



## HOW CAN I UNDERSTAND MY HOUSEHOLD ENERGY USE AND REDUCE MY BILL?

The ACT Government has introduced a range of programs to help households better understand their energy use and reduce the cost of energy bills. The good news is that Canberrans can lower their energy bills and transition to cleaner power at the same time.



## STEP 1: GETTING STARTED

Keen to reduce your energy use at home but not sure where to start? It can be as easy as making a phone call, or you can get more involved by attending a workshop or getting a smart meter.

### Ask for general advice

ACT residents are able to contact the Actsmart Sustainable Home Advice line for general advice on how to reduce the cost of electricity bills. Energy experts can also help compare the running costs of domestic appliances, and provide simple tips to help save energy. To contact the FREE Actsmart Sustainable Home Advice line, please call 1300 141 777 or email [ActsmartAdvice@act.gov.au](mailto:ActsmartAdvice@act.gov.au).

### Better understand your energy use

Anyone can borrow a 'do-it-yourself' Actsmart Home Energy Action Kit from the ACT's public libraries. The kit has everything you need to assess your current energy and water usage, so you have the information to take action. To find out more, please contact Access Canberra on 13 22 81.

For low-income households, a friendly energy efficiency assessor can visit you at home and talk about how you can reduce your energy and water use, save money and improve the comfort of your home. This service is part of the Actsmart Home Energy Efficiency Program and is run through St Vincent de Paul. For more information, please contact St Vincent de Paul on 6234 7408 or email [energyefficiency@svdp.org.au](mailto:energyefficiency@svdp.org.au).

New 'Power of Choice' reforms mean that people can have more control over how and when they use electricity. All new electricity meters will now be smart meters—a digital electricity meter that records how much and when you use electricity in real time. You may be able to use the information to identify energy hungry appliances and the impact they have on electricity bills, move some energy use to different times of day when it can cost you less, and find a more suitable retail electricity package that matches the way you use electricity. Existing meters will be used until they reach the end of their working life or you can choose to get a smart meter. For more information, please contact your energy retailer to discuss what options are available to you.

### Attend a workshop

If you're interested in getting a deeper understanding of energy efficiency and do-it-yourself tips, attend a FREE Actsmart workshop. Topics include how to heat and cool homes efficiently and draught proofing. More information is available at [www.actsmart.act.gov.au/news-events](http://www.actsmart.act.gov.au/news-events).



## STEP 2: SUBSIDIES, LOANS AND UPGRADES TO IMPROVE ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Low income households pay the highest proportion of their incomes on energy bills, but are least able to afford to make improvements. Fortunately, there are a number of programs that provide assistance to invest in efficient appliances and clean power generation.

### Solar panel installation

Installing rooftop solar panels is estimated to bring down energy costs by \$300 to \$900 a year, and the clean energy they produce is great for the planet. Eligible participants who install solar panels under the Actsmart Solar for Low Income program can access a subsidy of up to 60% off the total cost of a rooftop solar system, as well as an interest free loan to pay off the remaining costs. For more information, please contact Access Canberra on 13 22 81 or email [actsmart@act.gov.au](mailto:actsmart@act.gov.au).

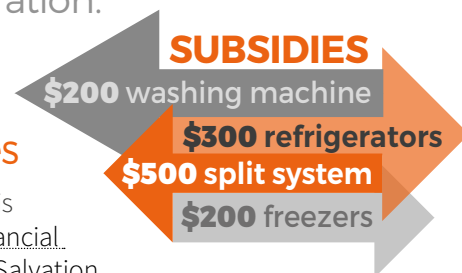
### Inefficient heating system upgrades

Households can receive up to \$4000 off the purchase price to upgrade an old, inefficient gas heating system to a new efficient one through the Energy Efficiency Improvement Scheme (EEIS). For more information, please contact ActewAGL Energy Shop on 6280 0994 or Climate Master on 6228 1126.



### Replacing old appliances

The ACT Government is working with Care Financial Services Inc. and The Salvation Army to provide subsidies to low income households for the purchase of energy efficient appliances. These subsidies are provided through the No Interest Loans Scheme (NILS), and include \$300 for energy efficient refrigerators, \$200 for freezers, and \$500 for split systems as well as \$200 for a limited number of washing machines. To find out more, please call Care Financial Services on 6257 1788 or The Salvation Army on 0437 723 863.



### Air-conditioning upgrades for public housing tenants

A program to replace old, inefficient gas heaters in public housing with high efficiency reverse cycle systems is underway. These upgrades significantly reduce energy costs for public housing tenants and will be delivered to pre-selected Housing ACT premises as part of a trial. For more information, please contact Housing ACT on 6207 9183.





## STEP 3: FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO MANAGE BILLS

While it's best to explore ways to reduce your energy bill before it gets on top of you, if you're struggling to make ends meet don't go without energy. National energy laws require energy retailers to help customers experiencing payment difficulties through flexible payment options and programs to improve their energy efficiency. Contact your retailer to discuss hardship and payment options.

### ActewAGL Energy Support Fund

ActewAGL's Energy Support Fund provides direct support to help cover energy bills through a system of vouchers. These vouchers are distributed by community groups that provide emergency relief services. The fund includes contributions of \$250,000 by both the ACT Government and ActewAGL. For more information, please contact ActewAGL on 1300 136 008.

### Get an energy concession

The ACT Government offers a rebate of up to \$604 through the Utilities Concession Scheme for low income households, increasing to \$654, from July 2018. The concession covers electricity, natural gas, water and sewage. Eligible households include Centrelink Pensioner Concession Card holders, Low Income Health Care Card holders, Veteran's Affairs Pensioner Concession Card holders or Gold Card holders. For more information, please contact your energy provider.



## STEP 4: CONSUMER PROTECTIONS AND DISPUTE RESOLUTION

### Contact the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal with complaints or disputes

Consumers can contact the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal to discuss an unresolved complaint regarding a utility, or a bill dispute. For more information, please contact the Tribunal on 6207 1740.