

8 March 2023

Select Committee on Cost of Living
Senate, Parliament of Australia
Email: costofliving.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Select Committee,

Asthma Australia would like to thank the Senate for establishing the Select Committee on Cost of Living.

We have provided our 2023-24 Federal Pre-Budget Submission for consideration by the Select Committee for this inquiry. A significant focus of Asthma Australia's 2023-24 Federal Pre-budget Submission is on supporting people on low incomes to transition to cleaner and more efficient forms of heating, cooling and cooking and improve the air quality in their homes.

The initiatives in the Pre-budget Submission are informed by the nationally representative survey undertaken by Asthma Australia in 2022 to look at homes, health and asthma in Australia, which was completed by 5,041 people. The survey asked participants about their current practices and preferences for heating their homes and cooking. The most common type of cooking was gas (48%) followed by electric (41%). Only 6% had an induction cooktop. While the preferred type of cooktop was gas, regardless of their cooktop preference, most people's preference is based on cooking preferences, ease of cleaning and affordability. Only 15% of respondents cited their cooktop preference was due to health reasons and 14% noted environmental reasons. For people whose preferred cooktop type is induction, 57% said the cost of replacing their cooktop was a barrier and 44% of people whose preferred cooktop type is electric reported this barrier. Not owning the home was also a significant barrier to switching cooktops.

In the survey, the preferred types of heating were reverse cycle air conditioning and central heating, which are the most efficient options and provide the additional benefit of cooling the air in the warmer months. However, nearly half (43%) of respondents reported they do not currently have their preferred form of heating at home. One in five respondents (22%) regularly use portable electric space heaters, 13% regularly use wood heaters, 8% regularly use flued gas heaters and 7% regularly use unflued gas heaters. For people who don't have their preferred source of heating, the most common barrier to switching is cost (43%), followed by not owning the home (32%).

Introducing financial support for low-income households to replace inefficient methods of household heating and cooking would address health impacts associated with poor indoor and outdoor air quality, assist low-income households to address cost of living pressures and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This is particularly important for people in situations where they are unable to make these changes due to cost or not owning their home. It is important that resources are mobilised and allocated in ways that promote equity including distribution of resources to people in most need.

We thank the Select Committee for the opportunity to make a submission and would welcome being called to give evidence for the inquiry.

Yours sincerely,



Michele Goldman
Chief Executive Officer
Asthma Australia