

The top 10 ways to help your business get the EcoEdge!

1. Lighting

If you have a lot of halogen downlights they are probably costing you a lot of money! Each halogen downlight on for eight hours a day will cost around \$25 a year to run. They may be low voltage but this DOES NOT mean low energy.

Talk to your lighting retailer about switching over to energy saving halogen downlights—Philips and Osram produce these. They use 30 to 35 watts each instead of 50 watts. If you are thinking of installing halogens in your business, install electronic transformers instead of regular ones—they waste far less energy.

Change 'normal' incandescent light bulbs over to compact fluorescent globes. They last longer and use around 80% less energy. Although they cost a bit more to buy, you'll still end up saving money! And they now come in lots of shapes and sizes including round, candle and floodlight.

If you have tube fluorescent lighting, consider switching to tri or quad phosphor tubes. They emit more light for the same amount of energy and you should be able to remove some tubes completely.

2. Fridges

Place timers on any fridges that contain non-perishable items (for example soft drink fridges) so that they are off at night. This can save you up to \$200 per year! Make sure your fridge doors are sealing properly and that the coils are cleaned regularly. Ensure that there is around 10cm between the fridge coils and the wall to provide adequate ventilation. When buying new fridges or freezers, look for the appliances's energy star rating (www.energyrating.com.au) and try to buy chest freezers instead of upright ones.

3. Hot water

Consider replacing your electric hot water service with a gas or solar unit. Heating water may be the largest user of energy in your business if you are using electricity. It will cost you a lot less to run a gas system and will produce fewer greenhouse gas emissions.

4. Dish and glass washers

Always make sure your dish and glass washers are full before you use them. These commercial appliances use huge amounts of energy, so the less you use them the more you will save. If you can get away with a domestic system in your business do so—they use a lot less energy.

5. Heating and cooling

Try to use natural ventilation or ceiling/upright fans. If you do need to use an air-conditioner or heater, make sure doors are closed and the thermostat is set appropriately. When the air conditioner is on, ensure the thermostat is set at around 25 degrees. For every degree you set the system under that

temperature, the energy costs rise by up to 20%. The same is true for a heater set above 18 degrees. With heating, try to buy gas heaters where possible. Avoid small fan heaters and column heaters—they are cheap to buy but expensive to run! Panel radiant heaters are a good alternative.

6. Gas appliances

Always buy gas appliances instead of electric ones whenever possible (for example deep fryers, salamanders and pasta boilers). Although they may cost a bit more to buy, they will cost less to run and produce fewer greenhouse gas emissions than electrically powered appliances. With gas, always make sure appliances and stove tops are off when not in use. This will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and heat in the kitchen, as well as being a lot safer.

7. Water

Install tap aerators, which can reduce the flow by around half, helping to save water. When you're using hot water, tap aerators also help you save money on your energy bill.

Consider installing a rainwater or greywater tank for flushing the toilets and watering the garden (if you have one!). Contact the Green Plumbers to see if it's possible in your business. (www.greenplumbers.com.au).

8. Waste

Reduce, reuse, recycle! Buy products in bulk, reuse packaging or return it to your supplier, eliminate plastic bags from your store, encourage people to bring in their own coffee cups and recycle whatever is left over! You may also want to consider getting a compost bin or worm farm for your food scraps—CERES Environment Park in Brunswick make a fantastic cafe-sized worm farm!

9. Transport

Walk, ride or catch public transport to work. Consider encouraging staff to do the same by holding car-free days, providing showering/changing facilities or public transport tickets and places to store bikes securely. If you absolutely must use a car, plan your trips so that you can do it all in one go and try to avoid lots of short trips. Consider offsetting any vehicle greenhouse gas emissions with tree planting through the Greenfleet program.

10. Greenpower

Consider running your business off renewable energy. You may want to investigate solar panels. If that's too hard or too expensive, consider purchasing Green Power from your electricity retailer. For a small amount of money per unit of energy (that gets invested in the renewables industry), your electricity can be supplied from renewable sources like wind or solar power. As a business, you can then use the Green Power logo to market your business.