



Each month, we'll share some of questions we covered at our last Energy Circle to make sure everyone is part of the conversation!

Why is home energy efficiency important?

The average Victorian home uses over 40% of its energy on heating internal spaces and over 15% of its energy on hot water. Imagine how much energy and money could be saved if our buildings were more efficient at retaining heat in winter and at nighttime, and if our hot water systems were more efficient at creating and storing heat energy. Even if our homes use solar power or other forms of renewable energy, it's important that we reduce the energy we need to power our homes, because this in turn reduces the size of the energy systems we need to support our everyday life.

What can I do if I have draughts?

Draughts are an obvious sign that your house isn't retaining warmth inside when needed, and there are a few common sources of draughts that you can check. Gaps under and around doors and windows, gaps in flooring and leaky wall and ceiling vents are common, especially in older houses. Fitting door seals, caulking gaps in flooring and around doors and windows, and sealing vents that aren't required to be open can go a long way to stabilising the internal temperature of your home, and reducing heat loss in winter and at nighttime.

What can I do about my single glazed windows?

Double glazed windows can reduce heat loss or heat gain by almost 30% compared to single glazed aluminium windows, and there are a number of things you can do if you have single glazing. Often the most cost-effective solution is to ensure you have lined internal window coverings, complete with pelmets, that can be kept closed at night to keep warmth inside. Other options include retrofitting secondary glazing (or high quality acrylic) to your existing windows, retrofitting double glazed units to your existing window frames, or replacing existing windows with double glazed windows. Seasonal summer shading can make a big difference too, regardless of whether you have single or double glazing.

How do heat pump hot water systems compare to conventional electric systems?

Heat pump hot water systems typically use 60 to 75% less electricity than conventional electric hot water systems. If you have roof top solar power then a heat pump hot water system is an even more efficient choice, with the heat pump hot water system able to utilise the electricity being generated on your roof during the day. If you have a conventional electric hot water system you may still be able to use the electricity being generated on your roof during the day to heat the water in your storage tank with the help of a renewable energy management device to monitor available excess solar power for water heating during the day before it's exported to the grid.

But aren't heat pumps noisy?

The noise from heat pump hot water systems, similar to what you would experience with a split system air conditioner, can be managed by carefully considering the position of the heat pump (eg away from windows) and considering anti-vibration rubber mounting feet for quietening.

How does induction cooking work and does it really save much energy?

Induction cooktops deliver energy directly to the pots and pans on the cooktop using electromagnetic technology. This makes induction cooking twice as efficient as conventional electric or gas cooktops, and much safer too, because the cooktop surface itself does not get hot. To check if your cookware is compatible with induction cooktops, test with a magnet. If the magnet sticks to the base, then it's compatible with induction cooking!

Is there help available locally?

Yes – Mycelia Renewables are offering free home energy assessments and help with basic upgrades for 10 households that could do with some help improving home energy efficiency and comfort – register your interest by emailing info@mycelia.org.au. Plus, portable induction cooktops and home energy and water efficiency kits are now available to borrow from Myli libraries (Bass Coast included), to help you do your own assessment. And for a place to go for online community discussion about 'all things' home energy efficiency, check out the My Energy Efficient Home Facebook page!

