



Amanda Rishworth MP's Green Hero News

April 2009

Energy Efficient Homes

Welcome to my second quarterly Green Hero Newsletter. This month's newsletter will focus on how we can reduce the use of chemicals we use in our homes. However firstly, I would like to highlight the packages the Federal Government have put in place to assist households make their homes more energy efficient.

Energy Efficient Home Package

The Australian Government will deliver a \$3.9 billion Energy Efficient Homes Package over the next three years. This package is part of the \$42 billion Nation Building – Economic Stimulus Plan. This is a critical component of the Government's Economic Stimulus Plan as it will support thousands of jobs in manufacturing, distribution and installation in the midst of an economic downturn. For more information go to www.economicstimulusplan.gov.au

The Package is made up of three elements:

The Homeowner Insulation Program installs ceiling insulation (capped at \$1,600) in the homes of eligible owner-occupiers.

This program offers ceiling insulation worth up to \$1,600 to eligible owner-occupiers.

The program targets homeowners who are currently uninsulated, or have ceiling insulation with an R-value of 0.5 or less. The full program starts on 1 July 2009 and will run until 31 December 2011,

However eligible homeowners can get their insulation installed now, so keep your receipts and claim a reimbursement from the Government. In order to claim the reimbursement:

- The home must be within Australia or its territories.
- The insulation must be installed by a skilled tradesman (e.g. a builder, plasterer or specialist insulation installer) who is working for a business with an Australian Business Number.
- Residents need to get two quotes from two different skilled tradesmen which need to be attached to the application for reimbursement.
- Please note that the \$1,600 insulation assistance is an alternative to the \$1,600 solar hot water rebate. People cannot access both \$1,600 rebates for the same home.

The Low Emission Assistance Plan for Renters provides assistance of up to \$1,000 to install insulation in private rental properties. The installation guidelines above also apply to this program.

The Solar Hot Water Rebate provides rebates of \$1,600 to install a solar hot water system. It replaces the old \$1,000 rebate and removes the means test. As detailed in my January Green Heros Newsletter this program runs until 30 June 2012.

Assistance Available to Lower your Energy Bills

Adelaide's householders can lower their energy bills and reduce greenhouse gas emissions under the Residential Energy Efficiency Scheme (REES). Gas and electricity providers will offer householders incentives to adopt energy saving measures. Energy saving measures can include:

- Installing ceiling insulation
- Draught proofing doors and windows
- Minimise second fridges
- Using efficient lighting
- Installing efficient appliances, such as water heaters and heating and cooling systems.

The REES will be available to any South Australian household, however the scheme will have a particular focus on low-income households.

The following providers of electricity and gas in South Australia are now required to meet targets which are about improving the energy efficiency of our homes.

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|------------------|-----------------|
| ■ Origin Energy | ■ TRUenergy |
| ■ AGL | ■ Simple Energy |
| ■ SA Electricity | ■ Red Energy |
| ■ Powerdirect | |

For further information go to http://www.dtei.sa.gov.au/energy/government_programs/rees

Safe Disposal of Fluorescent Tubes for Residents

The City of Onkaparinga Council offers a disposal service for the new low energy fluorescent lights that we are all being encouraged to use. As these contain mercury the Onkaparinga Council have introduced a fluorescent tube recycling service which is available at six locations across the Council area. Further information about the location nearest to you can be obtained by contacting the City of Onkaparinga Council on **8384 0666** or the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) on **8204 2004**

Broken Fluorescent Tubes

The main composition of fluorescent tubes and compact tubes are mercury, stainless steel and glass. If a fluorescent tube breaks in your home you should open all windows and doors in that room and vacate the room for 15 minutes before commencing the clean up procedure. Although the recommended time is around 15 minutes if you have young children you may want to err on the side of caution and vacate the room for up to half an hour. You will then need to follow a detailed cleaning up process.

There is a different procedure for each kind of surface that the material is broken on, but it generally involves the wrapping of the broken material in newspaper or an equivalent material, and then secondly putting it into sealed plastic, it can then be placed into the bin. Once you have wrapped and packed and stored fluorescent tubes in your bins they can be taken along to the closest drop off point.

At the recycle depot the material is then placed carefully into containers. These containers are collected from Council storage when they are full with the initial recycling process occurring here in South Australia. The mercury extraction and other procedures in the recycling process is done in Melbourne. Melbourne is the only area in Australia that does the 100% recycling of fluorescent tubes - the main components mercury, glass and aluminium are all 100% recycled and returned back into the various industries.

