

Energy Efficiency



The fiery facts

There is something romantic about an open fireplace, with red crackling embers and the warm glow that leaves a rosy kiss on your cheeks.

But are fireplaces doing the best job when it comes to efficiently heating your home? And can you use one without emitting pollutants into the atmosphere?

There is no disputing open fires look great and can be economical if you have access to cheap or free firewood.

Unfortunately open fires are extremely inefficient. In fact up to 85 per cent of heat is lost up the chimney.

Figures show that around 12 per cent of homes in Victoria use wood as the main heating source in their home with most of them being slow combustion wood heaters, and only around 1 percent are open fire places.

A well maintained, slow combustion wood heater can be up to five times more efficient than an open fireplace and can be used to heat large living areas.

Firewood is classed as a renewable fuel provided it is harvested in a sustainable way. However, wood heaters can cause local air pollution problems in urban areas, so measures should be taken to avoid excessive smoke. Refer to www.epa.vic.gov.au/air/woodheaters/ for more information.

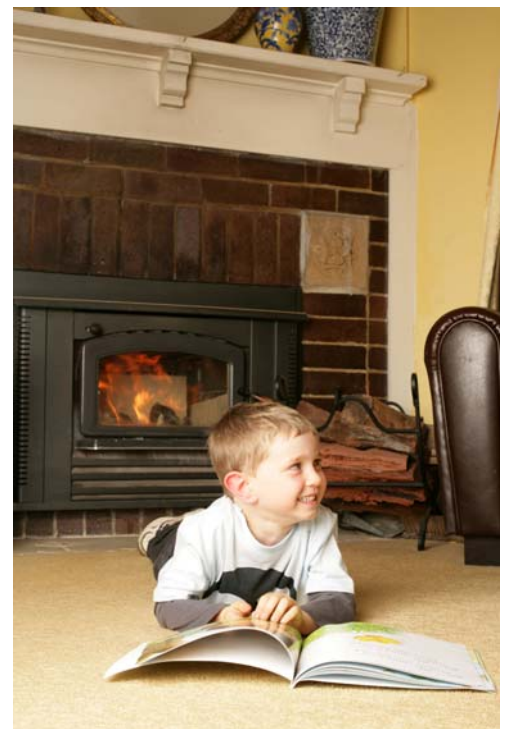
Another option is to choose one of the range of gas or electric heaters that provide a flame effect. Keep in mind that gas heaters provide more heat at lower cost when compared to electric heaters.

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A newer option on the market is methylated spirit or ethanol heaters. These are characterised by a visually dramatic flame, and can provide sufficient heat for small to medium living areas.

Handy Tips

- 85 per cent of heat from open fires is lost up the chimney.
- Fire wood is classed as renewable fuel provided it is harvested in a sustainable way.
- Choose a gas or electric heater that has a flame effect.
- A newer option is the methylated spirit or ethanol heaters.



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