



Homeowners' cheat sheet

Upgrade your home to be more climate-friendly and more comfortable

Introduction

Households make up about 40% of Australia's greenhouse gas emissions. Around 40% of these household emissions are from **petrol and diesel cars**, 30% are from **electricity use**, 20% are from **food** consumption, and 10% are from **gas** used in the home.

The story is likely to be similar in our local area, but varies a lot from household to household. Households that don't own petrol or diesel cars have much lower transport emissions. Households that have rooftop solar, are well insulated (or 'weatherised') and have energy efficient appliances have much lower electricity emissions. Households that don't consume meat or dairy products have much lower food emissions. Households that don't use gas for cooking, hot water or heating have much lower gas emissions.

The changes that reduce household emissions can also make houses **more comfortable** and **cheaper** to live in – it's a win-win-win! This guide sets out the basics.

Electricity

Rooftop solar is the best and most cost-effective way to reduce electricity emissions. Uptake of rooftop solar in the City of Sydney and Inner West Council are lower than the national average.

Inner West Community Energy is a local non-profit that can answer all your solar questions and connect you to trusted installers who can put solar panels on your roof within weeks. There are government incentives and rebates available, and in most cases the free energy you generate from your rooftop will pay for itself (and more!) over time. You can contact IWCE via email or Facebook, or attend one of their regular info nights. <https://innerwestcommunityenergy.org.au>.

Improved insulation or 'weatherisation' takes the edge off cold winters and hot summers. It can also drastically reduce household emissions and energy costs by reducing the need for heating and cooling.

Batteries allow households to capture solar energy produced for free during the day and use it at night, instead of buying expensive energy from the grid. Household batteries are increasingly affordable, and we're looking into options for batteries at a street or community level.

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Energy efficient appliances are important but it's rarely worth replacing an existing appliance while it's still working. Each time you do need to replace an appliance opt for an energy-efficient electric model, locking in lower emissions and operating costs for years.

The **electricity grid** will get cleaner over the next two decades as renewable sources replace coal mines. In the meantime, every little bit counts. Power from the grid is cleaner during the day and dirtier at night.

Transport

Reducing transport emissions means reducing the number of trips taken by private car, and electrifying those that remain. Many inner west residents already make most of their trips by **public transport, walking or cycling**, and our vision is that it should be easy and normal to live in Newtown without owning a car. With the expansion of safe, separated cycleways – which benefit all road users – this is increasingly true.

EVs have much lower emissions than petrol or diesel cars and are cheaper to run, even when charged from the grid. They're also in high demand and expensive to buy, even with Government rebates. **Electric bikes** are an immediate alternative, and we're exploring options for a community owned EV carshare. While EV supply is limited it's important that each new EV displaces a high-emissions petrol or diesel vehicle – or, even better, half a dozen fossil fueled vehicles through a carshare scheme.

Gas

Natural gas is responsible for around 10% of household emissions, and the only way to eliminate these emissions (and the cost associated with them) is to stop using gas. Gas is also increasingly being recognised as an indoor air pollutant.

Electric hot water and heat pumps (reverse cycle AC) are cleaner and cheaper to run than gas models, even using electricity from the grid. **Induction cooktops** are highly responsive and incredibly efficient, while standard electric cooktops have also improved.

Food and food waste

While it's an emotional topic for many, the link between cattle and climate is real. **Reducing meat and dairy consumption** reduces emissions, and over time allows grazing land (half the continent!) to be regenerated or repurposed. Luckily Newtown is home to the best **plant-based food** in the country. **Reducing food waste** is another important way to cut emissions.