The Federal Government Announces an All Electric Car Approved for our Roads

The vehicle is expected to go into volume production in Japan in June. You can read more about this at the following link: <http://www.alp.org.au/media/0409/mstard090.php>

Reducing Chemicals at Home

Reducing Chemical Use

This section focuses on tips to reduce the use of chemicals around the home. In recent times you may have noticed a greater number of cleaning products emerging on supermarket shelves marketing more environmentally friendly ingredients (such as Spray and Wipe with Baking Soda). While this is certainly a move in the right direction it does highlight that there are simple methods we can adopt to cut down on the use of chemicals - particularly in cleaning agents. If you are concerned about the amount of chemicals making their way into the environment from your home you may like to try out some of the cleaning recipes below.

In the Bathroom

Hands; Clean hands with sugar and olive oil or lemon and sugar and wash with pure soap - To remove ingrained dirt, rub with oatmeal and lemon juice.

Teeth; Peppermint extract mixed with bicarb soda makes refreshing toothpaste.

Hair; Condition hair by applying sesame or corn oil to your head and wrap it in a hot, damp towel for 20 minutes then wash out.

Skin; Use pure soap instead of shaving cream. Cornstarch can be used instead of baby powder. Olive oil or vegetable oil can be used instead of baby oil.

Cleaning in the bathroom

Toilet: Use baking soda followed by white vinegar for stains. Once a week leave vinegar in the bowl overnight and brush in the morning. Add a few drops of vanilla for a fresh smell.

Shower base: A scourer and bicarb soda

Bath and basin: Bicarb soda followed by wiping with vinegar

Ceramic tiles: Vinegar straight onto a damp cloth

Glass, mirrors and windows: Wash with simple soap and water, rinse with a solution of one part vinegar to four parts water

In the Laundry

Washing: Pure soap flakes or liquids are toxin-free and completely biodegradable. They can be used instead

of laundry detergent. Rinsing - A cup of vinegar in the final rinse cycle makes an effective fabric softener.
Nappies: Presoak in three tablespoons of baking soda in warm water, add a capful of eucalyptus oil to the soak to act as a disinfectant and always dry in sunlight.

Gentle Detergent: Grate one third of a cake of pure soap, add a little water and bring to the boil until dissolved (use a potato masher if necessary). In a bucket dissolve a third of a cup of washing soda in a little hot water, add the soap solution and top up with water. This mixture sets into a soft gel. Use two cups per wash. Also good for washing dishes and hair!

In the Kitchen

Drains: To prevent clogged drains, mix a cup of baking soda, salt and a tablespoon of cream of tartar. Pour a quarter of this mixture into the drain and follow with a pot of boiling water. Flush with cold water.

Ovens: Wipe regularly with a soapy cloth to avoid build-up and use steel wool (gently) for stubborn stains. Alternatively, place about 50 ml of ammonia in a shallow pan and add enough water to cover the bottom of the pan. Heat oven for 20 minutes, turn off and place pan in oven overnight then wipe clean.

Dishes: Wash with pure soap and add a little baking soda for very greasy dishes.

Metals: Wipe with cider vinegar or lemon juice.

Silverware: Bring two tablespoons of bicarb soda and one piece of aluminum foil to boil in one litre of water. Soak silverware in hot solution to remove tarnish and polish with bicarb soda and a soft cloth if stain is deep.

General Cleaning Recipes

Timber: Use beeswax or one part lemon juice to two parts vegetable/olive oil keep in sealed jars and shake before using.

Furniture polish: Dissolve five ml of lemon oil in 475 ml of paraffin oil and apply with rag.

Polishing Cloth: Melt 50 ml of paraffin wax and 50ml of vinegar together in a double boiler. Soak a dusting rag in the mixture for half an hour and hang out to dry.

Floor Polish: Melt 25 ml of paraffin in a double boiler. Add one litre of mineral oil and a few drops of lemon essence. Apply with a rag, allow to dry and then polish.

Floors: Hot water and soap. For cork, tiled, lino or slate floors use half a cup of white vinegar in a bucket of hot water.

Air fresheners: Try pot pourri or fresh flowers. Grow house plants as these provide excellent air purification. Baking soda in your refrigerator or garbage bins will help to reduce odours.

Carpet: Deodorize carpets by sprinkling with bicarb soda then vacuuming. To fully clean and deodorize carpets, mix two parts cornmeal with one part borax. Sprinkle liberally; leave one hour, and then vacuum.

All Purpose Cleaner 1 - Mix 2 teaspoons of borax with one teaspoon of soap and 1.1 litres of water. Pour solution into a spray bottle for easy application.

All Purpose Cleaner 2 - Mix 4 litres of hot water, a quarter of a cup of sudsy ammonia, a quarter of a cup of vinegar and one tablespoon of baking soda. For a stronger solution, double all the ingredients except the water.

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