

16 November 2018

Ref: 31399/CW/sh



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Coroner Jacqui Hawkins
Coroner's Court of Victoria
65 Kavanagh Street
SOUTHBANK VIC 3006

Dear Coroner Hawkins

RE: INQUEST INTO THE DEATH OF MRS SONIA SOFIANOPOULOS

Thank you for providing me with a copy of your finding into the death of Mrs Sonia Sofianopoulos. I also take this opportunity to thank you for the courtesy extended to me as a witness at your Inquest.

I refer to Recommendation One of your Finding:

"I recommend that Chris Wealthy, the Chief Executive Officer of Australian Gas Association and Paul Fearon, the Chief Executive Officer of Energy Safe Victoria, collaborate to implement a strategy and a plan to phase out all OFG heaters."

I, and on behalf of the Australian Gas Association (AGA), support your recommendation to phase out OFG heaters. Whilst AGA does not have any statutory or other powers to bring about such change it has, and will continue to actively engage with Energy Safe Victoria and industry stakeholders to encourage and promote the phase out of OFG heaters.

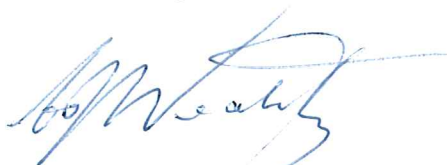
Following consultation with Standards Australia, a Working Group has been established to consider possible changes to the applicable Australian Standards AS/NZS 5263.0:2017 "*Gas appliances – Part 0: General requirements*" and AS/NZS 5263.1.3 : 2016 "*Gas appliances – Part 1.3 : Gas space heating appliances*". AGA has actively participated in this Working Group and will continue to do so. At this time, deliberations of the Working Group are ongoing and consensus has not been achieved.

I understand that the option to phase out OFG heaters will be the subject of review through the government's regulatory impact statement process. Accordingly, and to assist Energy Safe Victoria provide input to this process, AGA has constructed a purpose-built test chamber to assess and quantify the effects of negative pressure in the test chamber and, specifically, the effect this has on the operation of an OFG heater and the accumulation of carbon monoxide inside the chamber.

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AGA believes that the provision of objective empirical evidence will assist those conducting the regulatory impact statement to properly assess the risks associated with the operation of OFG heaters installed in modern dwellings fitted with multiple extraction fans but with little adventitious ventilation. I am hopeful that AGA's contribution will assist the decision makers within government to quickly arrive at a conclusion that prevents a reoccurrence of the circumstances surrounding the tragic death of Mrs Sofianopoulos.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chris J Wealthy', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Chris J Wealthy
Managing Director and CEO