

Sustainable Living Home Owner Manual



2018

Forward

This Home Owner Manual has been compiled by ESD Australia to provide home owners information and advice on being sustainable around the home.

The manual covers useful information and tips on reducing energy bills, saving energy and money, outdoor living and longer term investments to consider.

It is envisaged these sustainable living tips will help you get the best out of your home, whilst reducing your impact on the environment.

Acknowledgements

ESD would like to acknowledge the following Australian Government websites for information used to compile this manual:

- ✓ yourhome.gov.au
- ✓ energyrating.gov.au
- ✓ waterrating.gov.au
- ✓ energy.gov.au/

Please visit these sites for further tips and information.

Disclaimer

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Reduce your energy bills

Power prices are prompting some households to take a fresh look at energy consumption and there's plenty you can do to lower your energy bills and lots of resources to help you save while staying comfortable.

Every household situation is different. So the best place to start is by understanding how much energy you use each day and which energy saving actions will have the biggest impact in your home.

Things to consider include:

- ◆ the size and features of your home
- ◆ the energy efficiency of your appliances
- ◆ your lifestyle
- ◆ the way you manage and use the equipment around your home
- ◆ your choice of energy retailer

How much can you save?

By using energy wisely and adopting smart energy-saving measures, you can save money, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and cut down on energy wastage at home while meeting your needs for convenience and comfort.

Whether it's washing clothes in cold water, adjusting your thermostat or turning off power at the wall - it all adds up. An average family of four could be saving hundreds of dollars a year by making just a few changes.

Examples of possible savings over one year include:

- ◆ Washing clothes in cold rather than hot water could save you around \$124
- ◆ Getting rid of the second fridge could save you around \$172
- ◆ Using a clothesline instead of an electric dryer once a week could save you around \$79
- ◆ Switching off gaming consoles after use could save you up to \$193

These amounts are a guide only. Exact savings will vary depending on the age of your appliances, the size of your home, the climatic zone you live in and the energy prices you pay.

If you need to upgrade a major appliance, buying an energy-efficient one is often a worthwhile investment over the life of your product. By replacing your electric storage hot water system with a solar hot water system or a heat pump water heater, you could make significant savings on your energy bill. The amount you save depends on your individual circumstances.

What difference can I make?

Households produce 21 per cent of Australia's carbon pollution. That means the average Australian household creates around 14 tonnes of greenhouse gases a year, including private transport use.

So every household that takes action large or small is not only helping their hip pocket, but also contributing to Australia's efforts to tackle climate change.

Key factors impacting your household's energy bills

A range of factors determine the amount of energy used in individual households. Some reflect changing lifestyle preferences - such as the increase in home entertainment and technology products - while others relate to the climate and the type of housing where you live.

The main factors impacting your energy use include:

- ◆ the local climate where you live
- ◆ the total size of your home - and whether it's a townhouse, apartment or freestanding home
- ◆ the design of your home - orientation and whether passive heating and cooling opportunities are used
- ◆ features and appliances - the size, number and energy efficiency of your major appliances
- ◆ habits and lifestyle - the behaviour of the people in your house including how much heating, cooling, cooking, showering, washing and clothes drying is done

Some features in your present home (such as size and orientation) you are stuck with, but you can still take advantage of local conditions and make your home function as efficiently as possible – look at our tips for heating and cooling to get some smart ideas.

If you're planning changes to your home, or building a new one, this is the most effective time to consider energy and water efficiency.

Saving energy and money

As power prices rise, many of us are looking for ways to use less energy at home. The good news is there are lots of simple, no-cost things you can do right now. By trying some of these ideas and making a few changes to everyday habits, you could save money and help the environment without sacrificing comfort.

Lifestyle changes aren't always easy because they involve changing our behaviour. Anyone who's ever tried to change their diet and exercise regime will know it can be hard to change ingrained habits - but it can be done.

The good news is, while it may take a while to bed down new ways of doing things around the home, once you do, they become second nature. See how many of the following your household can adopt.

1. Dress for the season

During winter's coldest months, many of us hibernate indoors watching TV, playing our gaming consoles or cooking a hearty meal. Staying in has an energy price tag - adding to our home energy bills. Find ways to have fun 'unplugged' – like breaking out the board games.

