

Pack of Draft Communications Materials

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1. Briefing Note to Elected Members

XXX council has been developing a regional community energy program as part of our regional climate partnership. Adapting to and mitigating the effects of climate change will ensure a safe and prosperous future for all.

After community consultation and reviewing community energy projects around the country and the world, our team identified that a great opportunity to support our community is to offer energy saving tips and information, to help people understand their rights and options when it comes to choosing an energy retailer. There is also a plan to procure a 'bulk buy' price on an energy offer, to support the uptake of renewable energy and lead to economic growth in our region.

We currently spend around \$XXX million per year on electricity in our region. Helping locals save money on power bills will mean more money stays in the region to support local businesses.

Households interested in being part of this exciting program will be asked to visit an online portal. On the portal they can sign up their interest in participating and upload some billing data, so that we can estimate savings if we proceed with the next step. Once they have provided that information, they can download their **free energy saving booklet**. The booklet will be packed full of hints and tips and we are hoping to get local businesses to support us by offering exclusive discounts to people who download the booklet. For example, 10% off energy efficient light globes or draught proofing.

This program is designed to save households money, reduce emissions, support the transition to renewable energy and increase the amount of money that stays in our local economy: a win, win win. If this plan is to succeed, we need as many locals as possible to participate.

We hope that you will support this engagement with the community to visit our website and complete their expression of interest.

We plan to have the website promoted through council's communications channels, as well as through local groups, such as faith-based groups, schools, community organisations and sporting clubs.

2. Letter from Mayor to ratepayers

Dear XXX,

An exciting opportunity to support renewable energy in our region and get a better price on energy

Council is committed to reducing carbon emissions throughout the municipality and we want to help our community do the same. Adapting to and mitigating the effects of climate change will ensure a safe and prosperous future for all.

After community consultation and reviewing community energy projects around the country and the world, our team identified that a great opportunity to support our community is to offer you energy saving tips and information, to help you understand your rights and options when it comes to choosing your energy retailer. We also have a plan to procure a 'bulk buy' price on energy that will support the uptake of renewable energy and lead to economic growth in our region. We need you to get behind it if we are to succeed.

If you are interested in saving money, supporting the transition to renewable energy and increasing the amount of money that stays in our local economy, then visit our portal at www.XXX. On the portal you will be asked to indicate your interest in participating and upload some billing information, so that we can estimate savings if we go ahead with the next steps. Once this stage is complete you can download a **free energy saving booklet**. The booklet is packed full of hints and tips *and even has some discount vouchers can that be used in local businesses. TBC*

See the reverse of this letter for a case study of how one local household saved money and reduced their carbon emissions, whilst also improving the comfort levels of their home. TBC

- To indicate your interest and download a FREE booklet packed with energy saving tips visit [XXX](http://www.XXX)

Yours sincerely

Mayor

3. Short messages for social media and on-holds

1. Your council is working to find you a great deal on clean energy. To find out how you can save money and support the transition to renewables visit XXX
2. Help us to invest in a healthier future for South Australia and future generations, with clean energy at a fair price. Find out more by visiting XXX
3. Can't make sense of your energy bills? Want to make sure you are supporting renewable energy in your region? Your council is keen to help South Australia's economy prosper, while we shift to clean energy. Find out how you can save money and support the transition to renewables by visiting XXX
4. Energy costs going up? XXXX council is committed to helping you get a fair deal on energy, whilst supporting the transition to renewable energy. Sound too good to be true? Visit XXX to find out more
5. Renting and not sure what you can do to reduce your energy bills? We've got some tips for how you can reduce your energy usage, as well as signing up to be part of a new program to help you save money and support the transition to renewables. Visit XXX to find out more
6. Have you been looking for ways to reduce your energy bills? Or are you unsure about who you to trust when buying power? Get free advice on choosing a retailer, solar, lighting, hot water, heating and cooling and all things energy related when you visit XXX
7. Your council is helping you access free energy efficiency advice for your home or business, as well as offering an opportunity to get clean green power at a fair and predictable price. Visit XXX to find out more
8. Save money and the planet! XXXX is working to offer independent advice on making your home more comfortable year-round, while reducing your carbon emissions
9. Need help uncovering the energy guzzlers in your home? By signing up your interest in the XXX program you can download a free energy saving booklet, so you can start saving straight away. Visit XXX
10. Solve the mystery of what's guzzling energy at your place and find out about an exciting opportunity to access clear power at a fair and predictable price. Visit XXX to find out more
11. Need help managing your energy bills? Help is at hand! As part of the XXX program we are committed to helping you get a good deal on power, keep your home comfortable year round and support the local economy! Sound too good to be true? Visit XXX to find out more.
12. Going green is good for the planet and good for the economy. In fact, the global economy can and has grown while global carbon emissions remained stable or declined. If you want to learn how you can help support renewables, whilst supporting the local economy visit XXX
13. A clean, green and prosperous future for South Australian is possible! Visit XXX to find out how your council is working towards strong economic growth, without it costing the earth. You can benefit by knowing you are getting clean energy at a fair price.

