

Dear Masterchef,

**We are writing to you to register our disappointment in Masterchef Australia's ongoing decision to use gas cooktops in its kitchens.**

We are acutely aware that as the leading cooking program in Australia, Masterchef plays an integral role in the cultural landscape. We are concerned that your decision to promote gas cooking could lead to your viewers making choices that have health impacts for them and their families. It is also at odds with Australia's energy transition from polluting fossil fuels to clean, renewable energy, a transition that is well underway in Victoria where the program is filmed.

The health impacts of burning gas during cooking are clear. It produces a whole range of air pollutants, including carbon monoxide (CO), formaldehyde and nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>). A review by the World Health Organisation (WHO) published in 2010 concluded that NO<sub>2</sub> in the indoor environment (a major pollutant emitted by gas stoves) is consistently associated with respiratory symptoms, airway narrowing, airway inflammation, and decreases in immune function which can lead to increased susceptibility to respiratory infection for infants, children and adults. ([WHO 2010](#)).

NO<sub>2</sub> is strongly associated with asthma as well as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. In fact, studies have estimated that a child living with gas cooking in the home ([Lin et al, 2013](#)) has a comparable risk of developing asthma to a child living with household cigarette smoke ([Burke et al, 2012](#)). Research shows that gas cooking is estimated to contribute up to 12% of the childhood asthma burden in our country ([Knibbs et al, 2018](#)) and Australia has one of the highest rates of asthma in the developed world ([Bambrick et al, 2021](#)).

We urge Masterchef Australia to consider its role in the narrative around gas cooking and to be a leader in this field in the same way as Masterchef UK where contestants have been cooking on induction for many years. This is also true of Masterchef Italy, Singapore, Denmark and Spain.

Yours Sincerely,

[Dr Christine Cowie](#), an environmental epidemiologist at [UNSW Medicine & Health](#),

[Doctors for the Environment Australia](#)

[Healthy Futures](#)

[Environment Victoria](#)

[Climate and Health Alliance \(CAHA\)](#)