One of the easiest ways to save money in winter is to turn down the heater and put on some warmer clothes. Reaching for a jumper or blanket instead of the thermostat is important when you realise that each additional degree adds between 5 and 10 per cent to your energy use. While you're at it, dress your bed for the season too by putting on an additional blanket.

2. Shut the door on wasted energy

Trying to heat or cool the whole house can waste a lot of money. Shut the door to areas you aren't using (like bathrooms and the laundry) and only heat the rooms you're using.

Draught-proofing your home is one of the cheapest and easiest ways to keep your home comfortable all year round. You will also save lots of energy and money as draught-proofing can save you up to a quarter of your energy bills.

Swing by the hardware store and pick up supplies like brush-strip seals for the bottom of the doors, draught-proofing strips and even some of grandma's old-fashioned door snakes (just remember to train everyone who uses the doors to put the snake back in place after coming inside).

Don't forget to block the gaps around internal doors too. If you have rooms you're not heating, such as laundries and bathrooms, draught-proof these too. This way when

you close off areas you don't need to heat, there's no hidden and unwanted leakage of conditioned air.

3. Let the sun shine in

Solar panels may not be suitable for every home and budget but you could still be using the free power from the sun. Open your curtains when the sun is shining on them and close the curtains when the sun moves away. Using the sun's energy will help boost the temperature for free in the cooler months.

4. Heating and cooling efficiently

For each degree heating or cooling is increased, energy use will increase by up to 10 per cent. To keep your bills in control, think about setting your heating thermostat to 18–20 degrees Celsius in winter and to 25–27 degrees Celsius in summer. Make sure the timer is only set for times you will need it, turning it off overnight and when you are away from home.

You can make the most of the energy you're using by closing internal doors and only heating or cooling the rooms you're using.

Turn off your Air-conditioners/heaters before going to bed and when you're leaving the house - it's cheaper and it's safer too.

5. Turn off gadgets and appliances

Did you know home entertainment systems and electronic gadgets are quietly adding to your power bills? 'Standby power' used by gadgets and appliance can account for 10 per cent of your electricity bill. If it's got a little light or clock - it's using power. TVs, DVD and video players, game consoles, mobile phone chargers, microwave ovens, music docks and stereos are some of the biggest culprits.

Running costs can be reduced by turning off appliances at the wall when they are not in use, saving you money on your energy bill all year round.

6. Use a solar clothes dryer

Clothes dryers are very convenient - but remember you're paying for this convenience. Rather than automatically putting your clothes into the dryer, use free energy from the sun and the wind to dry your clothes whenever you can.

You can put clothes racks out in the sun and fresh air on verandahs or dry clothes indoors on a rack when the heater is already on.

7. Choosing efficient appliances

Household appliances can account for up to one third of your energy bill. If you're buying a new fridge, freezer, television, washing machine, clothes dryer, dishwasher or air-conditioner, look for the Energy Rating Label - the more stars, the less energy the product will use. High star-rated models can cost a little more, but choosing a cheaper less energy-efficient product could end up costing more in the long run. This is because running costs over the product's lifetime can add up to more than any savings made on the original purchase price.

8. Be active and become a 'swapper'

Swapping car trips for walking or cycling is a great way to save money and keep fit during the winter months. Join in and become a swapper family.

It makes good sense to walk instead of using your car for short journeys. Cars cost a lot of money to run, especially when you're paying for petrol, maintenance and the upfront cost of buying a car (or a second car).

People-powered transport is good for the environment, good for your health and good for your wallet too!

9. Waste not, Want not

Worldwide, 30 per cent of our food goes to waste. That means the average family throws out more than \$1,000 in wasted food every year.

As well as costing you money, this food ends up in our garbage bins and in our tips where it produces methane - a harmful greenhouse gas that's 21 times stronger than the emissions from your car.

Much of the food waste in our kitchens comes from poor planning or from buying too much food so use shopping lists and check your pantry and fridge regularly to ensure you use up what's there.

10. Minimising hot water use

Hot water is responsible for around 25 per cent of the average household energy bill. Ways to reduce this include washing clothes in cold water and waiting until there is a full load, and only running the dishwasher when it's full.

It might not seem like much, but installing a water-efficient showerhead is one of the most cost-effective ways you can save energy on heating water and save water too. A water-efficient showerhead is simple to install and will pay for itself in a very short time. Best of all you can still enjoy a great shower, so there's really no excuse to keep pouring your money down the drain

Keep showers short and avoid the temptation of using the shower to get warm. Staying in the shower uses up to 20 times as much energy as getting out and standing under two heat lamps. Even a few extra minutes in the shower will add to your power bill.

