

Fact Sheet 3

Improve your home's comfort and efficiency



Residential Efficiency Scorecard

The Scorecard is a home energy rating program.

An accredited assessor will visit your home, look at the building features and fixed appliances, and generate a certificate showing an energy star rating, hot weather rating and appliance efficiency ratings.

Your Scorecard assessor will give you advice on how to make your home more comfortable and energy efficient, so you can keep energy costs down.

To find out more about the Scorecard or to request an assessment, visit www.victorianenergysaver.vic.gov.au/scorecard.

Why bother with energy efficiency?

Most Victorian homes are uncomfortable to live in unless heated or cooled for most of the year. Older technologies used for heating water, lighting and pool pumps can be really inefficient, meaning that households pay far more than they need to run these appliances.

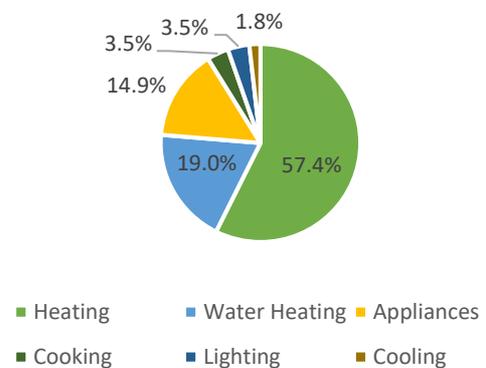
There are ways to reduce the amount of energy being used, which leads to lower electricity and gas bills, makes the home more comfortable and can help to manage some medical conditions.

A Scorecard assessment will help to plan improvements that can be made immediately or over the long term and to prioritise what will have the biggest impact for your individual circumstances.

Where energy is used in a house

According to Sustainability Victoria, the average household bill for energy (electricity and gas) in Victoria is about \$2500 per year.ⁱ

The graph below shows where an average Victorian household spends their energy dollars.



Source: Sustainability Victoria, 2019.

Due to Victoria being a cooler climate, the main energy use is from heating the home. Hot water and lighting make up most of the remaining energy use from fixed appliances. White goods (fridges, washing machines, dishwashers etc), entertainment appliances (TVs, computers etc) and other non-fixed appliances make up around 15 per cent of the energy cost.

Changing the way you do things to reduce energy bills

Here are some simple and fast ways to help reduce your energy bills.

Check each rating on your Scorecard certificate to understand which changes will have the biggest impact for you.

Heating

- Keep the thermostat at 20°C or below for your winter heating. Every degree higher can increase heating costs by around 10%
- Close off rooms that are not in use

- Only run the heater when required. Turn it off overnight and when you leave the house
- Seal gaps and cracks around doors and windows or use draught excluders (door snakes).
- Use curtains or blinds on windows. For best results use drapes (heavy curtains that reach the floor and either side of the window to create an air barrier) along with pelmets. Keep them closed from late afternoon to keep heat inside. Use a wheat bag or other type of heat pack to heat yourself. Ensure you follow the instructions to stay safe.
- Try putting on a heavy jumper and use blankets while watching TV at night.



Hot water systems

- Take shorter showers (4 minutes is good).
- Install a low flow shower head.
- Leave mixer taps in the cold position after use
- Fix any dripping taps, especially hot water taps.
- Where practical, run your washing machine on a cold wash.

Lighting

- Switch the lights off when the room is not in use.
- Use natural lighting wherever possible.
- Install more efficient LED (light emitting diodes) or CFL (compact fluorescent light) lamps when new bulbs are needed.

Pools and spas

- Always use a pool cover when the pool is not in use.
- Try setting the water heating temperature 1-2°C lower.
- Consider reducing the pump running time, especially over winter if it does not affect the water quality.

Cooling

- On hot days, close the curtains during the day to keep the heat out.
- Use external shades on north, east and west facing windows to keep the heat out.
- Use ceiling and pedestal fans before turning on the air conditioning.
- If it is comfortable for you, then set the thermostat around 24-26°C. Every degree lower can increase running costs by around 10%.
- Ensure that windows and doors are closed when the air conditioner is on. Note that evaporative coolers work differently to air conditioners and require that air is able to leave the home, eg through open doors or windows.
- Only cool the rooms that are being used.
- If its cooler outside, consider opening windows at night or early in the morning to let the cooler air in before a hot day.
- Try not to use a clothes dryer, particularly in summer. Hanging washing outside will prevent the house from heating up from the clothes dryer.
- Avoid using the oven on hot days. Try a cold meal or cooking outside on the barbecue.

If you have solar electricity

- Use your appliances during the day if possible so they use the energy directly from the solar system.
- Check your solar system is working well by noting the production regularly, for example, monthly. Address any issues as soon as possible.

Most of this information has come from <http://www.sustainability.vic.gov.au/you-and-home/save-energy>

Remember, your Scorecard certificate shows you which areas you need to focus on to be comfortable and reduce your costs.

ⁱ (Sustainability Victoria. <http://www.sustainability.vic.gov.au/you-and-your-home/save-energy>)