



Moving home?

Simple solutions for improving the environment

Now that you're moving, it's the perfect opportunity to make changes to your new home. This booklet contains some simple suggestions for making changes that will help the environment too.

Before you move

It's so easy to make changes to your home before you move in.

These changes can save energy and water, reduce waste and save you money!

Assess your new home

Walk around your new home and identify the areas that consume energy and water, or that result in waste. When walking through each room, consider the following questions:

Lighting

- What level of light do you need in each room?
- How can you make the most of natural light?
- What is the most efficient way to achieve required light levels?

Heating and cooling

- How can you reduce your need for heating and cooling?
- Can you encourage natural airflow?
- How can you best direct the heating and cooling to the areas that need it?
- How can you make sure that your system is efficient?

Appliances

- What appliances do you need?
- Where can you place them to make sure that they will operate efficiently?
- Can you use energy and water efficient options?

Cooking

- What cooking options are available?
- Are they efficient and suitable for your needs?

Waste

- How can you reduce waste?
- Where can you place recycling bins to make sure you use them properly?
- Could you use a compost bin or worm farm to reduce waste going to landfill?

Once you've answered these questions, write a list of your environmental opportunities and then tick off the list as you take action. You can also use the suggestions below to help you decide what to do in your home.

Save energy		Save energy	Reduce emissions	Save money	Finished
Make the change - Once you have completed the task, tick "Finished" in the column on the right.					
Replace incandescent light globes	The government is phasing out incandescent light globes. Replace incandescent globes with energy-saving compact fluorescent lamps (CFL) or light emitting diode (LED) globes.	✓	✓	✓	
Clean vents	Ducted heating vents and other exhaust outlets can become blocked, which makes your heating / cooling system work harder. Clean your vents to save energy.	✓	✓	✓	
Seal gaps	Prevent drafts by sealing gaps with adhesive door and window seals.	✓	✓	✓	
Close up unused fireplaces	Seal your chimney with dampers and flues. Removable dampers are available.	✓	✓	✓	
Hang block-out curtains	Block-out curtains keep extreme temperatures out and reduce your need for artificial heating and cooling.	✓	✓	✓	
Install external blinds	External shading of windows blocks out the hot summer sun. Use sun sails, outdoor umbrellas, shade cloth or external blinds.	✓	✓	✓	
Check energy rating labels	When purchasing new appliances, check the product's energy star rating. Choose appliances that display high star ratings or use the least amount of kWhs per year.	✓	✓	✓	
Purchase GreenPower	Accredited GreenPower is electricity generated from renewable sources such as wind, solar, wave and hydro. You can purchase some or all of your energy as GreenPower. Contact your local energy retailer for more information.	✓	✓		

Save water		Save water	Reduce emissions	Save money	Finished
Make the change - Once you have completed the task, tick "Finished" in the column on the right.					
Clean efficiently	When cleaning, don't be wasteful with cleaning products and water. Use non-toxic, biodegradable products or make your own. You can save energy by using cold water. Reuse the water in your garden when appropriate.	✓	✓	✓	
Fix leaks	If your water meter is running when no one in the house is using water, then you have a leak. Also, check if your toilet is leaking by adding some food colouring into your toilet cistern. If it appears in the bowl then it's leaking. Fix all leaks by replacing worn washers and old hoses.	✓		✓	
Install flow restrictors or aerators	Install flow restrictors or aerators to your taps to reduce the flow of water.	✓		✓	
Install a water efficient showerhead	Install water efficient showerheads on existing shower arms. Check for rebates or free showerhead exchanges with your local water authority.	✓		✓	
Use the Water Efficiency Labeling Scheme (WELS)	When purchasing new appliances check the water efficiency rating of the product. Choose appliances that display the highest number of stars or use the least amount of water per minute.	✓		✓	
Buy a front loader	Buy a new front-loading washing machine. Front loaders use significantly less water and need less detergent per wash. Wash in cold water to save energy.	✓	✓	✓	
Install a dual flush toilet	Purchase and install a dual flush toilet, and use it appropriately.	✓		✓	

Reduce waste		Reduce landfill waste	Reduce emissions	Save money	Finished
Make the change - Once you have completed the task, tick "Finished" in the column on the right.					
Make recycling easy	Identify the areas that are most likely to need a recycling or compost bin, for example, the office could use a paper bin and the kitchen a compost bin. Place recycling bins in places that are easy to get to.	✓	✓		
Confirm rubbish collection procedure	Each local council has a specific rubbish collection day, type of bin and method for sorting waste. Check with your local council which day is rubbish collection day and ensure you understand which wastes go in which bin. If you don't have a bin, contact your council to arrange delivery.	✓			
Hold a garage sale	Don't waste unwanted items by throwing them in the bin. Try having a garage sale so that you can make some money and your unwanted items can be reused.	✓			

You've decided to renovate

You have so many options available to you when renovating your new home. Be creative, and sustainable, and improve the comfort and resale value of your home.

