

Energy Matters

JULY 2010

Alan Cuthbertson
alan@sysprosoft.com

..if you are not doing anything on Sunday 12th September, drop in and have a look....

Inside this issue:

Home Sustainability Day 1

Walk Against Warming 1

Elections 1

Green Loans 2

Disclaimer

The views in this newsletter are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Green Loans program

Home Sustainability Day

For the last 9 years ATA has been organising the Home Sustainability Day where home owners open their homes to the public to show what they have done to reduce their Carbon Footprint.

This year, I have decided to open my home so you all get a chance to tramp through my house, rather than me tramping through your house!

While there are some expensive items in my house (solar panels, solar hot water, zoned gas heating) most of the changes have been small and relatively inexpensive, such as draught restriction, clothes line cover and cardboard pelmets. In addition you can have a look at my DIY double glazing.

So if you are not doing anything on Sunday 12th September, drop in at 251 Old Eltham Rd, Lower Plenty and have a look.

The web site is yet to be populated with information, but you can check out my and other houses closer to the day:

<http://www.sustainablehouseday.com>

Walk Against Warming

The Walk Against Warming day is on again on the 15th August. This is just one week before the election, so, rather than walk through the city, they have decided to walk

The Elections

The elections are only 3 weeks away and I am very disappointed that there is no real action from either of the two major parties. The Greens are offering a more reasonable approach, but without either of the major parties supporting a charge on Carbon Pricing, nothing will happen.

Initially the suggestion of a Citizen's Assembly to review climate change seemed an excuse to do nothing, but on reflection it might be useful.

There is a real problem that addressing climate change requires a 10 year plan, not a 3 year plan. So a single party cannot implement a solution if the other party will replace it at the next election.

Perhaps a Citizen's Assembly can convince the population that action is essential and we can get on with doing it in a bipartisan way.

But the pessimist in me thinks that 3 years from now, nothing will have changed.

The most exciting thing so far about the election was the GETUP add [www.getup.org.au/campaign/ClimateActionNow&id=1181](http://www.getup.org.au/campaign/ClimateActionNow?id=1181)

through some critical electorates and letterbox the voters.

If you are interested in being involved, just google "walk against warming 2010"

Green Loans

After twelve months, the Green Loans program is coming to an end. Over that time I have carried out over 200 assessments. I hope you have found them helpful.

I plan to send you an email on the anniversary of your assessment to remind you about your assessment and to gain feedback as to how useful it has been.

The Green Loans Program had a rather torrid time in January when the department found themselves swamped with people trying to do lots of assessments. They removed the Loans component of the program, leaving the Home Assessment part in place.

Now they are replacing it with the Green Start program. It still offers home assessments, but individuals or companies must tender to get the work. I am planning to tender as an independent assessor, but I have some doubts about my chances. I suspect that the government will simply limit the work to a few companies because it is much easier for them to manage. However I do question the quality you may get from a large company focussed on minimising their costs, rather than maximising value to the home owner.

If you have a friend who would like an assessment, pass on my details because I will still be doing assessments for the next few months.

Watch that Meter Spin!

During June I upgraded my 1 KW PV panels to 2 KW and was surprised at the difference. I am regularly topping 1300 watts when my previous record was 880 watts. Since my average usage in the house is around 700 watts, I am now pumping a much higher percentage of my generated power back into the grid.

Over the 9 months that I have had the panels in, I have generated 1300 KWH and fed 320 KWH back into the grid, approximately 25%. I hope the bigger panels will generate 2800 KWH over 12 months and feed 1200 KWH back into the grid, around 42%.

My annual savings should be around \$1,100.

Microwave versus Jug

Someone asked me the other day which was more efficient for boiling water, an electric jug or a microwave.

The electric jug is actually more efficient. I measured the energy used to boil 1 cup of water in the jug and it was 30% less than in the microwave.

The problem is, that most people overfill their electric jug, putting 2-3 cups of water in it. Boiling one cup of water in the microwave uses half the energy for boiling 3 cups in the jug.

So, if you are careful when adding water to the jug, use it rather than the microwave, otherwise, use the microwave.

..the energy used to boil 1 cup of water in the jug was 30% less than in the microwave ..