

Household Energy Reduction Project

Understanding behavioural change

Waterworks Valley Community
Climate Connect Project

July
Update

What's happening?

A lot! The gulf oil spill. Freakishly dry winter weather. Big jump in Aurora power tariffs. Electricity industry in turmoil. Further power and petrol price hikes foreshadowed.

How should we respond to all this?

Learning how to live better with less is the only sensible response to all these growing uncertainties.

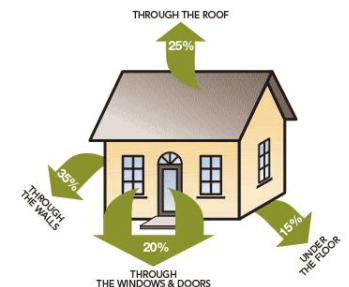
Missing resources!

One of the most illuminating things that came out of our Climate Connect project is that many householders who obtained a Home Energy Assessment tend not to act on the information given to them. After learning what needs to be done to fix up their home they don't get down to doing it.

When asked what stops them, it turns out that many householders 1) do not feel competent to carry out the changes or 2) they don't know where to acquire materials or green products that are prescribed for their home.

A resources database

To remedy these barriers we are now compiling a database list showing where to obtain green products and services that are not gimmicks – watch this space. In the meantime, [click here](#) for contacts of home handypersons in South Hobart area who can do home upgrades at reasonable rates.



continued...

Measuring your footprint

Blindspot

“Why are you asking us about low-flow showers? Hobart has no shortage of water – what’s this question got to do with energy?”



We’ve been taken aback by the number of such responses re efficient shower heads.

In short: halving the amount of water that a shower uses = halving the amount of energy used to heat up that water.

It’s a major domestic energy issue!

“If you don’t measure it...

...then you can’t manage it!”

We all scoffed at Kevin Rudd’s minimalist 5% greenhouse abatement target, but what target do we set ourselves?

The problem for most Australian householders is that their climate footprint is going up, not down, so they are not in a strong position to call for a tougher position from their own government.

And for those of us who have been judiciously working to reduce our household energy consumption, how do we know if we are getting there or not?

Our project website shows [a number of measurement tools](#) you can use, not least the ability to download from Aurora your power bills for the past 8 years or so – so you can track how effective your efforts have been. You can even download them in convenient graph form.



Bulk Purchase Offer

For those who are keen, South Hobart community is doing a bulk purchase of home electricity monitors. These enable you to see where power is being used or wasted and opportunities to make changes. You will need to nominate quickly to be in the deal, so [go to their website now](#) for more information.

Are you as green as you think you are?

Blindspot 2

Residential customers are easily outpacing all other sectors of the economy in terms of growth in national electricity consumption.

In 2008 - 09 the residential sector increased power demand by 3.5%, whilst overall energy consumption grew by just 1.5%. What's more, Tasmanian household energy growth is beating the pants off other states.

Growth in household energy is being caused by the take-up of energy-intensive appliances such as large TVs and entertainment consoles.

(And in Tasmania by a switch from wood heating to heat pumps.)



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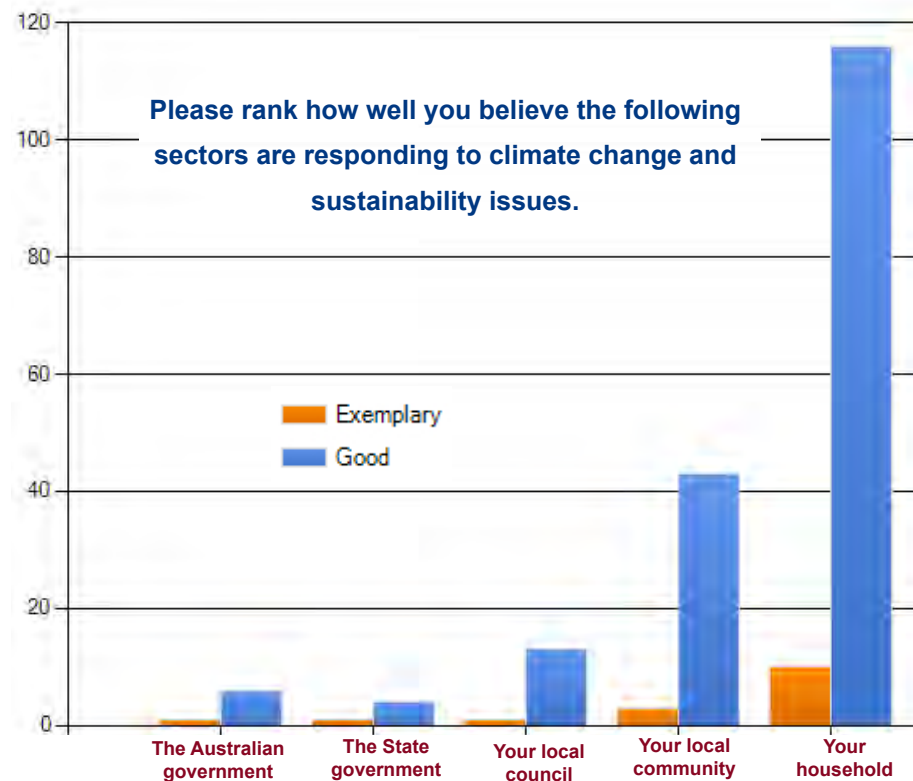
Now here's an interesting contrast. The chart below is a response from our project's statewide Household Climate Survey. It shows two interesting things:

- 1) A wide gap between 'good' and 'exemplary' – even at the household level.
- 2) Leadership on climate change increases sharply with decentralisation.

Is the second one accurate?

Well, it seems there is some wishful thinking involved. Environmental psychologists tell us that householders tend to exaggerate their perceived energy performance – because they genuinely want to 'feel good'. We do things like change our light bulbs and think we are doing fantastically, whilst doing other things that worsen our footprint by a much greater amount.

It must be said that the above responses come from committed people who are actively involved in lifestyle change. The general trend shown in the chart is probably true, though somewhat distorted.



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Resources

Blindspot 3

Solar power is great and we wouldn't want to discourage anybody but....

The amount of energy that you will get in a whole year from a standard \$10,000 one kilowatt rooftop solar system is equivalent to the energy contained in just 2 tanks of car petrol.



It would not even cover one Hobart to Melbourne return journey in a jet plane.

In other words, with a more wholesome perspective we find that we get even better energy savings by reducing our car trips by just one per week – or short plane trips by just one in a whole year.

And the investment is zero!

How to retrofit your walls

Getting insulation into existing walls is at the tail end of most people's efforts, because it's not all that easy.



Many householders report this as a major barrier to improved household efficiency.

Waterworks Community has produced a 'How to insulate the walls of your home' guide for those who are keen to have a go. [You can download it here.](#)

Check out your hot water

The outstanding energy saving opportunity that came out of our Climate Connect Project was hot water cylinders.

Little do most people know how much energy is lost from them and how easy it is to cut back on those totally unnecessary losses. 15 minutes of simple adjustment and pipe insulation can save a lot of heat loss.

So.... how much heat is being lost?

[Download our information summary here.](#)

