

Victoria Government is seeking comments to its proposed new residential tenancies act.

The Victorian Government is proposing to mandate lowest cost fixed space heating for renters, followed by insulation and then hot water.

The Department of Justice and Community Safety has released proposed regulations to support the introduction of reforms to rental laws, together with a Regulatory Impact Statement outlining the costs and benefits of the regulations to the community. Over 130 new reforms will affect all types of rental housing. They will increase protections for renters, and ensure rental providers can still effectively manage their properties.

You can access the proposed rental reforms on:

www.engage.vic.gov.au/rentingregulations

GAMAA will provide written feedback on how the new regulations will impact our Industry with submissions need to be submitted by 5pm on 18 December 2019.

The outcomes of the consultation will be published in April 2020.

Rental providers must ensure that their rental property meets certain minimum standards on or before the move-in date. This includes a proposed minimum standard for a fixed heater in the property's main living area, which includes an energy efficiency requirement. An extract states:

- (a) for a non-ducted air conditioner or heat pump in a Class 1 building, a 2 star heating rating in the efficiency rating system referred to in regulation 23(b);
- (b) for a gas space heater in a Class 1 building, a 2 star heating rating in the efficiency rating system referred to in regulation 23(d). and
- (c) Nothing in this regulation prevents the use of an appliance, fitting, or fixture of a level of rating above the level of rating prescribed

Heating is a key priority due to affordability concerns (heating represents about half of a typical Victorian household's energy consumption), and associated health benefits. It is proposed that other energy-related standards would be developed in due course to ensure basic amenity and energy affordability for renters.

GAMAA members should note that it is proposed that LPG will not be able to be used as a fuel source for gas heaters in the main living area of all Class 1 rental properties from July 1 2023.

GAMAA Executive Councillors have met with DELWP to discuss the proposal and will review and respond.

Regulatory impact statement (RIS) - open flued gas space heaters

As GAMAA members may be aware, the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) is undertaking a review and regulatory impact statement (RIS) process to consider options to address risks from open flued gas space heaters.

The 2018 Coronial inquest into the death of Mrs Sonia Sofianopoulos recommended the phase out of open flued gas space heaters. In its response to the Coroner's recommendations, the Victorian Government committed to conduct a review into open flued gas space heaters, with options such as a phase out to be assessed through a regulatory impact statement (RIS) process led by DELWP.

As part of this process, yesterday DELWP released a discussion paper for public consultation which outlines potential options to address risks from open flued gas space heaters and provides an opportunity for stakeholders to advise DELWP of the potential impacts, risks and benefits of these options.

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**Gas Appliance
Manufacturers
Association of
Australia**

**GAS
Connections**

As an important stakeholder regarding this issue, GAMAA will be making a submission in response to the discussion paper which is available on the Engage Victoria website.

The following table summarises the Core Options and Complementary Measures currently being considered.

Core Option	Description
Base Case	Under this option the current set of Victorian regulations relevant to OFGSHs and CO poisoning would not be changed. Educational campaigns run by ESV would continue to inform the public of the dangers associated with exposure to CO and encourage servicing.
Ban on new installations (excluding like for like replacements)	This option would ban the installation of OFGSHs in households where they were not already installed. Installations of OFGSHs would continue to be permitted where they replace an existing OFGSH (a “like for like replacement”).
Ban on all installations	This option would ban all OFGSH installations in Victoria, both new and like for like replacement installations.
Standards based approach	In this option, the Victorian Government would submit a project proposal to Standards Australia requesting an amendment to the gas appliance standards AS/NZS 5263.0 and AS/NZS 5263.1.3. The amendment would seek to enhance the safety requirements for OFGSHs.
Complementary Measure	Description
Mandatory installation of CO alarms	This measure would mandate the installation of CO alarms in all buildings where OFGSHs are installed. This could be extended to include any type of gas space heater.
Mandatory servicing requirements	This measure would mandate regular servicing of OFGSHs and recommend potential changes to compliance certificate schemes. Importantly, mandatory servicing could be broadened to apply to any gas heater, not just OFGSHs.

Information provided by GAMAA and other stakeholders in response to the discussion paper will inform the assessment of options and identification of a preferred approach. There will be consultation on any proposed regulatory changes as part of a RIS process in 2020.

GAMAA will be our submission before they **close at midnight on 18 December 2019**. Should any member want to contribute please contact rjamieson@sitags.com.au