston Municipality wood heater register

Initiative Table - Advocacy

No.	Initiative 3 - Advocacy
I 3.3	Advocate for changes to State legislation to enable improved wood heater regulation
I 3.4	Advocate for the Federal Government to implement better air quality legislation around domestic wood heater emissions such as a National Air Strategy.
I.3.5	Collaborate with other Councils throughout Tasmania to help advocate the need for changes around wood smoke regulation etc.
I 3.6	Advocate for changes to the Planning Scheme to include residential protection from wood heater smoke.

Initiative 2 - Investigate implementation of a By-law

While education, initiatives and existing legislation play an important role in reducing wood smoke, a by-law can provide Council with additional tools to address ongoing sources of air pollution and support long-term improvements in community air quality. By-laws can be used to support and reinforce the outcomes of earlier initiatives within this Plan by providing an additional mechanism to reduce wood smoke emissions and improve air quality. Should monitoring, research and community feedback indicate that further action is required to achieve meaningful improvements, Council may investigate the introduction of a by-law as a later-stage response. Any proposed by-law would be informed by local data, scientific evidence, community consultation, industry engagement and a detailed assessment of regulatory effectiveness. The purpose of a by-law would be to complement existing education, incentive and regulatory measures by establishing locally appropriate requirements that support cleaner air outcomes for the community. Examples of measures adopted in other jurisdictions include restrictions on the use of high-emission or non-compliant wood heaters, limitations on indoor open fireplaces, requirements for replacement or upgrade of wood heaters at the point of property sale, minimum performance standards for new wood heater installations, and restrictions on the installation of new wood heaters in defined areas.

The usefulness of mechanisms such as those identified above, was highlighted through the ACT Wood Heater Program, where it was noted that part of the failure of their wood heater policy was being unaware of how many new wood heaters were being reinstalled back into the community (Australian Capital Territory, 2023). To compliment education, monitoring and regulation, by-laws could ensure older wood heaters and open fireplaces, do not continue to pollute and that any newly installed wood heaters meet a lower emissions criterion to reduce their impact on the community.

Future stages of the Plan may involve investigating the potential role of a by-law in supporting the achievement of the Plan's objectives. This would be considered only following continued Council endorsement, a strong evidence base, and assessment of the effectiveness of voluntary programs, education initiatives and community adoption measures.

Launceston City Council will review possible by-law options and determine whether these are appropriate and enforceable alongside existing legislation. The review will identify whether one or several of the following aspects could be integrated into a by-law:

- 1. Emissions from indoor open fireplaces**

- Open fireplaces emit significantly more PM_{2.5} than wood heaters (NEPC, 2013; Australian Government, 2021).

- 2. Emissions from older or high-emission wood heaters**

- Wood heaters installed prior to a set date or those that exceed emissions criteria of 1.5 g/kg will be restricted from operation in the Launceston urban area if identified breaching the Smoke Regulations.

3. **New wood heater and open fireplace installations within the Launceston urban area**
 - Regulate wood heaters or open fireplaces in **new residential dwellings** or **extensions/renovations**, except when replacing an existing wood heater or open fireplace. Wood heaters permitted to be installed must meet the requirements of item 4 below.
4. **Setting a reduced emission standard for new wood heater installations in the Launceston Urban Area**
 - New installations must meet emissions of 0.5–1.0 g/kg under the newly developed Tasmanian Protocol, UTAS (Test method for defining ultra-low emission wood heaters for hardwoods).
5. **Point-of-Sale upgrade or removal of wood heaters and open fireplaces**
 - Prior to the sale of a property, all wood heaters that are non-compliant with the current Australian Standards for wood heaters and all open fireplaces must be either:
 1. Replaced with a low-emission heaters (compliant with 4 above), or
 2. Removed with the building made good (fireplaces chimney or flue closed off).

Initiative Table - By-Laws

No.	Initiative 2 - By-Laws
I 2.1	Investigate viability of creating a by-law to enforce wood smoke regulation and associated activities through the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i> .
I 2.2	Lobby State Government for wood heaters by-law support.
I 2.3	Draft appropriate by-laws and Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS) for third party review.
I 2.4	Table by-laws in parliament for passage through both houses.
I 2.5	Implement and educate public and businesses on by-law.
I 2.6	Ongoing regulation of by-laws.