14. Our communities deserve access to energy that is affordable, reliable, good for the local economy and good for our environment. That's why we are part of the XXX program. To find out how you can save money and participate visit XXX
15. Renewable resources are part of the solution to climate change. Visit XXX To find out how you can take part in the energy transition.
16. Time for a clean slate! Breaking up with fossil fuels won't hurt the economy, so let's move on to renewables together. Visit XXX to find out how your council is working to support you in saving money and supporting a transition to lower carbon.
17. A simple ceiling fan can make you feel 3 to 8 degrees cooler, allowing you to dial your AC to a higher temperature and still feel just as cool. Ceiling fans are much cheaper to run than air conditioners and don't cost a lot to buy and install, so save money and feel more comfortable this summer with a ceiling fan. For this and other energy saving tips visit XXX
18. Need free tips and advice on how to stay cool this summer without your bills hitting the roof? Visit XXX and sign up your interest in taking part in the XXX program, to access energy saving tips
19. Our communities deserve access to energy that is affordable, reliable, good for the local economy and good for our environment. Collectively, our region spends about \$XXXM on electricity each year, with much of this revenue leaving our communities. That's why we are working hard to help you save money that can stay in our local economy. Visit XXX to find out more

4. Energy efficiency tips for renters

Below are some energy saving tips for renters. Please note that some of the advice below is trickier in an apartment than a free standing house, so be sure to check out our tips for apartments for specific advice.

Shade your windows

External shading of windows is one of the most effective ways to keep the heat out in summer. The sun hitting the window heats up the glass and then the heat radiates back into the house, even when the sun is no longer shining on the window. This means that preventing the glass from heating up is the most effective way to keep inside cooler. A removable blind, shade cloth or outdoor umbrella over north and west-facing windows in summer to shield them from the sun is effective. If you want to attach a more permanent shade solution to the house, such as a shade sail, ask your landlord.

Internal window protection

For windows that still get hot in summer or are difficult to shade from outside you can place reflective films on the inside of the glass, to bounce the sunlight away. There are removable foil-laminated cardboard options, as well as films.

Seal up gaps and draughts

Stop draughts by closing gaps around doors and windows. Self-adhesive door and window seals are cheap, easy to install and removable when you leave (although most landlords won't complain if you leave them for the next tenant!). Or you could use a 'door snake'. Alternatively, ask your landlord if they will invest in permanent draught stoppers and seals around doors and windows. It is also worth checking around door and window frames and skirting boards. Another common source of air leakage is through plumbing and gas entry points and around poorly fitting cabinetry. These can be easily fixed with sealant, although you will need to check with the landlord first.

Use heating and air conditioning wisely

Reducing the temperature on the thermostat of your heater or increasing it on your air conditioner by just 1°C can reduce the energy used by 10%. In summer, set your air conditioner to the highest comfortable temperature, which could be around 26°C.

Cool and heat the house naturally

On hot, still summer days close all windows, doors and curtains to help keep the house cool. Take advantage of that cool change by opening windows and doors to let the cooling breeze through the house. Ask the landlord to fix the windows if they're stuck shut, and to install fly screens if this is a deterrent to opening the window.

Switch to energy-efficient lighting

In most cases you don't need your landlord's permission to change your globes over to LEDs. Most types of lights are now available as energy-efficient LEDs.

Check your water heater settings and install a Valvecosy

Make sure your water heater is set at the lowest comfortable setting which is 60 °C for a tank system, and 50 °C or lower for an instantaneous system. If it's set too high it's wasting energy. Insulate your hot water pipes and place a [Valvecosy](#) over the pressure-temperature relief valve of your hot water system to reduce heat loss. You can also invest in a super low-flow showerhead, such as a [Methven Kiri](#), that you can take with you.

DIY pelmets for renters

We all know we need to get smarter about how we use energy and, in much of Australia, heating is a large part of that energy use. Renters, especially, can have a hard time improving the heating efficiency of their homes. One thing that many houses lack is pelmets above the curtains/windows. Pelmets help keep warm air in during winter, but also help to reduce heat from getting in during summer, because they stop the flow of air behind the curtain, which can cause temperature shifts inside.

