



Pathways to a low CO₂ future. Take action at home.

Taking action in your home

Homes use a lot of energy, and Victorian homes account for about 20% of the state's total electricity and gas use. As most of our energy is generated from coal-fired power stations, homes are responsible for major Greenhouse Gas emissions. The average is 14 tonnes, per household, per year.

Your home is a great place to start to reduce your carbon footprint!

You can do plenty of things, starting with the very small (turning off lights and appliances when not needed), to the very large (installing a solar hot water service or solar electricity system).

What's most important is to not be daunted and start with something small ... today!

Step 1. Your Options

- Have a full household assessment done for free. MASG offers a free Household Sustainability Assessment of your house under the federal "Green Loans" scheme. This will give you detailed feedback on where you are using energy and water in your home, and the best actions you can take to reduce your consumption. It will also give you access to a \$10,000 low-interest loan to retrofit for energy efficiency. Call Jayson at MASG on 5470 6878 or email Jayson@masg.org.au
- More information on this scheme is available at www.environment.gov.au/greenloans
- Do your own mini assessment. Check out the *Quick Guide to Sustainable Living* by Environment Victoria for an easy guide to assessing your own home (and other aspects of your lifestyle). Call 9341 8100 or go to www.environmentvictoria.org.au
- Get a copy of the energy saving Bible! The CSIRO *Home Energy Saving Handbook* is comprehensive, easy to follow, and full of helpful and practical advice. You can order copies from the CSIRO website at www.csiro.gov.au

Small steps with a big difference

Green Power is the easiest way to cut your greenhouse gas emissions. This is electricity from accredited renewable sources such as wind farms, solar thermal plants and hydro-power. You can buy it from many retailers, with options ranging from 10-100% of your total energy mix. Learn more about Green Power at:

- www.greenpower.gov.au
- www.greenelectricitywatch.org.au

You can do many small things that make a big difference, including:

- Heating and cool only the rooms you use, rather than the whole house. *Tip.* The good old "hottie" is a far better way to keep warm in bed than heating the whole room.
- Taking shorter and fewer showers, which reduces your use of water and energy. Four minutes is the magic number, and timers are available from all hardware stores. Cheap as chips!
- Turning off lights in unoccupied rooms, and turn off appliances at the power point when not in use.
- Turning the heater down in winter and put on warm clothes instead.
- Using cold water in the washing machine, and only wash with a full load.
- Using a clothes line or rack instead of a clothes drier in winter.

The list is limited only by your imagination and creativity.

For more tips, check out the *Quick Guide to Sustainable Living* by Environment Victoria. Call 9341 8100 or go to www.environmentvictoria.org.au

If you're getting serious turn the page!

Step 2. Getting more serious

Retro-fitting for energy efficiency

Roofing insulation, draft stopping, heavy curtains, ceiling fans and awnings are some of the ways to improve the heating and cooling properties of your house. You can replace inefficient heaters (such as electric with gas), and change your hot water system. Have a free Household Sustainability Assessment to find out the best actions for you.

Change to a solar hot water system

Hot water can account for 25% of household energy use and around six tonnes of Greenhouse Gas emissions every year. One crucial action you can take to reduce your carbon footprint is replacing an old or inefficient hot water system.

Electric-boosted solar hot water produces about half the Greenhouse Gases (3.3 tonnes) of a solely electric system (5.8 tonnes per year), and a gas-boosted solar hot water system produces only 0.5 tonnes of Greenhouse emissions per year for a medium-sized household. Five-star gas hot water systems are also relatively efficient, producing 1.4 tonnes of emissions a year.

See the **Solar Hot Water fact sheet** and **Solar Hot Water contacts list** for more information and local supplier/installer details, available on the website at www.masg.org.au. We also have a **Local Resource Guide** with details of many local suppliers of retro-fit products and trades people who can help you. Go to www.masg.org.au, or call in to MASG for a copy.

Step 3. Going the whole hog!

Install your own renewable electricity

You can generate electricity from the sun on your own roof. You may even be able to sell some electricity back into the grid at a premium rate!

Check out our fact sheet on solar photovoltaic electricity, and our solar photovoltaic contact list.

Other helpful resources for you in this series

Think global, eat local. Eat local and reduce your emissions. See the **Think global, eat local** fact sheet in this series for information on how your dining room table doesn't have to cost the earth.

Getting around town and country

See our **Safe transport for the planet** fact sheet for ways to reduce your transport emissions.

Buy, design or renovate your own low energy house

If you are buying, designing or building your own home, this is the ideal time to incorporate sustainable design features and technology. They will ensure low environmental impact, low emissions for the life of the building, and save you money.

Alternatively, you can retrofit your existing house to improve its efficiency, and comfort. See the **Living lightly fact sheet** in this series for information and links.

Locally

MASG has a local retrofitting guide, full of advice about local architects, builders and suppliers who don't cost the earth. Call 5470 6978 and ask about the Carbon Reduction Action Group (CRAG) *Local Retrofitting Guide*, or check it out on the website.

Join MASG, a great source of information and activities, festivals and activism, and a strong community group of over 1000 members working on these problems.

