

Simple Changes Matter



Our Maggie



Over the last 12 months, Magnetic Island identities and Solar City participants Don and Barbara Kinsey have reduced three out of four power bills by more than 20 percent.

Their actions have entitled them to yet another rebate under the Solar City 20+10 initiative, however this is not their prime objective.

For Don and Barbara, like many Magnetic Islanders, it is not enough to live sustainably, there must also be a focus on reducing their carbon footprint. For them, the 20+10 initiative which rewards participants for continuously reducing their power bills, fitted well with their long held philosophy.

As a result of taking on board recommendations made during a free Solar City energy assessment, the couple have seen marked falls in their electricity consumption since their initial assessment.

"Three of the last four quarters we've reduced better than 20 percent - so that's become a challenge now," Don explained.

"We have done what we believe is a fair bit. The trend is fairly gentle but I'd have to say in our

case we knew most things that Brian told us. What the Solar City project did was give us an incentive to want to do more about it."

Don and Barbara Kinsey are no strangers to the world of environmental advocacy. Don - an oceanographer and the former Executive Director of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GRBMPA) - along with wife and photographer Barbara - have managed to reduce their carbon footprint over the course of the project, with little disruption to their day to day lives.

They are also members of the University of the Third Age (U3A) and two years ago developed a course on climate change to share with the members in the interests of keeping the local chapter informed of current thinking.

Recently, he and Barbara updated that course based on a book originally lent to them from the Solar City project library. Following a request from the U3A group the project has donated the book and the next course is scheduled to start mid 2011.

More than 75 percent of Magnetic Island's homes and businesses have now had free Solar City energy assessments, significantly contributing to the drop in both energy consumption and peak demand.

PROJECT UPDATE

Hi everyone

I hope you and your families along with your homes and businesses weathered the effects of Cyclone Yasi that hit us in early February. It was a very harrowing and challenging time both on Maggie and right across north Queensland. Like you I'm sure, my thoughts are with those who have been affected.

Despite Yasi's determined efforts, the Solar City PV systems hosted on roofs across the island remained in place and for the most part intact - with the exception of one panel requiring replacement on the roof of X-Base and one other which required only minor repairs. Thanks go to the installation team who were very busy in the weeks following Yasi checking each system and ensuring the project panels made it through the cyclone in one piece.

Now onto matters non-weather related - a huge thank you to all island residents who took the time to fill out the Solar City Project's second survey.

I realise it was a rather arduous task but we were pleased to receive responses from 26 percent of residents and businesses.

We were pleased to see 70 percent of respondents have visited the Smart Lifestyle Centre since it was opened, mainly to either attend an event being held there or to



seek advice and information on energy efficiency. And 67 percent of businesses surveyed say they keep up to date with what's happening on the project via updates such as this one. We've included the website address for government rebates in response to your request.

While our residential voucher system finished in January, we had a last minute rush on redeeming the vouchers in December. A record number of locals ventured down to the Smart Lifestyle Centre with their vouchers, claiming over \$33,000. As well as a significant number of other rebates, more than 30 redundant fridges were surrendered and removed from the island to be degassed and recycled, approximately 20 participants upgraded their old box air-conditioners to inverter systems and about 15 vouchers worth \$500 each were translated into rooftops covered with white, reflective paint - keeping the owners cool and reducing their energy costs.

Results from those participating in our Peak Demand Reduction Trial have remained positive - with peak period usage reduced by 24 percent in the first three months of the trial. We will have more results in the next update, due at the end of June.

Until then, take care and stay safe.

Julie Heath

Solar City Community Engagement Manager



e-Update now available

The Magnetic Island Solar Suburb Update can be delivered to your inbox, rather than your mailbox. If you'd like to receive an electronic version of the Update instead of a paper copy, email us at solarcity@ergon.com.au with the "subject" line: Electronic Update.



Visit us at the Smart Lifestyle Centre located on Horseshoe Bay Road, at Horseshoe Bay



You can also phone the Solar City Project Team on **4758 1674**



Visit our website:

www.townsvillesolarcity.com.au



For more information on Government rebates:

www.cleanenergy.qld.gov.au/solar-hot-water-rebate.html

www.climatechange.gov.au/What-you-need-to-know/renewable-energy/solar-homes.aspx

Solar Park powers on

If you have driven past the Smart Lifestyle Centre lately, you will have noticed a few changes.

