



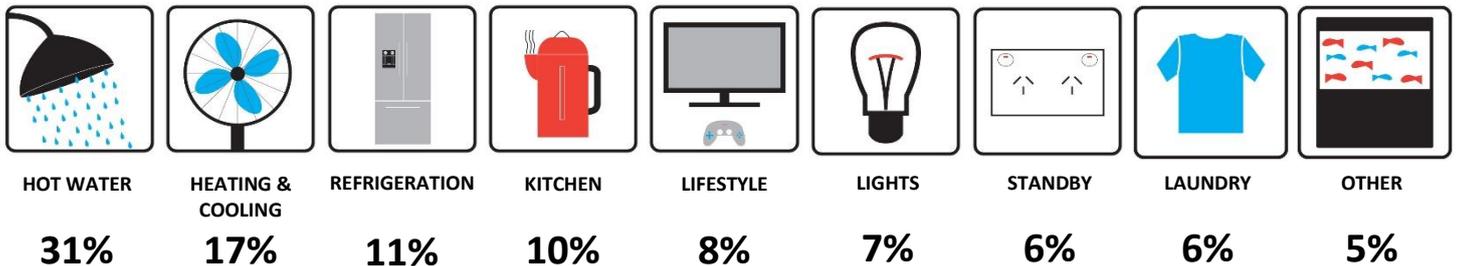
Electricity Consumption: What does it mean to you?

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Have you ever wondered how much electricity we consume at our day-to-day activities? It is not uncommon for Australian households to consume up to 8000 kilowatt hours (kWh) a year—21.9kWh a day. If you’re like me, that doesn’t really mean a lot, but it becomes more comprehensible when you realise it costs you \$7.30 a day.

With natural resources diminishing, we all want to reduce the electricity we consume. And with the ever-increasing cost of electricity, the motivation becomes two-fold: to save our natural resources and, incidentally, to save money. Making few small adjustments around the house, you’ll find simple ways to waste less electricity: for instance, switching your TV off at the wall, rather than leaving it on standby.

Recent studies by the Australian Bureau of Statistics show that average household electricity use looks like this.



By adjusting how we use these household appliances, we may be able to reduce our dependence, and in turn, reduce our overall electricity consumption.

To start making changes, you need to know where you’re at. You can ask your electricity retailer, or check out the Australian Government’s Energy Made Easy website www.energymadeeasy.gov.au. To go a step further, you can also purchase portable energy meters from major hardware stores or electrical suppliers, and monitor your own usage.

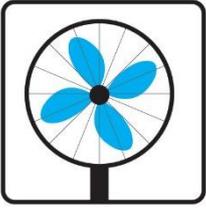
Below are some simple electricity-saving ideas, to help you get started.

HOT WATER



The average Australian shower takes eight minutes; that consumes about 1,000 kWh a year. By reducing your shower to five minutes, you could save over \$100 a year. Fitting a water- saving showerhead with a flow of 10L/min will allow you to still enjoy your shower, without the guilt of wasting excessive resources. Other simple ideas include: setting your hot water thermostat at 60–65°C to avoid unnecessary heating, using cold water to wash hands and rinse dishes where possible - or even switching to gas hot water.

HEATING AND COOLING



For every 1°C over (or under) the efficient running temperature of your air-conditioning unit (21°C-23°C) or central heating unit (18°C-21°C), you may be adding 10% to your usage costs. As an alternate cooling solution, use fans instead where possible as they consume considerably less electricity than an air conditioner. A regular fan will cost around \$0.14 to run for 8 hours, compared to an air-conditioning unit which, for 8 hours will cost approx. \$4.80 to run.

To assist your heating and cooling being more efficient, closing the windows, doors, curtains and blinds will help moderate the temperature in the room. Bathroom radiant heaters are electricity guzzling appliances - try to refrain from using them to warm up the room. Ideally, only use it when someone is standing under it to maximise its efficiency.

KITCHEN APPLIANCES



General maintenance of door seals on kitchen appliances such refrigerators, freezers or ovens will assist lower your running costs and reduce wasted electricity, however, there are a few other tips that may help you save on your kitchen appliances consumption costs.

Check that the thermostats in refrigerators and freezers are set to correct temperature – if it's set too low it will increase the electricity consumed. Consider the location of the fridge, as poorly insulated spaces such as a garage may require the appliance to work harder in maintaining temperature, thus increasing its electricity consumption. There should be sufficient space for air to circulate around the fridge. If you have second fridge as a designated 'drinks fridge', perhaps consider keeping it turned off, unless entertaining, to conserve wasted electricity.