Consult a professional

Even if you're doing a DIY renovation, it's worth consulting someone with expertise in sustainable design or construction. You'll find there's a broad range of architects, designers, builders

and labourers who specialise in sustainable renovation and retrofits. They can give you invaluable advice that will increase the resale value of your home and reduce your energy and water bills.

Save energy		Save energy	Reduce emissions	Save money	Finished
Make the change - Once you have completed the task, tick "Finished" in the column on the right.					
Minimise lighting	Utilise natural light wherever possible, including skylights. Consider the type, placement and number of lights to minimise the number of bulbs and consequent energy use.	✓	✓	✓	
Avoid down-lights	Halogen down-lights use a lot of energy. Replace them with LED lights, downsize the wattage, or remove lights from areas where you don't need them.	✓	✓	✓	
Install sensors	Motion and light sensors will reduce the incidents of lights being left on unnecessarily, especially for outdoor lights.	✓	✓	✓	
Install timer switches	Use timer switches on your lights, heaters and air conditioner to avoid leaving them on when not needed.	✓	✓	✓	
Install insulation	Insulation reduces the need for heating and cooling. It can be placed in your ceiling, walls and under the floor. The higher the product's R-value the better it insulates. Look for natural or recycled materials. Seek advice from an expert.	✓	✓	✓	
Air conditioning	Consider an evaporative cooling system, which works well in less humid areas. You could also consider an energy efficient split system. Only cool the areas that you are using.	✓	✓	✓	
Heat efficiently	Avoid electric heaters such as bar or fan heaters as they are expensive and use a lot of energy. Natural gas heating is much more efficient. If your house has ducted heating, consider using vent directors to direct the heat into the room rather than into the curtains or ceiling.	✓	✓	✓	
Install ceiling fans	Ceiling fans help circulate air inside your home, increasing your comfort while using little energy. In winter, you can put fans on low to push warm air back to floor level.	✓	✓	✓	
Windows	Heating and cooling can be lost through your windows. So use the Window Energy Rating Scheme (WERS) that explains if the window is best for warm or cold climates (or both). You can also double glaze windows or add solar control film. Always choose windows that can be opened.	✓	✓	✓	
Hot water system	Your hot water system should be as close as possible to the hot water taps. Also, insulate hot water pipes. Install a solar system if you live in a sunny area. Choose instant hot water if you have a small household. Purchase the most energy efficient system suited to your needs. Seek expert advice.	✓	✓	✓	
Choose a gas stove	Gas stoves generate less carbon dioxide than electric stoves.	✓	✓	✓	
Install solar cells	Photovoltaic (PV) solar cells use the sun's heat to generate energy that can be used in your home or fed back into the electricity grid. Government rebates are available. Seek expert advice.	✓	✓	✓	

Save water		Save water	Reduce emissions	Save money	Finished
Make the change - Once you have completed the task, tick "Finished" in the column on the right.					
Install dual flush toilets	Dual flush toilets use far less water than the older style single flush.	✓		✓	
Install grey water	We shouldn't be flushing drinking water down the toilet! Install a grey water system so that water can be reused in your toilet. Seek expert advice.	✓		✓	
Install a water tank	You can use the tank water on your garden, for flushing your toilets or in the laundry.	✓		✓	

