



Saving energy to keep electricity bills in check

Saving energy around your home is the best way to keep electricity bills in check.

The top five things you can do to save energy at home are:

1. switch off second fridges
2. set air-conditioners to 24 degrees in summer or better still, use ceiling fans instead
3. use a low-flow showerhead to save hot water and energy
4. switch appliances off at the wall to cut out standby power
5. install energy-efficient compact fluorescent light bulbs.

We all know we need to use energy-efficient compact fluorescent light bulbs instead of regular light bulbs as they use five times less energy. However, some of your home's electrical appliances are also using much more energy than you might think.

For example, when measured against energy use by compact fluorescent light bulbs, a Sony PlayStation 3 would use the same amount of energy as 38 light bulbs. A 106cm plasma TV would use the same as 50 light bulbs; while leaving a hair straightening iron on would be the same as turning 125 light bulbs on all at once. More energy saving tips are available on the **ClimateSmart Living** website, www.climatesmart.qld.gov.au.

If you want to save energy at home, there are also a range of Queensland Government programs that can help you:

- free **EnergyWise Appliance Testers** identify which appliances cost the most to run. Appliance testers will be available to borrow from local government libraries from mid-2009. Information will be posted on www.energywise.qld.gov.au with details about how you can borrow one.



- the **Queensland Solar Hot Water Program** could help you replace your electric storage hot water systems with a solar or heat pump hot water system for just \$500 for eligible households and \$100 for eligible pensioners and low income earners. For more information visit, www.cleanenergy.qld.gov.au or call 13 25 23.
- the **ClimateSmart Home Service** brings a licensed electrician to your home, to audit your energy use and install energy saving equipment for just \$50 (free for Brisbane residents through a Brisbane City Council rebate). For more information or to book, call 13 20 40 or visit www.climatesmarthome.com.au
- the **Low Carbon Diet** shows you how to reduce your impact on climate change and energy use in just 30 days. For more information visit www.climatesmart.qld.gov.au

The Queensland Government also delivers a range of support to help Queenslanders cope in the face of rising electricity costs. This support includes:

- a dispute resolution service through the Queensland Energy Ombudsman
- rebates for pensioners and seniors
- assistance for customers experiencing a crisis or unforeseen emergency
- a concession for consumers using life support machines
- a \$450 000 program to make sure the needs of low-income households and disadvantaged energy customers are heard.

Energy ombudsman

The Energy Ombudsman Queensland (EOQ) is a free and independent dispute resolution service for Queensland's energy consumers. It provides free, fair and confidential help for residential and small business energy customers who have been unable to resolve a problem with their electricity or reticulated natural gas supplier. EOQ offices are located in Brisbane, Cairns and Rockhampton. For more information visit, www.eoq.com.au or call 1800 662 837.

Electricity rebate

Queensland pensioners, seniors and some other concession card holders are currently eligible for a \$190.85 a year rebate on their electricity bill to help meet their electricity costs. Consumers wishing to apply for this rebate need to contact their electricity retailer.

Further information is also available from the Department of Communities website:
www.communities.qld.gov.au/community/concessions.

Home Energy Emergency Assistance Scheme

The \$3 million Home Energy Emergency Assistance Scheme helps customers experiencing a crisis or unforeseen emergency that limits their ability to pay their home energy bill. The scheme currently provides up to \$720 per eligible household every year. Assistance is only provided for two consecutive years. Consumers wishing to apply for this rebate need to contact their energy retailer. Further information is also available from the Department of Communities website:
www.communities.qld.gov.au/community/concessions.

Electricity Life Support Concession Scheme

Seriously ill Queenslanders who use home-based life support systems including kidney dialysis machines and oxygen concentrators are eligible for a monthly concession to assist in meeting their electricity costs. Consumers wishing to access this concession should contact the Department of Communities on 13 13 04 or visit
www.communities.qld.gov.au/community/concessions.

Consumer Advocacy Program

The Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation has funded a \$450 000 (over three years) Consumer Advocacy Program delivered by the Queensland Council of Social Service (QCOSS).

The program represents the views and needs of low-income and disadvantaged energy consumers across Queensland to government and energy retailers.