

Climate Change

Useful Information



Understanding Climate Change

- Levels of greenhouse gases, (such as carbon dioxide (CO₂), in the atmosphere are increasing due to land clearing and the burning of fossil fuels such as coal, natural gas and oil for electricity, heating and transport.
- Higher levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere are increasing average temperatures across the globe. This is because greenhouse gases trap the sun's energy in our atmosphere. The more greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, the hotter it becomes. This process is called climate change (or global warming).
- Climate change is beginning to affect rainfall and temperature patterns across the globe. It is causing more severe and frequent floods, storms, bushfires, droughts, and heatwaves. As average temperatures rise, this severe weather is predicted to get worse. This in turn threatens agricultural production, our economy, our homes and our community.
- To avoid the worst impacts of climate change we need to contain the increase in average temperature to a maximum of about 2° Celsius. Some say containing it at about 1.5° Celsius is necessary.
- To stop climate change, developed countries across the world need to massively reduce their greenhouse gas emissions (also known as carbon pollution) into the atmosphere by up to 95% by 2050.

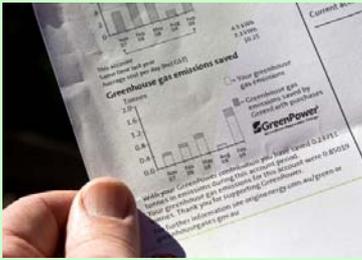
We already have most of the solutions we need to avoid the worst impacts of climate change. It is up to all of us - individuals, businesses and governments - to take action to help stop climate change by reducing our carbon pollution (greenhouse gas emissions).

Easy Actions to Save Energy, Money & Carbon Pollution

Reduce your carbon pollution by using energy wisely. Every Victorian household produces an average of 14 tonnes of carbon pollution a year from their energy use, transport and waste. Most homes could halve the amount of energy they use and be just as comfortable. This would also save money!

- **Turn off the second fridge** and save around \$180 a year on your electricity bill. Set your fridge temperature between 3-5° C and freezer between -18 and -15°C and make sure the seals are intact.
- **Reduce your hot water use:** Install a water saving shower head and keep your showers to 3 or 4 minutes. Wash your clothes in cold water instead of hot and you can save \$90 a year.
- **Walk, cycle, use public transport and car share whenever possible.** For every litre of petrol you save, carbon pollution is reduced by 2.5 kilograms.
- **Buy appliances with a high energy star rating** as it will save energy and money over the lifetime of the product. For example, by replacing your electric storage hot water system with a solar hot water system, a family of four could save over \$400 a year on their electricity bills.
- **Use a clothesline instead of an electric dryer** once a week and it could save you around \$55 a year.
- **Replace standard globes with energy efficient ones.** Compact fluorescent light globes use 80% less energy than an incandescent globe and last 5 times as long.
- **Insulate your home and seal draughts and gaps around external doors and windows** and gaps in the floor and walls. This will help keep the warm air in during winter and heat out during summer.
- **Heat only those areas you need.** Keep doors, windows and curtains closed when heating. Set your thermostat to 18-20°C in winter. (For every degree over 21 you increase your heating bill by 10%!)
- **Use a fan or evaporative cooler instead of air-conditioning.** If you do air-condition set the temp to 25°C or higher.
- **If there's a light turn it off!** Standby power from TV's, DVD players and computers account for 10% of household energy use. Switch it off at the wall and save \$100 a year.
- **Reduce the pollution from food production and its transport.** Buy locally produced food, organic where possible and grow your own. Also reduce your consumption of carbon pollution intensive foods such as red meat and dairy. Minimise packaged and processed foods, and don't let food go to waste.

Switch to GreenPower and Renewable Energy



Green Power

GreenPower is government accredited energy from renewable sources such as the sun, wind, water and waste. Sign up to 100% GreenPower electricity through your energy company and you can reduce your carbon pollution by around 50% - significantly reducing your impact on climate change. Buy as much GreenPower as you can afford, and then tell your friends and work colleagues all about it.

For more info go to: www.greenpower.gov.au. www.greenelectricitywatch.org.au

Solar Panels and Solar Hot Water

Why not generate your own green power and reduce or even negate your electricity bills?

The cost of solar panels and solar hot water systems has come down dramatically in recent years and coupled with rebates and/or payments from State and Federal Governments for the renewable energy you generate and feed into the energy grid, it has become more affordable to the average household.

For more information on what system to buy to suite your needs, finding an installer and the time it takes you to pay off the cost of the system through savings on your energy bills, go to the Choice website: <http://www.choice.com.au/reviews-and-tests/household/energy-and-water/solar.aspx>

Other Ways to Get Active

- **Get involved with Darebin's Sustainable Homes and Communities Program**, which offers a range of practical information on sustainable and low carbon living. Go to: www.sustainablehomes.vic.gov.au.
- **Subscribe to Darebin's free environmental newsletter 'Sustainability News'**. Call 8470 8405 or email environment@darebin.vic.gov.au to sign up.
- **Spread the word about climate change:** Talk to your family, friends, neighbours and workplace about climate change and the simple steps they can take to reduce their carbon pollution.
- **Get involved with a climate change campaign:** Contact a local environment organisation and get involved with one of their campaigns.
- **Contact your MPs:** While individual action is important we also need large scale action from political leaders. Contact your local MP and ask for more action.
- **Go Carbon Neutral:** Once you've reduced your energy use and are buying GreenPower, you can go one step further by offsetting your remaining emissions. Visit: www.epa.vic.gov.au/climate-change/carbon-offsets/



Darebin City Council Leads on Climate Change Action

- **Darebin City Council has committed to be carbon neutral by 2020.** This will be achieved through energy conservation and efficiency, purchasing GreenPower renewable energy, installing solar panel and co-generation systems, and then offsetting residual emissions.
- **Darebin's Energy Efficiency Program** has been very successful. Since 2006/07 we have reduced energy use in our largest 11 buildings with total savings of 1,129 tonnes since the program commenced.
- **We are purchasing 100% GreenPower for all Council's electricity use.** This reduces our carbon pollution by about 6000 tonnes each year, which is equivalent to removing roughly 1400 average cars from the road!
- **Darebin delivers a range of programs to help our community reduce greenhouse emissions.** See www.darebin.vic.gov.au/environment for more information.
- **Darebin City Council has won or been a finalist in many prestigious environmental awards** that recognise greenhouse and water savings in business and the community.

