

NEWSLETTER ISSUE 4 APRIL 2011

Why your energy bills don't have to increase

Why is it we are only ever given one side of a story by the media? For weeks now we have heard that the cost of gas, electricity and water are going up, but no one has said how easy it is to minimise the impact on your pocket!

We all know that by replacing the old incandescent globes with the new LED type (or compact fluoro) you can save 75% of your lighting bill not to mention they last 8 times longer. And whilst this is good for individuals and buildings (strata scheme common areas) to do, there are a number of other things which can be done to reduce costs to you individually and as a scheme.

If you start now, by the time the price hikes come the impact should mean a very small increase to you, twice over in fact, between your personal bills and the schemes (and therefore your levies).

We have put together a list of suggestions that can help you reduce your energy bills. These ideas, have been broken into categories: those with no cost, those with little cost, those to do now and those to do when the replacement arises. Why not start now?

INDIVIDUALS - Things you can do now to save

Item	What to do	Cost / Saving
Air conditioner	Run at no less than 26 degrees	Around 10% saving on each bill for each degree difference from setting you currently run
* Garden Mulch	Layer of garden mulch (straw, gravel or wood chips)	Reduces amount of water required and frequency
Turn things off at the power point	The kettle, toaster, computer, washing machine and dryer when not in use	Up to 10% saving on each bill
Fridge and freezers	Regularly check seals are clean and work efficiently, locate the appliance in cool well ventilated areas, remove frost - run at minus 3-5 degrees for maximum efficiency	We don't have a figure for this one - but it comes highly rated by energy saving websites

* Washing	Use cold water where possible and dry outside	Each saves 3.5kg green house gases
* Leaking pipes/taps	Waterfix are subsidised by Govt - will replace tap washers, fix leaks and change toilet to dual flush system	\$22 per bathroom – who knows the savings to a whole scheme - depends on number of leaks
Appropriate cooking method	Gas is cheap, as is microwave, and only fill the kettle with the amount of water you need at the time	Small savings, but it all adds up

Longer term - at time of replacement

Item	What to do	Cost / Saving
Air conditioners	Buy at least 4.5 star rating - but really save with each extra star	Save 10% off your energy bill for each extra star rating over 4.5
Dishwasher	Buy with at least 3.5 stars	Up to an extra 30% savings a year for every star over 3.5
* Dual flush toilets	Single flush uses up to 11 litres, dual uses 6 or 3 litres. Some new ones use even less	\$200 back from Govt to install - huge savings on schemes water bill - should the scheme replace them all whilst the rebate is on?
Fridge and Freezers	Buy a fridge with at least 4 stars and a freezer with 4.5 stars	Every extra star is more savings
Washers and Dryers	Washer - buy at least 3.5 stars and Dryer with at least 2 stars	25% saving of lifetime running cost of washer and 15% for dryers
Insulate ceilings and floors (remember to get Owners Corp approval)	Insulate ceilings and floors	Heating and cooling - 35% saving for ceilings and 20% for floors

* These are items that a scheme could implement throughout the building (have the common area lights been changed to LED yet?) Ask your manager to get an electrician to check on this when they are next on site.

The committee should resolve at a meeting to get Waterfix out to each unit – where possible – for the benefits outlined above. And what about changing all the toilets to dual flush and claim the rebate – like all things this will not last for-ever. Now you can do something to reduce your levies rather than see them increase. **You are in control.**