If you have a dishwasher at home, try and run it when it's a full load, on the quickest, most efficient cycle suitable. The drying stage of the cycle is very electricity intensive, so an idea may be to finish the cycle just before the drying phase, open the door and allow the stored heat to dry the dishes.

When cooking, cover pot and pans with their lids to help reduce cooking time, and where possible, avoid over filling the kettle. Only boiling what is required will help minimise wasted electricity.

***Did you know?* Refrigeration makes up over half of the entire kitchen electricity consumption.**

LIFESTYLE



Typical households have two or more large-screen TV's connected to cable TV, networks, game console or media devices, contributing about 2,000kWh (approximately \$650) to the household electricity bill per year. Whilst switching appliances off at the wall may seem somewhat laborious, by grouping appliances that are commonly used together (such as a computer, monitor and printer) all on the same power board, you may be able to effectively reduce and manage the wasted electricity used by the devices.

For convenience, gaming consoles tend to be left on when not in use. These electricity intensive devices, if not switched off can add some 1,750kWh (approximately \$525) to your annual

electricity consumption. If you have devices that are only used during specific hours of the day, a simple solution may be consider installing timer switches to automatically shut power off to the connected units. For example, you may wish to install a timer switch on your TV and media devices to cover the period no one is regularly home during the day.

When purchasing a new computer, consider its end use. A laptop will consume about 1/3 less power than a regular desktop, and a tablet will consume even less.

If you are like me and enjoy having background noise on at home (how good is busting out a tune whilst vacuuming?), try using the radio instead of the TV – it could potentially save you over \$100 a year!

Did you know? Most domestic households have almost 70 appliances sitting on standby mode. Whilst each appliance uses very little electricity individually, when added together, they consume over 600kWh per year, which is about \$180. Switching the appliances off that the power point will conserve this wasted electricity, and in turn save you money.

LIGHTS



Not all lights and light bulbs are the same. When comparing alternative light bulbs to the standard incandescent light, compact fluorescent lights (CFL) use about 1/3 of the electricity, whilst LED lights use about 1/5 electricity the electricity - though both are incrementally more expensive at the initial outlay. Even though they consume very little electricity, it's still a good idea to switch lights off when not needed, to reduce your wasted electricity consumption, or consider installing sensor lights where possible.

LAUNDRY



Front loader washing machines are renowned for using less power and water than top loader machines. Some washing machines may have internal heating elements, which will heat up the water for the wash, consuming more electricity than a cold wash. Where possible, use a cold wash cycle, preferably with a full load.

Clothes driers are a great convenience for drying clothes during the wetter months, however they are very electricity intensive, and have been known to ruin clothes on the odd occasion. Whenever possible, air dry clothes on outdoor clothes line or portable drying racks, and then try to limit using the dryer for a quick spin to soften the fabric.

Did you know? A cable TV interface will use about 260kWh annually when left on standby-mode (about \$80).

By making some very simple changes to the way we use and think about our household appliances, we may be able to make some considerable savings to our annual electricity consumption. By simply reducing our electricity usage by 1kWh per day, we would potentially save about \$100 per year. Whilst it may require some changes to our personal

needs, behaviours and lifestyles, the benefits of the savings will certainly be outweighed. I hope you find these simple tips usefully in helping you save \$\$\$ on your next electricity bill.

About Alison Fox

Alison has worked across a diverse range of customer centric organisations, with a strong focus on customer engagement, organisational development and design. During her career, she has worked across a variety of creative and corporate organizational development assignments in both public and private sectors, focusing on frontline management, business management and leadership.

Alison's background in design and public relations has enabled her to lead teams of researchers and designers to develop new customer engagement processes across a large government organisation, providing seamless customer interactions and staff processes to deliver concise information, based around customer and stakeholder communication strategies.

About Phacelift

Phacelift specialises in providing advice on good business practice. For more information please visit our website: www.phacelift.com.au

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References

Number	Description	Author	Location
1	Article 2 Reducing Electricity Consumption	Dr Martin Gill	http://www.phacelift.com.au/library/library-consumer-series/
2	Energy Made Easy – the Power to Compare	Australian Energy Regulator	http://www.energymadeeasy.gov.au/

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