

# **Adopting energy saving practices around the home and workplace**

**Earth First**

**By Peter West**

With the global climate change crisis taking centre stage and our national carbon pollution reduction scheme facing criticism for proposing inadequate targets, it can be difficult to see how we as individuals can make a difference to such a large global problem. However, this year's Earth Hour campaign is expected to unite over 10 million Australians and 1 billion people around the world in a single display of protest.

The Earth Hour initiative aims to inform and activate communities around the world to address the threat posed by climate change— sending a strong message to all governments about the need for immediate action.

Greenhouse gas emissions are contributing to the world's warming, and Australians are one of the largest producers— pumping out around 560 million tonnes of greenhouse gases per year, of which 20 percent comes from households. We are also the world's largest coal exporter and almost all of our own electricity is generated from coal – a finite resource.

Renewable energy technology is available to turn this trend around, and we have an obligation to make significant changes to our way of life to address the adverse problems presented by global warming.

Many scenarios for climate change predict significant consequences for our food security in NSW and Australia, as well as our agricultural industries, water resources, transport, infrastructure, biodiversity and environment. The cost of electricity is also forecast to rise as much as 200% in the coming years. What more incentive do we need to reduce our electricity usage and turn to renewable sources of energy?

## **Adopting energy efficient practices**

Earth Hour provides Australians with the opportunity to stand up and be counted — demonstrating to the world that we fully intend to reduce our carbon emissions. The event also presents the opportunity for us to identify simple ways in which we, as individuals, can change our habits to reduce our electricity use at home and at work. The average Australian household uses 8500 kWh of energy per year, and some simple ways you can make a difference include:

- Replace incandescent light bulbs with energy efficient fluorescent tubes that use up to 80% less electricity.
- Install sky lights and solar tubes
- Turn lights off in rooms not in use

- Install sensor lights for security and safety
- Switch electricity off at the wall, and turn off the standby mode on all appliances including computer monitors.
- Purchase energy efficient appliances
- Source accredited renewable-energy alternatives, such as 100% CountryGreen
- Install solar hot water and solar panels for electricity with the aid of government rebates.
- Minimise the use of LCD and plasma televisions that consume as much energy as a fridge.
- Install a power usage meter to calculate electricity use
- Turn off hot water systems when you go away

### **Show your support**

Turn off all non-essential lights and electrical appliances during Earth Hour this evening between 8.30pm and 9.30pm, and spare a thought as to how you can reduce your longer term electricity usage around the home and workplace.

### **Future events:**

Reminder: The ECCO and OCAN Autumn Local Environmental Awards close on May 1<sup>st</sup> and need to be submitted on an entry form available from Book City, Mitre 10, Windyhill Nursery, Central Western Daily or Orange City Council.

Sources of information: G-Magazine and Earth Hour website [www.earthhour.org.au](http://www.earthhour.org.au)