



# Media Release

## The Hon Greg Hunt MP

Shadow Minister for Climate Action,  
Environment and Heritage

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### **‘LIVES AT RISK’ WARNING OVER REFRIGERANTS DUE TO CARBON TAX**

The increased price of refrigerants due to the Carbon Tax could be putting lives at risk.

The refrigerant industry has warned that the higher prices of traditional refrigerants which have increased by up to 400 per cent due to the Carbon Tax are tempting people to swap to other gases which are highly explosive but are a fraction of the cost.

Refrigerants Australia wrote to Minister Greg Combet in June warning of the risk:

“A most recent example of the consequences of substituting hydrocarbon refrigerants for non-flammable refrigerants occurred at Tamahere in New Zealand in April 2008, where a coolstore was retrofitted with a flammable hydrocarbon refrigerant.

This resulted in New Zealand’s largest industrial fire, seriously injuring a number of firefighters, and tragically causing the death of one. A copy of the Coroner’s Report can be seen at <http://www.tamahereforum.co.nz/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/Derek-Lovell-Finding.pdf> and video of the fire at <http://www.refrigerantsaustralia.org/hc-safety-demonstration-videos.html>

I am writing to ask what, if any, steps the Commonwealth Government has taken to prevent the re-occurrence of the Tamahere disaster.

This issue is extremely serious, and warrants urgent attention.”

As yet they have not received a response.

This has all the hallmarks of the pink batts disaster, in which the Government ignored the warnings and lives were lost.

I have also written to Minister Combet demanding he detail what action the Government has undertaken to address this risk.

The industry is also concerned that hydrocarbons will be used in car air-conditioning which is not designed to take the gas. If the vehicle is then involved in an accident it could cause a major fire or explosion. It also poses a risk for car mechanics working on vehicles but are not aware that the explosive gas has been swapped over into the air-conditioner.

The Government must immediately act and raise awareness of the risk hydrocarbon poses. It is another example of how the Government doesn’t think through the unintended consequences of their policies and are putting people’s lives at risk.

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