11. Windows of opportunity

Windows can let as much as 40 per cent of your winter warmth leak out of your home but there're ways to improve window efficiency.

Invest in new warmth-saving curtains and blinds. This can make a surprising difference in keeping your home warm, as well as giving you privacy and looking great. Look for fabrics that insulate well, like heavy fabrics or curtains with thermal lining or layers. Choose the best quality you can afford to give you the best thermal results.

Fitted pelmets (curtain boxes) above curtains are also important in reducing heat loss. If pelmets don't fit with your interior design, choose window fittings such as blinds that attach to the wall and trap air, or install curtains that reach from the ceiling to the floor. For a simple do-it-yourself and low cost option, try fitting a strip of light timber across the curtain rail above the curtain to stop warm air that you've paid to heat from leaking away.

Installing an additional layer of glazing on windows and skylights is another option to increase energy efficiency. This way you will trap a layer of air and help to keep the winter chills at bay. Glazing also helps reduce outside noise. Double-glazed windows can be very expensive to retrofit (see the 'Longer term investments' below) but there're cheaper commercial alternatives and secondary glazing products that have a thin plastic coating which you can put over windows yourself at a low cost. Check out what's available in your hardware store and on the internet.

Outdoor Living

Swimming pools and spas

Swimming pools and spas are the perfect way to cool off on a hot summer day or relax under the stars. They can also use significant amounts of energy and water to fill and maintain. For a typical home with an in-ground pool this can be as much as 30 per cent of the household's electricity bill. So why not pool your energy and water know-how with ours to reduce pool running costs and make significant savings. Ways you can save include:

- ✓ **Selecting an energy-efficient pump** - A pool pump can be the largest user of electricity in a home - sometimes using more energy than your washing machine, clothes dryer and dishwasher combined. Keep your pool and spa crystal clear and your energy costs down by selecting a minimum 5-star energy-efficient pool pump at the smallest pump size effective for your pool or spa. The more stars the better.
- ✓ **Running your pump efficiently** - Reduce daily pumping time with the help of a timer, and run your pump at the lowest recommended speed to maintain pool hygiene.
- ✓ **Maintaining your pool** - Reduce the amount of work your pump has to do by keeping your pool well maintained. Regularly clean out the skimmer and pool pump baskets and pool filter. Keep the intake grates clear of debris.
- ✓ **Minimising evaporation to save water** - Invest in a well-fitting cover and roller, and ensure the cover is compatible with your pool treatment chemicals. A good quality cover also reduces the need for heating in cooler climates. Bubble covers made from transparent plastic bubbles can reduce cooling by 3 to 4 degrees Celsius and cut heat losses from a heated pool by as much as 75 per cent. The translucent bubble covers trap heat from the sun and can warm your pool by as much as 7 degrees Celsius.
- ✓ **Managing the chemical balance of your pool and spa** - Ensure you have adequate sanitiser to kill bacteria. Registered chlorine, salt-water chlorinators and chlorine-free sanitisers are available and each has different benefits and impacts. For those with asthma or other allergies chlorine-free sanitisers are a good option.
- ✓ **Considering solar energy for heating your pool** - If you require heating, solar is cheaper to run and better for the environment than electricity or gas. Only heat your pool or spa when needed and don't over heat - particularly if you're using expensive-to-run electricity or gas models. You can also prevent heat loss in your spa by ensuring the insulation - including your pool cover - is in good condition.
- ✓ **Going natural** - For a chemical-free option that uses less energy than a conventional pool, why not look into a natural pool. The natural pool system is designed to pump water into a separate filtration zone where the water is cleaned by passing through gravel - just like you might find in natural lakes and waterholes. Aquatic plants can be added for additional filtration. Natural pools can be designed for your garden or retrofitted into existing in-ground pools. Look for a supplier in your area

Barbeques

Barbeques (BBQ's) are an essential part of the Aussie lifestyle. They can also contribute to air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. If you're cooking or entertaining in the backyard regularly, it makes good energy sense to buy a BBQ that will stand the test of time and be easy to use, maintain and operate efficiently. Things to consider:

