

“My electricity bill dropped significantly after installing solar hot water.”



Name: Ruth Primrose
House Type: 2 bedroom unit,
 Desert Springs
No. of occupants: Varies

Average daily electricity consumption:

Prior to Home Energy Survey (HES):

13.6kWh per day

First 12 month period after HES:

8.2kWh per day

Second 12 month period after HES:

6.1kWh per day

third 12 month period after HES:

9.9kWh per day

About the householder

Ruth Primrose has lived in Alice Springs for five years. She bought her 2 bedroom unit in 2007 and with friends coming and going, it is a busy household with up to five people staying. The unit is within a complex of 50 other units.

Ruth has always strived to live more sustainably and undertakes activities such as recycling paper, glass and cans. She uses a composting system and tries to save water and electricity wherever possible.

Ruth has reduced her energy consumption from 13.6kWh per day to an average of 9.9kWh, and even dropped to 6.1kWh in the second 12 month period after having her Alice Solar City home energy survey.

Why did you get involved in Alice Solar City?

“I would call myself a greenie and have been for many years, and I am very interested in lowering my Carbon footprint. I came to Alice Springs from Canberra which is considered quite a green city. When Alice Solar City started up it was a great opportunity for me to improve my energy saving habits.”

What motivates you to save energy and what actions did you take prior to Alice Solar City?


Ruth is conscious of the impact her lifestyle has on the sustainability of the planet. To save energy, she has purchased more energy efficient products, such as a split system air con with an inverter, low energy light bulbs, and an energy efficient fridge and front loader washing machine.

Even before joining Alice Solar City, Ruth had installed two whirlybirds in her roof to let the hot air escape, installed skylights so she wouldn't use as much electrical lighting, and installed window coverings on her glass doors and windows. Ruth also invested in security screens so she could let in natural breezes without worrying about her safety. Now she only uses her evaporative cooler in the height of summer.

Measures implemented


Solar hot water system

By installing a solar hot water system, Ruth has cut her water heating bills by hundreds of dollars per year. She installed the larger size to cater for her many visitors and wanted to ensure they were all getting hot showers. She only rarely uses her one-shot hot water booster.

 Ruth received a 35% discount to install solar hot water, saving \$1645 (the rebate available now is up to \$2000)


Replace light bulbs with low energy bulbs

Ruth replaced all her light bulbs with low energy bulbs, including lamps and outdoor lights.

 Ruth received a 35% discount to purchase low energy bulbs, saving \$39

Replace 12V Halogen downlight system


Ruth had six 50 watt (W) halogen downlights in her house. One switch in her dining area turned on 100W, and a separate switch in her living area turned on 200W.

 Ruth received a 35% discount to replace her 12V halogen downlight system, saving \$184

If you are thinking of choosing low energy lighting for your home, you can come into the Smart Living Centre to 'try before you buy' with over 20 different lighting options on display.

Service of evaporative airconditioner

Ruth chose to have her airconditioner serviced to make sure it was working as efficiently as it could.

 Ruth received a 35% discount to service the airconditioner, saving \$89.

10:10/20:20 incentive

Ruth participated in the Alice Solar City 10:10/20:20 incentive, meaning if she dropped her energy use by 10%-20% compared to the same period the previous year, she would receive a 10-20% credit on her bill. Ruth received one credit of \$33.09 in late 2008, but has found it difficult to find time to make claims. (If you need some help claiming the 10:20/20:20 incentive, contact Alice Solar City.)

What advice do you have for other households wanting to reduce their energy use?

“Alice Solar City gave me traction in lowering my energy use and minimising my footprint. Getting the financial assistance was such a boost and morale raiser and it is something I often talk to others about. I encourage people to start with small energy saving projects around the house. Do it incrementally, just one step at a time, not all at once.”

If Ruth's consumption had stayed the same, her electricity would be costing her \$2.69 per day instead of an average of \$1.60, an approximate saving of around \$398 per year, and a saving of 1,388 kg of greenhouse gas emissions.