Here are some instructions on how to make inexpensive, lightweight pelmets that can be attached to the wall with tape—good for renters, as they don't require drilling into the walls.

Materials you'll need

Corflute is a cheap plastic board with a corrugated plastic centre which you may associate more with signs for real estate agents, elections and protests! It comes in sheets up to 2400 x 1200 mm and can even be bought in longer lengths off the roll. It comes in a variety of thicknesses but we will be using the standard 3 mm. It's easy to cut and eminently foldable. You can place it on top of the brackets holding the curtain rail or attach it to the wall with tape or sticky tack that won't leave a mark if you take the pelmets down when you leave.

Appliances

It's worth understanding your energy usage in the home that is related to appliances. Some simple behaviours, such as turning off stand by power, can reduce your energy usage and bills.

Star ratings

Appliances with higher energy and water ratings use less energy and water respectively. Always buy appliances with the highest energy star rating. The price difference is usually gained back in savings within a year or so

Fridges

Set the thermostat of your fridge to the most efficient setting; your fridge should be set at 3° to 5° and your freezer at -15° to -18°. Check your seals are in good working order to prevent cooled air escaping.

Laundry

Washing your clothes in cold water can save around \$100 per year and will help your clothes last longer. It is also worth making sure you have a full load of laundry before running the machine. You can also save time on drying clothes by spinning the clothes on as high a speed as is possible. Whenever possible, dry your clothes on a clothes line instead of in a clothes-dryer, as dryers are very high energy users

Reduce your bill

To save money on your power bill it is always worth doing some research to get the best deal. Check out our tips for shopping around for a better deal.

5. Energy efficiency tips for homeowners

Sample list of simple actions that can be designed as a downloadable PDF booklet

Powering your home

- Install solar on your roof
- Purchase GreenPower from your electricity retailer
- Convert your home to all-electric and switch off gas
- Design your home for passive heating and cooling

Cooling and heating

- Insulate your home
 - Ceiling
 - Underfloor
 - Wall cavities
- Block draughts in your home
- Install double glazing for your windows
- In summer, close curtains during the day to keep the heat out
- In summer use external shading to keep the sun off the windows
- Use a fan before turning the air conditioner on
- Set your air conditioner thermostat to 24–26°C or above. Every degree lower will increase running costs by around 10%
- Keep windows and doors closed when your air conditioner is operating to avoid wasting energy (unless you have evaporative cooling)
- Open doors and windows to flush heat out of your home when the outside temperature drops on summer evenings
- If you are going to buy a new air conditioner use the energy rating labels to upgrade to a high efficiency model. You will spend less on running costs over the life of the purchase
- In winter, close curtains at night to keep the heat in
- Open curtains and blinds when the sun is shining to gain warmth and light
- Pair curtains with pelmets, to prevent air circulating behind the curtain
- Try zoning your heating to the areas you are using
- Set your thermostat to 19-23°C. Every degree higher will increase running costs by around 10%
- Keep windows and doors closed when your heating is going
- Use your reverse cycle air conditioner to heat (as well as cool) your home
- If you have solar set your cooling or heating on a timer to access generated power from your roof

Hot Water

- Wash clothes with cold water
- Take shorter showers (use a shower timer to keep track)
- Install a low flow shower head
- Insulate hot water pipes leading from your hot water system into the house
- Plan for replacing older systems (the average hot water system has a lifespan of 12–13 years).
- Think about
 - the fuel source available to you
 - how much hot water your household uses
 - the running costs of a new system › the purchase cost of a new system

- When you purchase your new hot water system, spend a little more and upgrade to a high efficiency one. You will spend less on running costs over the life of the purchase
- Use the energy rating labels to identify the highest efficiency gas hot water system
- Invest in a solar hot water system
- Invest in a hot water heat pump

Appliances

The power requirements for appliances around your home can all add up, so ensuring that your purchasing efficient ones and using them efficiently can save you hundreds of dollars a year.