- ✓ **Making a list of requirements.** It's important to buy the right type and size for your needs so you're not heating a large cooking space unnecessarily. Consider which accessories such as range hoods, rotisseries and wok burners you will actually use.
- ✓ **Doing your research.** Specialised outdoor cooking options now include pizza ovens, fire pits, and even solar ovens. Your choice will vary depending on the food types you want to cook, whether it's for everyday eating or you're planning on entertaining with large groups.
- ✓ **Going for gas over charcoal.** Choose gas for a cleaner meal that emits less air pollution. Gas BBQs have been shown to emit nearly three times less greenhouse gases than charcoal. If you're really keen on reducing your energy use, there's also a range of new solar products that you can experiment with this summer, including solar ovens and water boilers.
- ✓ **Keeping the hood down while grilling.** By cooking your meat and vegies at the right temperature and for the right amount of time you can retain juices and flavour as well as reduce energy consumption.
- ✓ **Substituting chemical based cleaners, with natural alternatives.** You can buy these or make a paste of bicarbonate of soda and scrub clean with a steel brush. Reduce the amount of food sticking to the grill by rubbing the plate with an onion and some olive oil once it's hot or by marinating food items first.

Lawns and landscaping - water and energy smart design

Lawns are responsible for up to 90 per cent of the water used in the average garden. Designing your garden to withstand times of low rainfall, including reducing lawn areas, can bring a range of benefits. Minimising the need for maintenance, water and other resources with a water-smart garden means you will have more time to sit back and enjoy your oasis. Things to consider include:

- ✓ **Replacing lawn areas with easy to maintain renewable woodchips** - Identify lawn areas you currently don't use and turn these into garden beds. Besides saving on water use, other benefits sure to please include easy maintenance, and no more noise and air pollution from all the equipment required for trimming, edging and cutting. Your family and neighbours wanting to have a weekend sleep-in will love you for it.

- ✓ **Planting native species** - Fill your newly mulched and chipped area with water-efficient, low maintenance, local native species that will attract birds and wildlife. As you look out on your new habitat, think of all the time and resources saved on mowing, watering, weeding or fertilising.
- ✓ **Measuring up** - If you do want a lawn area, plan for the size you need for household activities, and consider planting drought-tolerant and native varieties that will require less water.
- ✓ **Reducing the amount of water your lawn and garden needs** - Setting your mower to cut at 4 centimetres or higher provides greater protection for soil so it doesn't dry out as quickly. Water your lawn deeply and infrequently instead of lightly and often to encourage a deeper root system and better water retention.
- ✓ **Reducing the need for heating and cooling** - Well selected trees and shrubs can help reduce your heating and cooling bills. Plant shade trees that will keep the summer sun out and let the winter sun in to your home.
- ✓ **Selecting the right pump** - Reduce the environmental impact and running costs of decorative ponds and fountains by choosing a solar pump and keeping your water clean and healthy at the same time.
- ✓ **Choosing equipment wisely** – Choose lawn equipment, such as mowers and leaf blowers, wisely, the right equipment can reduce your lawn's environmental impact and save you time and money.

Garden furniture ideas - stylish and durable

Garden furniture comes in a range of materials including metals, synthetic and natural - but which ones are better for the environment and give you lasting use? Things to consider:

- ✓ **Selecting quality products** - If you're in the market for garden furniture, ensure you're paying for pieces that will stand up to harsh outdoor conditions including sun and rain. Cheaper items may look affordable but costs will quickly add up if they need to be replaced or expensively maintained.
- ✓ **Going for the good wood** - Wood is a renewable resource when it comes from a managed plantation. Look for certified wood furniture with the Forest Stewardship Council label to ensure it is sustainable. Do your research so you know which timbers are low impact options.