Reduce waste		Reduce landfill waste	Reduce emissions	Save money	Finished
Make the change - Once you have completed the task, tick "Finished" in the column on the right.					
Reuse materials	Look at your new home's existing materials, such as windows, floorboards and doors. Can they be sanded and polished – or used elsewhere?	✓		✓	
Buy recycled materials	Consider buying second hand materials. They may be a low-cost way of adding character to your home.	✓		✓	
Choose your timber carefully	Deforestation is a major issue that impacts on biodiversity. So avoid purchasing timber from virgin forests. Purchase timber from sustainable forests with Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification.				
Choose low VOC	The "clean" smell of fresh paint, laminate bench tops, treated timber and carpet is from the glue and chemicals used during manufacture. These toxins are known as volatile organic compounds (VOCs). Purchase products with low VOCs and ventilate your home until the smell goes away.				
Use green flooring	Tiled floors, floorboards coated in natural varnishes, bamboo and other natural flooring are environmentally friendly and highly durable. Carpet squares are also good for longevity as worn squares can easily be replaced.	✓		✓	
Don't buy unnecessary tools	Hire, share or borrow tools and items you rarely use.			✓	
Reuse construction waste	Construction and demolition waste should be reused within your home or taken to a waste recycling centre for other builders to use.	✓			
Protect the stormwater	Make sure that debris from your house isn't blown or washed into stormwater drains during renovations, as it ends up in rivers, creeks and oceans. You can contain it using tarps, fences and constructed barriers.				

It's time to move

Moving can be overwhelming. But you can make it an efficient and environmentally responsible process by following these simple tips.

Save energy		Save energy	Reduce emissions	Save money	Finished
Make the change - Once you have completed the task, tick "Finished" in the column on the right.					
Choose your removalist	Investigate the removalists in your area. Choose a company that is environmentally aware and that uses bio-diesel or ethanol fuelled trucks.		✓		
Pack efficiently	Only take the possessions that you need and fill the boxes so that you can potentially reduce the number of trips required for the move.	✓	✓	✓	

Reduce waste		Reduce landfill waste	Reduce emissions	Save money	Finished
Make the change - Once you have completed the task, tick "Finished" in the column on the right.					
Pack boxes effectively	Wrap fragile items with newspaper and recycle the newspaper when you're finished. Hire reusable packaging boxes rather than buying new ones. If a reusable option is not available look to buy boxes with the highest recycled material content. Use boxes of different sizes, to suit the items that you are packing (eg heavy items in small boxes). This will reduce the amount of newspaper you need to fill a box and protect your items.	✓			
Recycle unwanted items	If you have whitegoods, electrical products, furniture and clothes that you no longer need, they can be donated or recycled. Contact a local charity or second-hand dealer.	✓			



Did you know

Waste

Up to a third of the contents of a standard garbage bin could have been recycled.²

Now that you've moved in

There's a lot that you can do right now, in almost any home.

These suggestions require little effort and won't cost you anything. They're good habits to get into!

Save energy		Save energy	Reduce emissions	Save money	Finished
Make the change - Once you have completed the task, tick "Finished" in the column on the right.					
Wash in cold water	Wash clothes in cold water, instead of hot or warm water, to save energy.	✓	✓	✓	
Avoid the clothes drier	Place your clothes on the clothesline or clothes rack instead of using the electric clothes drier.	✓	✓	✓	
Look after your fridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use your fridge correctly. Keep the door closed and don't place hot items in the fridge to cool down. • Set the fridge to between 3 and 5°C. • Set the freezer to between -15 and -18°C. • Keep the fridge well ventilated and away from heat such as sunlight and cooking appliances. • Regularly remove frost build up and maintain seals. • Clean the condenser coils at the back of the fridge every few months. • If the motor is constantly running, your fridge may need to be serviced. 	✓	✓	✓	
Use the stove effectively	Use the correct sized element for the pot or pan you're using. Also, use lids on pots so you don't waste heat.	✓	✓	✓	
Turn off lights	Open blinds and curtains to let in natural light and if you aren't using a room or an outdoor area, turn the lights off.	✓	✓	✓	
Set security lighting	Correctly set the sensitivity of security lighting so that it doesn't activate unnecessarily.	✓	✓	✓	
Dress appropriately	Reduce the need for heating or air conditioning by dressing appropriately. Put on a jumper if it's cold and wear light clothing when it's hot.	✓	✓	✓	
Use natural ventilation	Keep your doors, windows, blinds and curtains closed on extreme weather days. Then open them when outside conditions are pleasant to encourage natural ventilation.	✓	✓	✓	
Improve the efficiency of air conditioning	Close windows and doors when you're using air conditioning and turn off lights and appliances to reduce the heat in the house.	✓	✓	✓	
Only heat or cool rooms you use	Minimise your energy consumption by only heating and cooling the areas that you are using.	✓	✓	✓	
Set thermostats appropriately	The lower you can set your thermostat in winter and higher in summer, the more energy you save - each degree saves around 10% in energy. ³	✓	✓	✓	
Turn off your computer	Turn off your computer when you aren't using it. Also, turn off your computer monitor when you're having a break.	✓	✓	✓	
Minimise stand-by power	Many appliances consume electricity even when they're not being used. So turn off appliances at the powerpoint, this could save up to 10% on your electricity bill. ⁴	✓	✓	✓	

