

2 March 2016

R Roddick

By email: fyi-request-3629-20fbdade@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Sir/Madam

Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987: Request for information

I refer to your email dated 10/02/16 requesting information on complaints in respect of smoke from solid fuel burners.

In relation to your specific questions:

1. *Over the period 1 January 2011 to 31 December 2015, please list the total number of complaints lodged to your organisation in relation to smoke from solid fuel burners.*

2011 – 20 Complaints
2012 – 40 Complaints
2013 – 679 Complaints
2014 – 153 Complaints
2015 – 263 Complaints
2016 – 3 Complaints

2. *List the respective action taken by your organisation.*

Reducing smoke emissions from solid fuel burners is an important part of improving air quality. All complaints are responded to, however, reducing smoke from households often involves working with the household on the best solution to the problem. This includes

- encouraging people to burn clean, dry wood
- teaching them how to operate their woodburner more efficiently, and
- assisting people to replace older style heating systems with newer, cleaner options.

Since 2013 the Canterbury Regional Council has been implementing the following approach to any complaints received from the public in respect to smoky chimneys.

- All complaints are recorded and logged into our databases
- Where a complaint is made in relation to a smoky chimney and this is the first time we have recorded a complaint for a particular address, then a warning letter and information for the householder is sent out
- If the smoky chimney persists and we receive subsequent complaints then this matter is prioritised for investigation by an air pollution officer. Officers contact the home owner and action is taken depending on the nature of the issue. Action taken may include providing information on how to burn better, ensuring the home owner is using appropriate wood, and in some cases may even include referral to Community Energy Action to assist in helping a home owner replace older heating with newer cleaner heating.

- In addition to responding to complaints from the public, Environment Canterbury Air Pollution Officer undertake monitoring of problem areas each winter to identify any smoky chimneys. We then work with these households to help solve the smoke problem.

3. *In how many cases were abatement notices issued?*
No abatement notices were issued.

4. *In how many of these cases was the complaint reiterated by the complainant after your organisation had taken action?*
3 reiterated complaints – 14 addresses
4 reiterated complaints – 4 addresses
5 reiterated complaints – 4 addresses
6 reiterated complaints – 1 address
7 reiterated complaints – 1 address.

If you are not satisfied with this response you are able to refer this matter to the Office of the Ombudsman under s27 (3) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987.

Should you require any further information or clarification, please do not hesitate to contact personal assistant in the first instance sharon.clough@ecan.govt.nz or 033653828

Yours sincerely



Don Rule
Chief Operations Officer