- ✓ **Picking preferred plastics** - If you do go for plastic, choose one of the recycled varieties now on the market. These plastics often have the look of wood without the worry of rot, warping or splintering. Look out for sets built from up to 100 per cent recycled plastic and you can also match these with cushion covers and umbrellas from recycled materials. Cheaper plastic products tend to fade and peel and have fewer options for repairs. Besides not being long lasting, plastics such as PVC can also emit toxic chemicals and pose problems when it comes time to dispose of them as they are not easily recyclable.
- ✓ **Watching out for wicker** - Real wicker is made from various natural fibres, including rattan, which bends easily to make chairs, and other products. Wicker furniture that is made from FSC Certified timber is a better option for the environment. It does deteriorate over time, so it is best used under cover or indoors and treated with lemon or linseed oil to help extend its life. Resin or synthetic wicker has become a popular choice for patio and poolside furniture due to its durability and easy care. Synthetic wicker can cope with different temperatures and humidity so will last a lot longer if cared for.
- ✓ **Protecting metals from rust** - If there are metal parts, ensure these are powder-coated and rust-resistant so they will be long lasting. Stainless steel, aluminium and wrought iron are not renewable resources. Look for furniture with metals made from recycled content, and designed to be easily taken apart so the metal parts can be recycled when no longer in use.
- ✓ **Maintaining it well so it lasts longer** - Anything left out in all weather will age. You can preserve the life of your outdoor furniture by stowing it or covering it when it's not in use, such as during winter or when on holidays. A durable plastic cover will protect items from exposure to rain and sun and reduces maintenance needs. You can also keep your furniture protected by installing it on a covered veranda. Lightly oil your wooden furniture at the end of every season or when it begins to look dry. When treating furniture choose oils and paint that are labelled low impact, as these create less damage to waterways and air quality.
- ✓ **Reducing waste by buying second-hand** - Used furniture can be renovated or restored to serve you for years to come. You can even transform indoor furniture that is no longer up to scratch into outdoor pieces by giving it a protective coat of paint, recovering cushions with water and stain resistant fabrics or simply placing it under covered verandas where it will be protected from the elements.
- ✓ **Getting inspired with upcycling** - Television, magazines and the internet are filled with creative DIY ideas for outdoor living. You might want to have a go at upcycling. It's all about turning old objects into something useful and decorative that expresses your personal style. A quick online search for 'upcycling' will reveal all kinds of ideas.

Outdoor entertaining - no and low waste dining

A Sunday barbeque is a relaxing way to share a meal with friends and family. If you're not paying attention it can result in a small mountain of plastic cups, plates, bottles and cans. Australia generated around 2,080 kilograms (2.08 tonnes) of waste for each person in 2006–07, with just under half being recycled. It's a sobering thought that plastic bottles and aluminium cans take at least as long as the average human lifetime to break down. So why not make your outdoor entertaining waste free by trying some of these ideas.

- ✓ **Being a helpful host** - Make it easy for your guests to recycle by setting up bins to separate plastics, glass and paper items as well as any non-recyclables items.
- ✓ **Bottle count down** - Instead of individual bottles and cans, you can reduce the packaging waste by planning ahead, buying in bulk and serving soft drink, beer and juice from a jug and keeping it cool in the fridge or freezer. Or why not make your own homemade lemonade or punch with sprigs of fresh mint from the garden.
- ✓ **Ditching the disposables** - Use your everyday plates and glasses instead of disposable tableware - or invest in a set of durable re-usable plastic picnic-ware for outdoor dining. Good quality tablecloths and re-usable cloth napkins that can be washed again and again will not only reduce waste it will save you money. Try op shops or hand-made markets.
- ✓ **Lighting right** - Outdoor lighting is important for late night entertaining and to help your guests find their way around your home safely. Ensure lights in traffic areas, like back and front doors, are fitted with a sensor and/or timer so they come on when needed. Go solar for fairy lights and for lighting up along garden paths where appropriate, and save on your energy costs.
- ✓ **Catering carefully** - A bit of planning will ensure you have the right amount of food and don't end up with piles of soggy snags and salad that ends up as food waste going to landfill. You can invite your guests to prepare their favourite dip, or salad to share in re-usable dishware so you avoid unnecessary packaging or paper plates overfilling your bins and then going off to landfill. If you do have leftovers ensure you get it into the fridge as soon as it cools so it's safe for snacking on later. You can also send home slices of quiche and cake with guests. What isn't good for eating can be placed in the compost.

Protect your home from bushfires

An outdoor tidy-up to maintain your home's exterior and the health of your garden is a good idea at any time of year. Keep in mind that peak fire season varies depending on where you live in Australia. Check with the Bureau of Meteorology to find out when the fire risk is highest in your area so you can be well prepared. Garden waste from seasonal pruning should be chipped, taken to green waste drop-off centres or located safely away from the house.

