

# Simple Changes Matter



## Our Maggie

### Energy efficiency in action for turtle recovery

A solar heat pump is helping to provide an important environmental role in assisting the recovery of sick and injured turtles on Magnetic Island.

With a 700 per cent increase in the number of stranded turtles off the north Queensland coast, local veterinarian Alison Bee approached the Solar City project with her idea of setting up a small recovery centre.

"With other facilities like Reef HQ and the James Cook University vet school in Townsville and the Cairns Sea Turtle Rescue centre at full capacity, I wanted to be able to

*Magnetic Island veterinarian Alison Bee and local plumber Donnie Kilmartin help a rescued turtle settle into the new holding tank to help support its recovery.*

offer an overflow facility providing immediate treatment and holding tanks," Alison said.

"We had a second-hand spa and filter which were donated to the vet surgery by the local pool shop and needed to source a heat pump to keep the water temperature at 28 degrees Celsius and run the filter."

The Solar City project supported the initiative with the provision of a solar heat pump, which will help reduce the electricity costs associated with running the treatment facility, while also providing a more environmentally friendly option.

Local plumber Donnie Kilmartin assisted in sourcing the most cost effective option for the solar heat pump, and installed it urgently to cater for a sick turtle being delivered to the vet surgery.

Weather events such as Cyclone Yasi have been responsible for reducing the amount of available seagrass in the ocean, which is the main food source for turtles.

Until the supplies of seagrass improve, which may take a number of years, the facility will continue to provide an essential refuge for the turtles.

## PROJECT UPDATE

Hello everyone

We have had some great results recently, and I just wanted to share some of them with you, particularly as the active phase of the Solar City project is starting to wind down. We will let you know more in the new year, however we are planning a final community event for the second quarter of 2012 to mark this transition.

So far, around 200 residents, commercial premises, government buildings and community organisations are hosting almost 700kW of solar panels on rooves around the Island – thanks again for your support, and for helping to keep Maggie beautiful. As Ergon Energy owns the solar panels, the electricity generated by them goes back into the grid with no financial gain to any party.

We have installed 1634 meters, both on the island and at Ayr, which acts as the control group for the project, and have conducted our free energy assessments for around 80 per cent of the island homes and businesses. This means 1192 homes and 148



businesses have made changes to their energy use behaviour, appliances or installed new technology and have seen the associated reduction in CO2 emissions as well as savings on their electricity bills.

Interestingly, all those incandescent light bulbs we have changed out during the energy assessments have provided a reduction in load on the network of around half that of the PV systems we have installed – so you can see – simple changes really do matter.

I'm also really pleased to report that in September, peak demand on the island for that month was 15.7 per cent less than September last year – an excellent result and a credit to you all. As well, energy consumption on the island today is back to pre-2007 levels. There will be a number of factors for that, however the most important one is the enthusiastic take-up by the community of energy efficient actions which has resulted in this impressive drop and allowed us to defer the installation of the third cable by eight years instead of our original target of six years from 2007.

Well done everyone!

Your success hasn't just been confined to lowering electricity bills and reducing

greenhouse gas emissions. The project has been recognised yet again by the International Association for Public Participation – the peak body for community engagement in Australia and New Zealand. The Solar Park consultation process, inclusion of public art and enhanced facilities, has won the Queensland Project of the Year. This is a credit to those community members who worked with us on the process to produce such a great result.

In November all the Australian Solar Cities met in Alice Springs to compare notes. The other six cities are doing some great work too, and you might like to look up their websites. Go to [www.townsvillesolarcity.com.au](http://www.townsvillesolarcity.com.au) and follow the links to other cities' websites.

As well, we recently submitted our Annual Report to the Australian Government. If you would like to read it, there is a copy in the Smart Lifestyle Centre or you can go to our website and find it under Publications and Resources.

Until next time, stay safe.

*Julie Heath*

Solar City Community Engagement Manager



Local residents John Kuit and Danielle Ryan have reduced the cost associated with running their pool pump, and saved money on their electricity bill in the process.

## Residents dip into pool pump trial

**Instantaneous improvements to their pool pump's operation have been reported by local residents taking part in the Solar City project's pool pump trial.**

Project Manager Wayne Preston said the results were impressive, showing Magnetic Island residents on the trial had saved an average of 64 per cent in electricity running costs for their pool pumps since starting on the trial.

John Kuit and his partner Danielle Ryan had been operating the pool at their

Horseshoe Bay house for 18 months before starting on the trial six months ago.

"The reduction in the noise level was something we noticed straight away," John said.

"While we were pretty happy with that instant improvement, when we received our first bill and had a reduction in the cost associated with running the pool pump, we knew we were onto a winner."

The data collected from John and Danielle's property has shown the highest reduction in electricity use for any of the pool pumps involved in the trial.

They have reduced the electricity usage associated with their pool pump by 71 per cent, which is a total saving of 556kWh.

Magnetic Island residents with a pool who are not involved in the local trial can still make savings by taking advantage of the current pool pump cash back offer from Ergon Energy, which runs until March next year.

Visit [www.ergon.com.au](http://www.ergon.com.au) for more information.



## Rewards for using less

**There are a number of good reasons to visit Maggie's Arcadia Store.**

**Besides the delicious gourmet food and great service, the store is also actively reducing their carbon footprint and saving energy.**

Behind the scenes the energy-saving efforts are really paying off for owners Julie Carmody and Clayton Scott. It has been a year since they implemented some simple but effective measures such as having a free Solar City

assessment, participating in an LED lighting trial, having Solar City panels installed, and changing some of their fridges. They are delighted with the result: a massive reduction in their energy bills and greenhouse gas emissions.

In the first year after their assessment and initial changes, their electricity usage dropped by \$20 a day. Now in their second year they are paying slightly less than they were paying a year ago despite a tariff increase in the interim. Julie estimates a saving of \$26.70 a day, which they have achieved through operating their own cold freight, minimising heating time, and ensuring products are kept cold throughout the chain of supply from suppliers to customers. Regular maintenance of their equipment has also come into it: "It has become part of our daily routine. We undertake a bi-monthly programme of cleaning air conditioners, cool room motors, upright refrigerators and freezers. During summer the air-conditioner was set to 16 degrees Celsius but now with the regular cleaning and the solar panels we can keep it at 24 degrees Celsius."

The proactive couple intend to keep working with the Solar City team and their suppliers to continue reducing their energy usage. "Everyone has a chance to make a difference and contribute to saving energy even in small ways. Imagine how much we could achieve if everyone just did something to be part of the change," said Julie.



### 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](mailto: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](http://www.townsvillesolarcity.com.au)



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