- Use the energy rating labels when replacing appliances. Whether you are buying a new fridge, freezer, washing machine, clothes dryer or dishwasher you will spend less on running costs over the life of the purchase
- Turn off the second fridge when it's not in use
- Check your fridge and freezer seals and clean and replace any damaged ones
- Check that the heat exchange coils at the back of the fridge are clean and well ventilated
- Replacing fridges that are older than 15 years
- Use the sun and wind to dry clothes (instead of an electric dryer)
- Scrape plates and run your dishwasher when it's full, not when it is only partially full
- Turn the TV and entertainment appliances off at the wall when they're not being used
- Install a 'standby-killer' switch or a standby power controller (SPC) to disconnect power to appliances when they're not being used
- Use the radio rather than the TV for background noise
- Only fill the kettle with as much water as you need

Cooking

- Keep lids on pots and pans when cooking and use the right sized pot for stovetop
- Cook in bulk and freeze the excess
- Use small appliances when you can, eg toaster instead of the grill
- Check oven door seals are in good condition
- Don't open the oven door unnecessarily during cooking
- Use the microwave for cooking whenever you can
- Turn the microwave off at the socket

Swimming pool

- Reduce your pool filter running time to the safe minimum set out in the manual
- If you are going to buy a new pool pump use the energy rating labels to upgrade to a high efficiency model. You will spend less on running costs over the life of the purchase
- Install a heat pump to heat your pool water

Lighting

LED globes use a fraction of the power of tradition incandescent globes or halogen globes.

- Replace lights with energy efficiency globes
- Turn off lights when not needed
- Utilise natural light as much as possible

6. Shopping around for the best energy deal

Switch retailer

Energy switch could save you hundreds of dollars per year.

You are probably well aware that electricity prices have been going up. In fact, over the last decade electricity bills have risen by more than 117 per cent. Making your home more efficient is a great way of reducing your energy bills. And luckily, there are lots of easy ways you can do this! But want to know one of the easiest things you can do to save money on your bills?

Switch energy retailers!

Comparing energy retailers

Your electricity retailer is the company that you pay your bills to. You can choose your retailer. The poles, wires and meters that deliver your power are owned by the electricity distributor, so you don't get a choice of distributor. Think of it like this: the retailer is the shop where you buy your biscuits but they don't make or transport your biscuits. Shopping around for an energy retailer is just like shopping around for the best price on biscuits.

No loyalty benefits

It's important to shop around on a regular basis, as often the discounts that you receive will only apply in the first year. Research carried out by Service NSW found 70 per cent of households pay too much for electricity, particularly customers who haven't switched for more than 12 months. In fact, the average saving for people who switched energy retailer was more than \$550 per household!

Comparing is easy

We recommend searching on line, to see if you are getting the best deal on electricity.

The South Australian Government has lots of handy advice here <https://www.sa.gov.au/topics/energy-and-environment/energy-retailers-and-contracts/retailers-and-contract-types>

And the Australian Government has a website where you can compare offers

<https://www.energymadeeasy.gov.au/>

This is a government website, so you don't have to worry about your price being affected in order to pay brokers' fees.

If you're interested in how your retailer's environmental performance, check out the [Green Electricity Guide](#).

It is worth visiting these websites at least every two years, as deals can change and the deal you signed up to may have changed in that time. Regularly checking means always knowing you are getting the best price.

Important questions

Here are some things to ask before you sign.

1. Is this the best deal you can offer me?
If you only ask one question this is it. Make sure this is their best deal.
2. Is the supply charge low or high and the usage charge low or high (especially compared to what you have been paying)?
This is important to clarify, as low users should shop around for a lower supply charge to save money but if your household uses a lot of electricity then you might be better off with a cheaper deal per unit (kilowatt hour), even if the supply charge is a little higher than what you currently pay.
3. Am I locked into this contract?
You may not want to be in a long-term contract. Often contract mean that there is an exit fee if you change retailer or plan before the end of the contract. Sometimes this is a low cost and worth risking if you are going to save a lot even in the short term.
4. Is there a general discount or pay on time?
General discounts mean you will pay the same price no matter when you pay your bill. Pay on time discounts only apply if you pay your bill on time. If you don't pay on time the price can be very high. So think about when you pay your bills before deciding which discount to take.
5. Am I eligible for a concession?
The government has a range of concessions that you might be eligible for make sure they are being applied on your bills. If you have a concession card let the retailer know. You will need to provide information about your concession, so have your card details handy.
6. Can I pay monthly?
Often paying monthly makes it easier to manage bills.
7. Do you offer payment plans?
Some people like to pay a certain amount each month, rather than paying the bill when it is due. It can help you to budget your money. It might even mean that you end up in credit at the end of the year and have some saved money!
8. Is the discount off my usage or off usage and supply (the total bill)?
Your bill has two pieces. Usage: which is how much energy you use and, Supply: which is a fixed cost per day, to provide energy to your home.
9. Do I get a better deal if I sign up for gas and electricity?
Some companies will give an extra discount if you sign up for gas and electricity.