“Prepare, act, survive” is the national slogan for readying your home for the bushfire season. Key to being prepared is to understand the level of bush fire risk you and your property are exposed to and the ways you can reduce this risk. Follow these pointers to ensure you are bushfire ready:

- ✓ Check and/or change the battery on your smoke alarms.
- ✓ Cut back any overhanging trees or shrubs and dispose of cuttings appropriately.
- ✓ Check the condition of your roof and replace any damaged or missing tiles.
- ✓ Clean leaves from the roof, gutters and downpipes and fit quality metal leaf guards.
- ✓ If you have a water tank, dam or swimming pool, consider installing a Static Water Supply (SWS) sign.
- ✓ Store wood piles well away from the house and keep covered.
- ✓ Keep garden mulch away from the house and keep grass short.
- ✓ Ensure you have a hose which is long enough to reach every part of the home.
- ✓ Remove and store any flammable items away from the house.
- ✓ Check the condition of external walls, cladding and seal any gaps.
- ✓ Consider doing a quick online fire safety audit to reduce your risk of a house fire.

Longer term investments to consider

1. Insulate floors and walls, and rug up floors

Insulated floors and walls will save you on your winter heating bills and also make your home cooler in the hot months. Insulated walls could be saving up to 20 per cent of your heating and cooling bills, whilst floor insulation can save you an additional 5 per cent.

Most cavity brick walls can be retrofitted with wall insulation, as can brick veneer, reverse brick veneer and timber framed walls, sometimes the lining or cladding doesn't even need to be removed. Get expert advice when looking into wall and underfloor insulation to ensure electrical and plumbing fixtures, as well as the best type of insulation are considered.

Warm rugs and thick carpet underfoot will also make a difference to how soon your household reaches for the thermostat. Just like when you're wearing your fluffy slippers, warm floor furnishings will make a big difference to how warm you feel in your home.

Put thick rugs where you spend time standing, especially if this is on a cold, hard surface. Placing rugs where you do the washing up and brush your teeth is a good start to keeping your toes warmer.

With a warm body and snug feet, you will hold off turning up the heating a lot longer and start saving money a lot sooner.

2. Double glaze windows

Once we know that a square metre of unglazed ordinary glass can let out as much heat as a single bar radiator heater can produce, we know it's time to think window efficiency.

If you've got a little extra money to invest in making your home more efficient and more comfortable, then laminating or double glazing windows could be for you. Double glazing can be especially useful for windows that can't easily be covered with insulating blinds or curtains.

Lower cost options for windows include laminating products you can attach to your existing windows. This option and the curtain ideas listed above will all make a noticeable difference to your comfort levels. The difference with double glazing is that your heating and cooling could be greatly reduced, and for some homes, never needed again!

If you're looking into double glazing, make sure you build up your knowledge of the ins and outs of double glazing. This will help you to choose a builder or window supplier who knows what they're selling.

3. Reconsidering your second car

Are you thinking about buying a second car? Perhaps you've done the sums and are considering the benefits of getting rid of an unnecessary second car.

If you can do without a second car you're likely to save thousands of dollars each year on registration, insurance, loans and running costs. The money you save by not buying a second car can easily cover occasional trips by taxi when you needed a second vehicle.

Even if you have a car, you don't have to use it all the time - using people power (like walking and cycling) is good for the environment, good for your health and good for your wallet.

If you decide to buy a new car or a second car, choosing a fuel-efficient car is a good financial decision that can save you thousands of dollars in fuel costs. It will also greatly reduce the pollution generated as you drive it.

All new light motor vehicles (cars, four-wheel drives and light commercial vehicles) sold in Australia have to display a Fuel Consumption Label. The label is designed to help you make better choices about the running costs and environmental impacts of your new car. Fuel consumption information is also available for many cars made before 2004.

4. Install solar power

Installing a solar (photovoltaic or PV) power system is a great way of capturing the sun's energy to generate electricity at home.

Once your system is installed, it will help reduce your electricity bills as well as your impact on the environment. Solar power systems are low-maintenance and can also increase the value of your home.

Solar power can be connected to the mains electricity grid or set up as a stand-alone system where the electricity is stored in batteries.

5. Be energy efficient when you buy, build or renovate

Building and renovating is an exciting time but it can also be complicated and stressful with all sorts of decisions to make. These include decisions about the design of the home or extension, heating and cooling options, insulation, effective easy-living outdoor areas, and which appliances are the most energy efficient. Your choices can improve not only your lifestyle and comfort but can also cut your heating, cooling and water costs for many years to come.



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