Key Success Metrics

The success of the Domestic Wood Smoke Plan will be measured through a combination of air quality outcomes, implementation progress, community participation, behavioural change, compliance activity and ongoing review. While long-term improvement in PM_{2.5} levels is a key measure of success, the Plan also requires practical measures that show whether actions are being delivered, whether the community is being supported to change, and whether Council is using evidence to adapt its approach over time.

1. AIR QUALITY OUTCOMES

A core measure of success will be whether Launceston's winter air quality improves over the life of the Plan. This will include tracking:

- annual average PM_{2.5} concentrations across the Launceston urban area;
- 24-hour PM_{2.5} exceedance days against the Air NEPM standard;
- 24-hour PM_{2.5} exceedance days against the WHO guideline;
- winter average PM_{2.5} concentrations, particularly during the cooler months when domestic wood smoke is most prevalent;
- changes in PM_{2.5} levels in identified hotspot areas and suburbs with poorer winter air quality;
- differences in air quality between suburbs, to assess whether localised exposure is reducing over time; and
- the extent to which Launceston progresses towards achieving and maintaining the Air NEPM standard in the first five years, with a longer-term aspiration to progressively work towards the WHO guideline over the life of the Plan.

Success should not rely only on city-wide averages. Localised monitoring will be important to determine whether air quality is improving in the suburbs and streets most affected by winter wood smoke.

2. MONITORING COVERAGE AND DATA QUALITY

The Plan will also be measured by whether Council establishes a stronger evidence base for decision-making. Success measures may include:

- establishment of a local air quality sensor network across priority suburbs and urban areas;
- use of mobile monitoring to assess hotspot areas, complaint locations and areas of potential concern;
- publication of accessible air quality information for the community;
- use of monitoring data to inform education, compliance, advocacy and future policy decisions; and
- improved understanding of spatial variation in winter PM_{2.5} across Launceston.

A successful monitoring program will provide Council and the community with more timely, localised and transparent information about air quality, while supporting more targeted and evidence-based interventions.

3. COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND EDUCATION

Education is a key foundation of the Plan. Success will be measured by whether the community has improved access to clear, practical and trusted information about wood smoke, health impacts and cleaner home heating practices. Measures may include:

- delivery of a community engagement and education plan;
- number and reach of education campaigns, resources, events and community activities;
- distribution of information through schools, community groups, sporting groups, retailers and other local networks;
- engagement with firewood suppliers, wood heater retailers and other relevant businesses;
- community awareness of wood smoke health impacts, measured through surveys or engagement feedback;
- community awareness of correct wood heater operation, maintenance and fuel storage practices leading to reduced complaints and instances of non-compliance;
- use of Council's website, dashboards or other communication channels to access wood smoke and air quality information; and
- uptake and visibility of real-time air quality information, including visual interventions such as illuminated trees or facades.

Success will be demonstrated when education activities are not only delivered, but are reaching the right audiences and supporting practical behaviour change.

4. BEHAVIOUR CHANGE AND HOUSEHOLD TRANSITION

The Plan aims to support residents to make informed and practical choices about home heating.

Success measures may include:

- reduced visible smoke from domestic chimneys during patrols and observations;
- number of residents accessing advice, in-home support, information sessions or referrals;
- uptake of available incentive opportunities or behaviour change initiatives, where available;
- Implementation of wood heater register and reduction in old and/or non-compliant wood heaters
- reduced reliance on high-emission appliances over time; and
- increased consideration of healthy homes, insulation, energy efficiency and cleaner heating options as part of the broader wood smoke conversation.

Because household circumstances vary, success should include measures that demonstrate Council is supporting practical and achievable change, not simply measuring enforcement outcomes.

5. COMPLAINTS, SMOKE PATROLS AND COMPLIANCE

The Plan should also measure how effectively Council responds to visible smoke and community concerns. Measures may include:

- number of wood smoke complaints received each year;
- complaint trends by suburb, season and type of issue;
- number of smoke education patrols undertaken during cooler months;
- number of properties provided with education, advice or warning correspondence;
- number of repeat non-compliance matters identified;

- number of regulatory actions taken under the Smoke Regulations, where appropriate;
- reduction in repeat non-compliance over time;
- proportion of matters resolved through education without requiring formal enforcement; and
- use of monitoring and complaint data to identify priority areas for proactive education or compliance activity.