Save water		Save water	Reduce emissions	Save money	Finished
Make the change - Once you have completed the task, tick "Finished" in the column on the right.					
Boil what you need	When boiling water in a saucepan or kettle, only boil the water you need.	✓	✓	✓	
Fill your dishwasher	Only run the dishwasher when it's full, rather than waste energy and water on multiple small washes.	✓	✓	✓	
Fill your washing machine	Only run your washing machine when it's full. This will save you both water and energy.	✓	✓	✓	
Scrape don't rinse	Scrape dishes into the compost (rather than rinsing them) before putting them in the dishwasher.	✓		✓	
Shorten showers	Shorter showers use less water and less energy. Reduce your shower time to four minutes – use a shower timer to monitor yourself.	✓	✓	✓	
Turn off the tap	Do not leave the tap running when brushing your teeth or shaving. You can use a glass of water to rinse your teeth or fill the basin for shaving.	✓		✓	
Use a bucket	Keep a bucket in the shower to collect water while you are showering. Use the water to water your garden.	✓		✓	
Flush appropriately	Use the single and double flush options appropriately.	✓		✓	

Reduce waste		Reduce landfill waste	Reduce emissions	Save money	Finished
Make the change - Once you have completed the task, tick "Finished" in the column on the right.					
Shop smart	Say "no" to shopping bags – use a re-usable bag instead. Refuse unnecessary packaging. Buy in bulk to reduce the amount of packaging or buy products packaged in recyclable packaging.	✓			
Put your waste in the correct bin	Most local councils offer curbside recycling. Make sure you put your waste in the correct bin. In most areas you can recycle cardboard, paper, glass, plastic and cans.	✓			
Recycle mobiles and cartridges	Australia Post offers mobile phone and printer cartridge recycling through selected postal outlets.	✓			
Clean greener	Choose non-toxic, biodegradable cleaning products or make your own with natural ingredients such as vinegar and bicarbonate soda. The manufacture and disposal of some chemical-based cleaning products can cause long-term damage to the environment and your health.	✓		✓	
Dispose of waste appropriately	Contact your local council to find out how to recycle and appropriately dispose of alternative types of waste, such as electronic devices, batteries and green waste.	✓			

Stepping outdoors

When you step outdoors, there are opportunities in your own yard – as well as every time you leave home to go out.

