

Fireplaces and the health dangers of smoke ...

While domestic fireplaces and combustion heaters are undeniably a pleasant warming device for the occupants, they are a community nuisance with increasingly alarming health impacts. With housing increasingly closer together, nuisance from smoke and smell from fireplaces is an increasing health problem. And even if you can't see or smell them, toxic emissions may still be present.

However, local authorities tend to argue that they have no control over the location or use of fireplaces. But as installations forming part of the building, surely they should be regulated as are sewerage vent pipes for example? And if not, as a potential and identified health risk, surely they should be regulated to prevent health impacts to neighbours, and at a local or regional level, community epidemiological impacts? It seems local authorities are quite happy to say "no" to both suggestions!

Typical design considerations for installation of domestic fireplaces and combustion heaters inevitably reflect the internal planning and functions of the house and the needs of its occupants. Not surprising then to discover that there are a very large number of sites where, perhaps inadvertently, people have installed fireplaces which cause extremes of nuisance and in many cases, very real health impacts on adjacent or nearby neighbours.

But of course, having paid to have the fireplace, they want to use it! After all, if it was a real problem, wouldn't local and state planning or health or environment authorities have enforceable guidelines or regulations and wouldn't installation require approval? The answers are "yes and no" depending on whether you sell or own a fireplace ... or whether you get the smoke from next door!

It is only too easy to have a fireplace properly designed for you ... but as this typical installation shows, it is only too easy to give the neighbour the smoke! In practice, it is almost impossible to avoid smoking the neighbours ... even with extended flues.

There are alternatives ... much more efficient to install insulation (it works in summer too!) and design for compartmentalisation, and then in rare extreme conditions, use a gas or electric heater.

For further information, contact [CABRA](#) via this link.



It is easy to end up smoking out the neighbours ...