A successful compliance approach will balance education and support with proportionate regulatory action for persistent or deliberate non-compliance.

6. EQUITY AND TARGETED SUPPORT

Given that wood heating is closely linked to household affordability, housing quality and access to alternative heating options, the Plan should include measures that consider fairness and vulnerability. Success measures may include:

- identification of areas where poorer air quality overlaps with higher health or socio-economic vulnerability;
- targeted engagement with communities most affected by poor winter air quality;
- consideration of affordability and housing constraints when designing initiatives;
- development of support pathways for households that may face barriers to transition;
- monitoring whether education, incentives or support programs are reaching households most likely to benefit; and
- ensuring future regulatory or policy options are informed by equity, practicality and community impact.

Success will require improvements in air quality while maintaining a fair and proportionate approach for households with different needs and capacities.

7. PARTNERSHIPS AND ADVOCACY

The Plan relies on collaboration with other levels of government, industry, health professionals, universities, community groups and local businesses. Measures may include:

- partnerships established with State and Federal Government agencies, health bodies, universities, community organisations and industry stakeholders;
- collaboration with other Tasmanian councils on wood smoke education, regulation and advocacy;
- advocacy for improved wood heater standards, testing protocols and regulatory frameworks;
- engagement with firewood and wood heater retailers to support better community information;
- funding secured for education, monitoring, research, incentives or implementation activities; and
- evidence of Council's monitoring data being used to support broader policy reform.

Success will be demonstrated when Council is not acting alone, but is using partnerships and advocacy to strengthen local and broader air quality outcomes.

8. POLICY, REGULATORY AND BY-LAW DEVELOPMENT

For later stages of the Plan, success should include whether Council has built the evidence base required to consider future regulatory options. Measures may include:

- completion of reviews into the effectiveness of education, monitoring, incentives and existing regulatory measures;
- development of a wood heater register or other mechanism to better understand the number, location and type of wood heaters in the municipality;
- assessment of the viability, enforceability and community impact of a potential by-law;
- completion of legal, policy and regulatory impact assessments, where required;
- further community and stakeholder consultation before any new regulatory measure is progressed; and
- implementation of any future by-law or regulatory measure only where supported by evidence, community engagement and Council decision-making.

A key success measure is not simply whether a by-law is introduced, but whether Council has undertaken a robust, transparent and evidence-based process to determine whether one is necessary and appropriate.

Overall, the Domestic Wood Smoke Plan will be considered successful if it results in measurable improvement in winter air quality – aligning to the NEPM and later the WHO guidelines, better localised understanding of PM_{2.5} impacts, increased community awareness and behaviour change, reduced excessive visible smoke, stronger evidence-based decision-making, and practical support for households to transition towards cleaner home heating choices over time.

Success will be measured progressively, recognising that meaningful air quality improvement requires sustained action, community participation, adequate monitoring, targeted support and continued Council commitment. The Plan should therefore be evaluated not only against long-term air quality targets, but also against whether Council is delivering the actions, partnerships, education, compliance and review processes needed to achieve lasting improvement.

This Plan aligns with the City of Launceston's Strategic Plan by supporting a healthier, more liveable and sustainable city, while also contributing to broader Tasmanian, Australian and global health priorities that recognise clean air as fundamental to public health and wellbeing. For Launceston, this work is especially important because the city's valley setting, seasonal weather conditions and reliance on domestic wood heating can combine to create winter air quality impacts that are not experienced equally across the community. Prioritising cleaner air is therefore both an environmental and a public health responsibility, requiring sustained action, shared commitment and practical support for households, businesses, industry, government and the wider community. Through this Plan, Council calls on all parts of the Launceston community to work together, make informed choices, support cleaner home heating practices and help protect the health of current and future generations.

