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CLIMATE CHANGE

Things you can do to make a difference

Can individual households make a difference? Around 20% of Australian greenhouse emissions are from domestic use. So if each of us managed to reduce household emissions by 50%, Australia overall would have reduced its greenhouse emissions by 10%.

Politicians are currently debating targets such as 20% by 2020. We could achieve half of that target by making changes at home and in our daily lives. Yes, some things do cost a little more, but there are lots more savings than expenses. The net result will be that you are financially better off. Here are just a few suggestions:

- Make sure your fridge is set at an energy-efficient 4 degrees Celsius.
- Turn off appliances at the wall (standby power can account for up to 15% of your electricity bill).
- Sign up for 100% ACCREDITED green power.
- Limit showers to 4 minutes.
- Install a solar hot water heater, or at least a solar booster system.
- Water efficient shower heads will cut water flow by up to 50%.
- Draught proof windows and doors. Install double glazing on large picture windows.
- Drive a 4-cylinder car.
- Turn off the TV and/or lights when you leave the room.
- Shop weekly, not daily.
- Buy in bulk. Take your own containers.
- Less packaging = less landfill.
- Wash in cold water.
- Compost organic matter
- Use the micro-wave rather than the oven.
- Walk or cycle, don't drive, wherever possible. It brings the family together, it's better for your health and reduces greenhouse emissions.
- Replace conventional light bulbs with compact fluorescent or low-energy globes.
- Teleconference in preference to interstate travel.
- Sign up with a carbon offset scheme which will undertake to plant enough trees on your behalf to absorb the level of carbon emissions generated, e.g. Greenfleet.
- Limit the electric appliances you use: beat the cream with a hand held rotary mixer, use a push mower, go for a "real" walk instead of using the treadmill or driving to the gym.
- When designing a new home, or renovating an old one, seek the advice of an environmental designer to ensure an energy efficient design.
- Install solar panels for electricity generation.