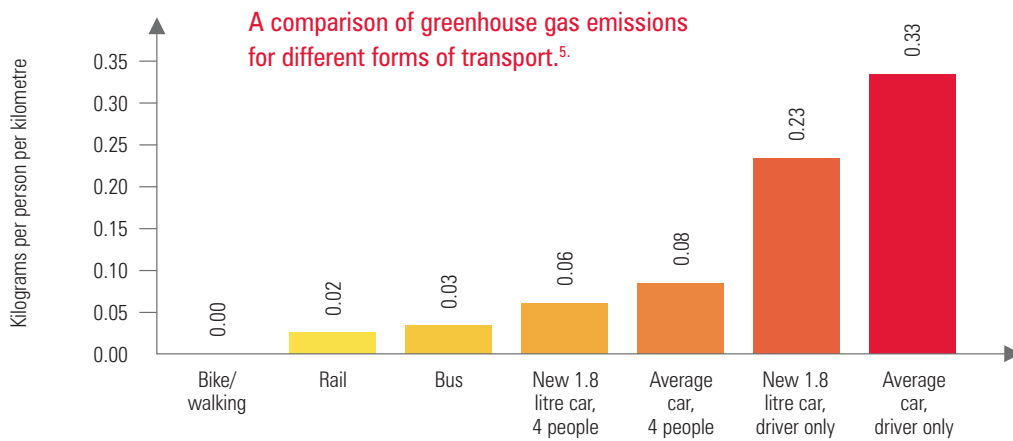
In the garden		Save water	Reduce emissions	Save money	Finished
Make the change - Once you have completed the task, tick "Finished" in the column on the right.					
Plant native plants	Native plants are adapted to local environmental conditions, so they require far less maintenance and less water. They also provide valuable habitat for local birds, beneficial insects and other wildlife.	✓		✓	
Grow your own fruit and vegetables	Grow your own fruit and vegetables so that you benefit from home grown food, without pesticides, save money, reduce packaging and avoid emissions from the transportation of purchased goods.		✓	✓	
Group plants together	Group plants together, preferably in shaded areas, so water is used efficiently and evaporation is reduced.	✓		✓	
Don't mow lawns too short	Longer grass is more drought-tolerant as it retains moisture.	✓		✓	
Plant for shade and protection	Trees and plants can provide shade and shelter from harsh winds. Use evergreen trees where you require permanent shading and deciduous trees where you want to let in the winter sun. This may assist in reducing your need for artificial heating and cooling.		✓		
Water appropriately	Water in the morning or in the evening, the roots not the foliage and water longer, but less often, to encourage deeper root growth and to make your plants more drought-tolerant. Ensure watering complies with local water restrictions.	✓		✓	
Avoid pesticides / herbicides	Pesticides and herbicides can harm beneficial insects and native birds and animals.			✓	
Use a broom	Clean outside areas with a broom rather than your hose. Hosing wastes water.	✓		✓	
Compost	Install a compost bin or a worm farm that you can use to dispose of your food scraps and garden waste. The compost you create is great for the garden and will save on fertilizers. It also avoids this waste going to landfill where it generates methane and greenhouse gas emissions.		✓	✓	
Mulch your garden	Organic mulch shields soil from the sun, reducing moisture loss through evaporation. It also feeds the soil.	✓		✓	
Cover your swimming pool	Cover your swimming pool to prevent evaporation and check for leaks. Check your local water restrictions before filling your pool.	✓		✓	
Use a water tank	Collect rainfall from your roof for use in your garden or for your toilet or laundry. Check the regulations with your local council and seek expert advice.	✓		✓	
Use a grey water system	"Grey water" from your shower and laundry can be recycled for use on the garden. Check local regulations with your council and seek expert advice.	✓		✓	

Transport

Australia is a very car dependant society. As a consequence, many of us now use cars without thinking about how they are affecting the environment.

The graph (below) is a comparison of the greenhouse gas emissions from various forms of transport. It shows that walking and bike riding are good for the environment. And it also reveals that trains and buses release relatively few greenhouse gases when compared to a car.

There are so many benefits to be gained from using one of these alternatives. You get exercise from walking and riding; and when taking public transport you can use the time to read a book or a newspaper. It may initially seem more inconvenient, but think of the benefits and the money you'll save on fuel and parking!



Transport

Make the change - Once you have completed the task, tick "Finished" in the column on the right.

		Save energy	Reduce emissions	Save money	Finished
Avoid driving	Consider using public transport instead of driving. Find the closest train, tram and bus stops – and get hold of a timetable. Find the best walking route or bike path so that you can consider walking or riding to work. Talk to friends and colleagues about car-pooling.	✓	✓	✓	
Maintain your car	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid sudden acceleration or braking. • Turn your engine off in prolonged traffic delays. • Stay under the speed limit to ensure peak fuel efficiency. • Inflate tyres to the correct pressure. • Close your windows to reduce air resistance. • Keep your car tuned and serviced regularly. • Buy cleaner fuel (premium unleaded fuels have less emissions). • Remove unnecessary weight. 	✓	✓	✓	
Buy a fuel efficient vehicle	When buying a car, choose a fuel efficient or smaller model. Smaller cars, motorcycles and scooters are more efficient than larger cars as they require less fuel per kilometre. You could also consider buying a Hybrid.	✓	✓	✓	
Take your holiday near home	Flying produces significant greenhouse gases. Taking a holiday closer to home will reduce emissions and assist the local economy. When you do fly, consider offsetting the emissions of your flights.	✓	✓	✓	

Grants and help

The Australian Government has a range of programs that may help you improve your home. Make sure you take advantage of these programs!

