

NEWSLETTER ISSUE 5 SEPTEMBER 2011

Saving money on your electricity bill

Our series on saving money via your electricity bill ends with this note about changing your meter to benefit from off-peak rates. You can save up to 24c per kilowatt in your home but you will need a PowerSmart meter. The Energy Australia website advises as follows:

Up until now, the price you have paid for electricity has been the same throughout the day, except for some limited controlled load off-peak rates. Your current pricing can be replaced by 'time of use' pricing called PowerSmart which is broken up into peak, shoulder and off-peak time bands.

PowerSmart helps you to save money by moving some of your energy consumption away from the expensive peak periods to the less expensive shoulder and off-peak periods. Your electricity consumption will be recorded over half-hour intervals, 24 hours a day and stored in the meter, recording the amount of electricity that is used and the time of day it is used.

Times	Ex GST	Inc. GST	Unit
Shoulder 7am to 2pm & 8pm to 10pm working weekdays and 7am to 10pm on weekends and public holidays	16.4000	18.0400	cents/kWh
Peak 2pm to 8pm on working weekdays	40.6000	44.6600	cents/kWh
Off-Peak All other times	9.6000	10.5600	cents/kWh
Service Availability Charge	59.0000	64.9000	cents/ day/ connection point

So arrange for a Powersmart meter to be installed at your home to achieve the above savings. By changing the meter and in some cases, the timer in common areas, you can realise savings on your levies too - in relation to running pumps (for hot water, pools and in the garage pits etc), garage ventilation systems, pool filters and pool cleaners.

Executive Committees interested in the services of a consultant to provide a one-off audit report on reducing energy costs can email us at reception@prostrata.com.au to request a proposal for the committee's consideration.

Firms we can obtain proposals for consideration from are:

Sustainability Now – Ethan Burns ethan@sustainabilitynow.com.au 0411 345 986

Energy Action – Stephen McCulloch - stephenmcculloch@energyaction.com.au - 0403 221 959

Breaches of bylaws

These are a very common complaint to strata managers. We estimate that more than 50% of schemes experience at least one breach per year. These generally relate to parking on common property (e.g. visitors parking by residents), the keeping of pets without approval, noise, and the disposal of rubbish and recycling

In an ideal world a quiet chat between neighbours would reconcile any issues, and indeed, this is certainly a good place to start. Should a discussion not solve things then the Executive Committee can decide to become involved. The exception however is noise.

If a knock at the door at the time of the noise and a polite request for things to be toned down does not result in a solution, then the police should be called there and then. There is nothing to be gained in suffering through excessive noise for hours, at any time of the day or night, because your neighbour has no regard for your right to the quiet enjoyment of your lot. If the police are ineffective at the time of the event, then a letter from us or the real estate agent a day or two later won't prevent a reoccurrence.

Individuals, whether owners or tenants, can apply to the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) to intervene if the Police are ineffective on more than one occasion. All complaints lodged with the OFT start with mediation - where you and the other party will meet with a trained OFT officer – and in the vast majority of cases this achieves the desired outcome. If you are not able to achieve a mediated outcome then you will be advised on applying for an Order by an Adjudicator. However mediation is the first step in all cases.

So, remember: you have the power under the *Strata Schemes Management Act 1996* (NSW) to effect change if problems for you are not resolved by conversation.

Welcome Emily Goodreid

Emily joined us during August as a senior strata manager to look after a portfolio of buildings. She has over 7 years of experience, and until recently, was responsible for blocks of over 100 units. She is familiar with the processes for defects rectification, major repairs and renovations to common property, and the *Strata Schemes Management Act 1996* (NSW).

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