Appendix A

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK (SURVEY)

The first round of community engagement included a survey which was completed by 1150 participants. The DRAFT Domestic Wood Smoke Plan considers these inputs when identifying the actions to be taken. Key outcomes from the survey includes:

- Approx. 70% of respondents have a wood heater or open fireplace in their residence and of those 77% use them as their primary source of heating over winter.
- 30% of respondents do not have a wood heater or open fireplace and of those 85% use reverse cycle air conditioners.
- 90% of respondents who already have a wood heater or open fireplace were not looking to replace their source of heating in the short term.
- Close to 7% of respondents who have a wood heater or open fireplace were looking to remove or replace their heating due mainly to environmental and health concerns.
- Those with a wood heater or open fireplace and who were not looking to change cited their current heating arrangements worked better than other forms of heating and that they operated their wood heater or open fireplace appropriately producing little smoke.
- 66% of respondents identified that winter air quality was good or better with 33% identifying winter air quality was average to very poor.
- The majority of respondents (44%) identified domestic wood smoke as the most likely driver for wintertime air quality in Launceston followed by fuel reduction burns (20%) and backyard burning, landscape fires and local industry/business remaining at around 17% each.
- 40% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that wood smoke has a negative impact on health with 30% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing.
- 60% of respondents identified they were not impacted by wood smoke with 21% identifying minor health impacts, 11% significant health impacts, 21% had smoke impacting their property, 19% of people identified being unable to enjoy outdoor activities and 23% of respondents identified needing to keep their home closed up due to smoke.
- The actions the community thought could be most helpful in improving air quality from most useful to least include:
 1. Education,
 2. Financial incentives,
 3. Air quality alert system,
 4. Proactive enforcement of current Smoke Regulations,
 5. Limiting new wood heater installations to those that produce significantly less emissions,
 6. Not allowing new wood heater installations in new homes or renovations within the urban area of Launceston.
- For the question about how much financial assistance should be offered the community selected \$2000 (25%) and 'other' (47%).

- o From those that responded 'other' the amount of \$5000 was the most common (35%).

The survey also asked the question - **Is there anything further you would like to comment on regarding Domestic Wood Smoke in Launceston?**

There were 671 responses to this question with the following key themes around wood heater use identified and listed below in order of how often they were raised.

Strong Attachment to Wood Heating - Some residents feel a deep cultural and practical connection to wood heating, viewing it as affordable, reliable, and integral to Tasmanian life. Wood heaters are also valued for their performance in cold homes and their resilience during power outages.

Cost of Living Pressures - Financial stress drives strong concern that restrictions on wood heating would worsen hardship, especially given high electricity prices and fears about future energy costs. Many believe alternatives are too expensive to install or run.

Opposition to Bans or Restrictions - Some residents strongly oppose bans, viewing them as government overreach that threatens personal autonomy and unfairly targets certain communities. Many express anger at perceived “nanny state” policies.

Health Impacts and Air Quality Concerns - A substantial group reports serious health effects from wood smoke, including respiratory illness and reduced ability to go outdoors. They describe smoke entering homes and call for urgent action to protect vulnerable residents.

Quality and Use of Wood - Some residents believe poor-quality firewood and incorrect heater use - not wood heaters themselves - are the main causes of excessive smoke. They call for stronger regulation of firewood suppliers and better education on proper burning practices.

Support for Regulation, Not Removal - Some residents favour targeted regulation—such as phasing out old heaters, penalising heavy polluters, and monitoring hotspots—rather than blanket bans. They prefer balanced approaches that address the worst offenders.

Other Pollution Sources Identified - Some residents argue wood smoke is unfairly singled out compared to traffic, industry, agricultural burns, and council activities. They believe broader pollution sources should also be addressed.

Housing Quality and Energy Efficiency - People highlight that many Tasmanian homes are cold, damp, and poorly insulated, making alternatives like heat pumps less effective. There is support for improving home energy efficiency through insulation and sealing programs.

Interest in Cleaner Alternatives - There is openness to cleaner heating options, but only if they are reliable, affordable, and supported by financial assistance. Scepticism remains about ULEBs and the cost or noise of heat pumps.

Geographical and Environmental Factors - Residents frequently cite Launceston’s valley geography and inversion layers as amplifying smoke problems, though some argue the issue is overstated. Seasonal still conditions are seen as worsening winter air quality.

Requests for Better Communication and Transparency - Residents want clearer information, including real-time air quality data, visible enforcement, and transparency about council emissions. They also call for stronger public education campaigns.

Equity and Environmental Justice - Some residents highlight that low-lying suburbs and vulnerable residents bear the greatest health burden from wood smoke. They argue for stronger protections, including mandatory phase-outs, to address environmental injustice.

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