Floods to the south and cyclones here and further north may have delayed initial progress on the Solar Park but construction is almost complete with the highly anticipated pavilions taking shape.

Dean Condon, Solar Park Project Manager, said the steel fins displaying the community art arrived and were erected earlier this month.

"It took longer than expected to get the steel fins, manufactured at Ergon Energy's Banyo workshop near Brisbane, to Townsville and over to the island but as soon as the wild weather passed construction crews got busy putting everything in place," said Dean.

"Now we're in a position to start on the skate park which will be the focal point of the Solar

Park," said Dean who is looking forward to the moment he can start putting up the photovoltaic solar panels.

When complete, the skate park roof and adjacent picnic pavilion will host 100 kilowatts of solar PV generating enough electricity to power 22 homes each day. The home team and community sound stage pavilion will also host additional panels.

Solar City Project Manager Ian Cruickshank said while the Solar Park was now on track for completion in July, it was exciting to see the steel fins reflecting local artists' interpretation of life on Maggie on display.

"When the Solar Park is complete it will be a wonderful symbol of the partnership between the community and the Solar City project to have a cluster of multi-use recreational facilities generating power for everyone on the island to enjoy," he said.



To allow skate park users access to the skate park for as long as possible, it remained open over the Christmas holidays while building contractors carried out preparatory work. However, once construction started in March the park was closed for safety and will reopen in the next few weeks following the finalisation of the PV installation.

The official opening for the new and improved community facilities is planned for July.



Unplugged!

THE REVIEW

Magnetic Island Primary School students were treated to an enthusiastic performance of Unplugged recently. The play, which promotes energy efficiency in an interactive and educational manner, is the result of a partnership between Ergon Energy and the Queensland Arts Council.

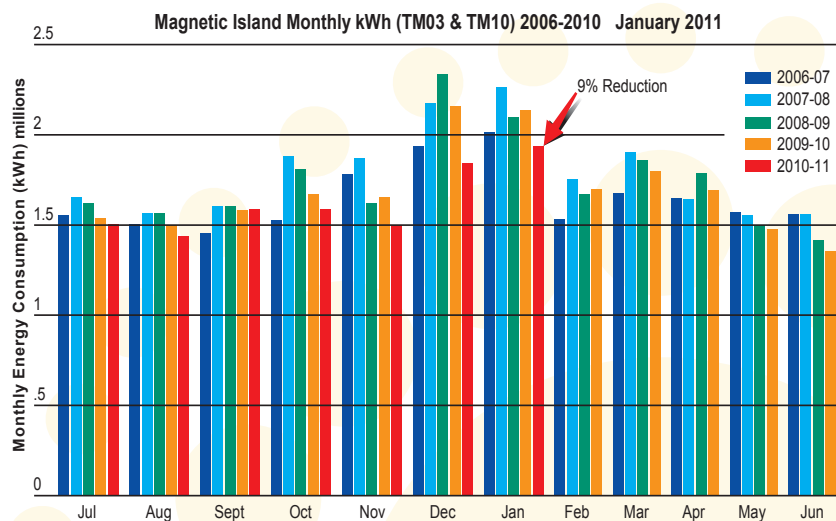
It is designed to encourage students and teachers to actively measure their power consumption both at home and in the classroom and try to reduce their carbon footprint. The reaction from the audience was extremely positive, and the Solar City team members in attendance benefited by seeing the parallels between teaching kids and enticing adults to lead a more sustainable lifestyle.

PROJECT PROGRESS

Good news on the energy saving front as we continue to see a downward trend in energy consumption over the peak months. Congratulations to all who have played their part by celebrating the festive season sustainably – making the most of their barbeques and the island's sea breezes and giving their electric cook tops and air-cons a rest.

The accompanying graph illustrates a 14 percent reduction in December - the most significant drop since the project began. With the exception of two mid sized resorts that lost bookings due to Cyclone Anthony, holiday occupancy rates over the Christmas period were the same as usual, so it's a great result for this time of the year.

We also saw a 9 percent drop in comparison to the same period last year - well done.



Australian Government
Solar Cities

