



## Delivering home retrofit programs?

There is support available to demonstrate that retrofits can achieve program objectives cost-effectively.

## Achieving program objectives

Retrofitting homes can help to achieve a range of policy objectives: reducing energy costs and greenhouse gas emissions, increasing climate change resilience and enabling people to live more comfortably in their homes.

Deciding which home upgrades will achieve these goals cost effectively can be difficult. Objective information is important in gaining householder trust in the upgrades program. It is also important for program design and evaluation to show upgrades are well-selected and delivered.

The Victorian Residential Efficiency Scorecard (Scorecard) program has been designed to help fill this gap.

## What is Scorecard?

The Scorecard gives a home a star rating, like the star rating you might see on a fridge. The rating represents the cost of energy to run the fixed appliances in a home and covers the building shell, heating, cooling, hot water, lighting, pool pumps and energy generation (solar panels). It also gives hot and cold weather performance ratings and calculates greenhouse gas emissions, providing a range of sub-ratings that can also be used to guide decision-making. Alongside this rating, Scorecard outlines options for upgrades. A qualified assessor tailors the recommendations to meet householder needs and makes further suggestions on ways to improve the ratings.

Scorecard assessments can be conducted for new and existing homes, and apartments with individual heating and cooling.

## Program benefits of using Scorecard

Scorecard can deliver many benefits for retrofit programs and help to overcome some of the barriers your program may encounter. This includes:

- Scorecard provides objective information on best value retrofits, with upgrades that are appropriate for each home. This avoids simplistic program design that can seem easy to implement, but may not be the best value for that home—which has been a key criticism of upgrade programs in the past.
- Scorecard is a trusted government-supported program, which is replicable, quality controlled and provides comprehensive training for assessors.
- Scorecard assessment recommendations provide clear and effective actions the households can take to improve comfort and reduce living costs.
- Scorecard's rigorous star rating scale allows access to [finance](#) and incentives. This can help to overcome the financing barriers to broad scale retrofit programs.
- Scorecard supports retrofit programs to be scaled to reach all households, providing tailored upgrades that achieve the best outcome for each dwelling, while maximising the return on investment.

Scorecard allows for measurable outcomes, as benefits can easily be demonstrated through energy bills, greenhouse gas emissions and an increase in the star rating. The before and after Scorecard ratings are an easy way to show the benefits of the upgrades. This provides assurance that project funds have been well invested.

Scorecard also provides the ability to compare between programs objectively and with tangible evidence. With a comprehensive database

underpinned by approximately 4000 assessments, Scorecard can help drive evidence-based program and policy decisions.

## Providing trusted information at scale

The first challenge in retrofitting homes is being clear as to how retrofits can cost-effectively achieve program objectives.

An analysis of nearly 2,000 homes found the main weakness in homes was the performance of the building shell (walls, windows, roof, insulation, gaps and cracks). Additionally, 85 per cent of homes analysed received the lowest possible rating for hot weather performance and 75 per cent of homes analysed received a low or very low rating for cold weather performance.<sup>1</sup>

This means that, no matter how efficient the appliances are, homes can struggle to stay cool during hot weather and warm during cold weather. It's important to consider how the building shell operates in conjunction with home appliances in order to find the best retrofit options.

Scorecard's home rating tool is supported by government and based on extensive technical development and field testing, providing a trusted and independent rating. The Scorecard is the only government supported rating tool for existing homes.

Scorecard assessments are delivered by skilled, government-trained and accredited assessors. It has been found that skills and training are important to ensure home assessments are accurate — it is not easy to evaluate the energy performance of a house. Assessors must comply with stringent training, quality control, health and safety processes. This means that both households and program managers are assured that assessment data is reliable and accurate.

Providing information that households can trust, is the first step to taking action on upgrades. A national trial of the Scorecard found that more than 70 per cent of households had made, or were planning to make, upgrades as a result of a Scorecard assessment<sup>2</sup>.

All Scorecard data is held in a privacy-protected database. Assessors fully document upgrades in the

Scorecard database and include photographic evidence of the information they enter.



## The Energy Savvy Upgrades program

The Energy Savvy Upgrades program is an example of a government program which is using Scorecard as a tool to help deliver effective home upgrades.

The Energy Savvy Upgrades program offers partly subsidised energy efficiency and renewable energy upgrades based on Scorecard assessments. The program aims to upgrade 700 vulnerable or low-income households, including renters, concession card holders and people living with a chronic medical condition.

The program has delivered 20% of its targeted upgrades so far (June 2020). Preliminary data shows how this program design is delivering on its objectives:

- 93 per cent of participants have converted from assessment to upgrade
- Householder energy use has reduced by 23 per cent
- An average Scorecard star rating increase of 1
- 42 per cent of upgrades occurred in private rental properties (landlord pays for assessment and upgrades)
- 63 per cent of participants said they would not have upgraded their homes without the program's help
- 59 per cent of participants said they would have chosen different upgrades without the help of the assessor and Scorecard assessment
- 77 per cent of participants intend to undertake further upgrades to their homes after benefitting from reduced bills and increased comfort.

## Want your program to benefit from Scorecard?

Contact [help.scorecard@delwp.vic.gov.au](mailto:help.scorecard@delwp.vic.gov.au)

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[https://www.victorianenergysaver.vic.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0033/442788/Scorecard-Flash-Report\\_July2019\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.victorianenergysaver.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0033/442788/Scorecard-Flash-Report_July2019_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.energy.gov.au/publications/reports-national-pilots-residential-efficiency-scorecard>