

# Green guide to living

An new initiative helps save energy – and money. By Henrietta Cook

When Kristian Hetey comes to visit he always carries a plastic bucket, tape measure and clipboard.

The bucket is for measuring the water-efficiency of showers, the tape measure for recording the dimensions of rooms and the clipboard for note-taking.

Hetey is not your average tea-sipping guest but rather the director of Go Green Design, a sustainable building and landscape consultancy company that conducts free home assessments across Melbourne.

The assessments are funded by the Federal Government's green loans program, an initiative that also provides interest-free loans of up to \$10,000 to make the changes recommended in the assessment.

"I don't think anything like this has been attempted on this scale before," he says from his Eltham office. "It's a very innovative program and I think the Government should be commended for taking such initiative."

Hetey has taught households across Nillumbik and Banyule how to save energy and

water and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. He says people are surprised to see how easy it is.

"There's this idea that sustainability is expensive and difficult to implement, and this is not the case. It can be as simple as changing a light globe and switching to energy-efficient lights or repairing a leaky tap or installing a more efficient hot-water service or solar power units."

As well as providing residents with a detailed room-by-room assessment, Hetey estimates the potential savings that could be made after implementing the green initiatives, as well as the greenhouse gas reductions.

Macleod resident Les Sarkady recently called on Hetey's expertise and organised a free assessment of his three-bedroom townhouse.

Although the engineer has always been interested in sustainability he says his approach to green living had been "haphazard" up until now. "We had done a few things like changed our light bulbs and put energy-efficient globes throughout the home but we really needed to get a good overview of the entire house."

Sarkady said he was interested to see if his



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shower heads were up to scratch.

"We had been agonising about changing our shower heads for some time, but after some bucket tests we realised that they were actually quite water-efficient."

Sarkady also received some useful information on switching off appliances at the wall and draft-proofing his front door. "There was a lot of air moving through the gaps at the front door; our assessor told us we could fix it for \$10 or \$20."

The final assessment also recommended some large-scale changes, such as installing water tanks and improving insulation. Sarkady is considering taking up a green loan to implement some of these. "Our house is better than what we thought, but there are still lots of things we can do to make it greener."

For more information, call 1800 895 076 or visit [www.environment.gov.au/greenloans](http://www.environment.gov.au/greenloans)