



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:

- Under the **Queensland Government Solar Hot Water Rebate** you could be eligible for a \$1000 Concessional Rebate (for pensioners and low-income earners) or \$600 Standard Rebate when you replace your electric storage hot water system with a solar hot water system or heat pump. Visit www.qld.gov.au/solar or call **13 GET SOLAR (13 438 76527)** to find out more about the Queensland Solar Hot Water Rebate eligibility criteria and terms and conditions.
- The Queensland Government Solar Bonus Scheme pays eligible households and other small customers for the surplus electricity generated from solar photovoltaic panel systems, which is exported to the Queensland electricity grid. For more information: call **13 GET SOLAR (13 438 76527)** or visit www.qld.gov.au/solar
- The **ClimateSmart Home Service** brings a licensed electrician to your home, to audit your energy use and install energy saving equipment for just \$50. For more information or to book, call **13 36 00** or visit www.climatesmarthome.com.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 Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland
- rebates for pensioners and seniors
- concessions for low-income consumers who need to run air-conditioning for specified medical conditions
- 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 and Water Ombudsman Queensland

The Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland (EWOQ) 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. EWOQ offices are located in Brisbane, Cairns and Rockhampton. For more information, visit www.ewoq.com.au or call **1800 662 837**.

Electricity rebate

Queensland pensioners, seniors and some other concession card holders are currently eligible for a \$230.46* 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.

For more information contact the Department of Communities on **13 QGOV (13 74 68)** or visit www.communities.qld.gov.au/communityservices

Medical Cooling and Heating Electricity Concession Scheme

The Medical Cooling and Heating Electricity Concession Scheme is available to low-income Queenslanders who have specific medical conditions that require frequent use of an air-conditioner to regulate their body temperature. The concession aims to assist these households with the additional electricity costs associated with operating air-conditioning.

** Figures current from 1 July 2011.*

For eligibility criteria and further information about how to apply, contact the Department of Communities on **13 QGOV (13 74 68)** or visit www.communities.qld.gov.au/communityservices

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 per year. Assistance is only provided for two consecutive years. Consumers wishing to apply for this rebate need to contact their energy retailer. For more information contact the Department of Communities on **13 QGOV (13 74 68)** or visit www.communities.qld.gov.au/communityservices

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 QGOV (13 74 68)** or visit www.communities.qld.gov.au/communityservices

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.

Drought relief

Eligible farmers in Queensland have access to drought relief from fixed charges for electricity used in irrigation pumping. This is available for farmers in drought declared areas or who have an individual drought declared property under Queensland Government administrative processes. Further information is available on the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation website www.dpi.qld.gov.au/4789_16001.htm