Energy Efficient Homes Package

The Government's Energy Efficient Homes Package is designed to improve the energy rating of Australian homes and help home owners save electricity. Under this program, the Australian Government is offering insulation and solar hot water grants.

www.environment.gov.au/energyefficiency

Insulation

The Australian Bureau of Statistics estimated that in 2005 around 40 per cent of Australian homes were not insulated. As part of the Energy Efficient Homes Package, the government is providing assistance with ceiling insulation to all Australian home owner-occupiers of currently un-insulated homes; as well as renters, with a rebate for landlords on the costs of insulating their rental properties.

www.environment.gov.au/energyefficiency/insulation/index.html

Solar hot water systems

As part of the Energy Efficient Homes Package, the Australian Government is providing rebates to help eligible home-owners, landlords or tenants replace their electric hot water systems with solar or heat pump hot water systems. Water heating is the largest single source of greenhouse gas emissions from the average Australian home.

www.environment.gov.au/energyefficiency/solarhotwater/index.html

National Rainwater and Grey Water Initiative

The government is delivering the National Rainwater and Grey Water Initiative to help people use water wisely in their everyday lives. The Initiative offers households assistance with installing a new rainwater tank or grey water system.

www.environment.gov.au/water/programs/nrgi/index.html

Green loans

Under the government's new Green Loans Program, households looking to save energy and water have access to a qualified household sustainability assessor to investigate their current energy and water usage and they can receive an interest-free loan to install solar, water saving and energy efficient products. Participating households receive a tailored report on changes they can make to their home; a pack of simple green renovation devices; and practical information to get them started.

www.environment.gov.au/greenloans

Solar Homes and Communities Plan

The Solar Homes and Communities Plan provides cash rebates for the installation of solar photovoltaic systems on homes and community buildings. The Plan ensures that solar panel rebates get to the households that need them the most through the introduction of a means test.

www.environment.gov.au/settlements/renewable/pv/index.html

Local council and state government rebates and incentives

A variety of rebates and incentive schemes are available in every state and territory. Please consult your local council or state government website for relevant schemes. It's also worth contacting your local water authority as many of them now offer useful water saving kits to help you save more water at home.

Note: Grants and funds are subject to change. Check the websites or contact the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts for more information. The above information is accurate at January 2010.

Did you know

Water

The average Australian home uses 260,000 litres of fresh water each year.



Useful websites

As you seek to reduce the environmental impact of your new home, there are a range of websites that you can access for more information, advice and help.

Advice for sustainable households: www.environment.gov.au

Energy star rating for appliances: www.energyrating.gov.au

Water star rating for appliances: www.waterrating.gov.au

NABERS home assessment tool: www.nabers.com.au

A technical manual for sustainable homes: www.yourhome.gov.au

Products reviewed: www.choice.com.au

Government department websites

Federal

Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts
www.environment.gov.au/index.html

Department of Climate Change
www.climatechange.gov.au

Australian Capital Territory

Department of the Environment, Climate Change, Energy and Water
www.tams.act.gov.au/live/environment

New South Wales

Department of Environment and Climate Change
www.environment.nsw.gov.au

Department of Water and Energy
www.dwe.nsw.gov.au

Northern Territory

Department of Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts and Sport
www.nt.gov.au/nreta

Queensland

Department of Natural Resources and Water
www.nrw.qld.gov.au

South Australia

Department for Environment and Heritage
www.environment.sa.gov.au

Department of Water Land and Biodiversity Conservation
www.dwlbc.sa.gov.au

Tasmania

Department of Environment, Parks, Heritage and the Arts
www.depha.tas.gov.au

Department of Primary Industries and Water
www.dpiw.tas.gov.au

Victoria

Department of Sustainability and Environment
www.dse.vic.gov.au

Western Australia

Department of Environment and Conservation
www.dec.wa.gov.au

Department of Water
www.water.wa.gov.au

Acknowledgments

Some of the information contained in this booklet was sourced from the websites of the following organisations and government agencies:

- The Australian Bureau of Statistics www.abs.gov.au/
- The Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and Arts www.environment.gov.au/
- The United Nations Framework on Climate Change www.unfccc.int/2860.php
- Sustainability Victoria www.sustainability.vic.gov.au/
- Alternative Technology Association www.ata.org.au

References

1. www.environment.gov.au , Jan 2010
2. www.geca.org.au , Jan 2010
3. www.yourhome.gov.au , Jan 2010
4. www.saveenergy.vic.gov.au , Jan 2010
5. www.environment.gov.au , Jan 2010

This publication is designed to provide accurate and authoritative information in regard to the subject matter. Australia Post does not make any representations regarding any of the third party organisations referred to or their goods or services. Although every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the contents of this guide at the time of publication, Australia Post shall not be liable for any loss or damage whatsoever arising from errors or omissions in this guide or any reliance placed on all or part of its contents.

February 2010

