

INSIDE: Controlling climate change in Victoria and...  
Environmental solutions from Solutions IE  
HUMOUR: Grandpa goes to the ATO

## HOW ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY

### ARE YOU?

How can you help your unit owners save money on eco-friendly products?? The Victorian Government has implemented a range of effective rebate schemes and other initiatives to decrease the State's carbon footprint.

Earlier this year, Victoria was labelled as the 'dirty state'. Last year, they saw greenhouse gas emissions increase by 2.2 million tonnes – a 2.1% growth with increases predominantly in the areas of petrol and brown coal pollution.

The Victorian Government has implemented some rebate initiatives. These include:

- Gas hot water rebate – the Government has implemented a gas hot water rebate for those residents who choose to make the switch from electric to gas.
  - \$400 rebate for 5 star instantaneous or storage hot water systems.
  - \$700 rebate for concession card holders.
  - \$300 rebate on installation if the resident lives in a flat or apartment where there is a separate occupancy directly above or below.
- Solar hot water rebates –
  - \$1600 rebates available to households replacing electric water heating with solar.

#### ARE YOU AWARE OF THE CHANGES TO THE REQUIREMENTS FOR ESSENTIAL SAFETY MEASURES???

The introduction of *Building Regulations 2006* (Vic) dramatically altered the building fire safety requirements for buildings in Victoria.

For buildings built prior to July 1994, a report must be produced stating that all the Essential Safety Measures are properly installed, are in good working order and are fully maintained as per the original specification and relevant Australian Standard. This report was required to have been completed by 13 June 2009 and for subsequent reports to be produced every 12 months from then on.

Buildings built after July 1994 also have a requirement to maintain any Essential Safety Measures in accordance with the Occupancy Permit or the Maintenance Determination. An annual Essential Safety Measures report must also be produced annually, before the anniversary date the Occupancy Permit or Maintenance Determination was made.

Essential Safety Measures in a building are any measure put in place to ensure the safety of persons using a building or place of public entertainment. Under the *Building Regulations 2006*, all buildings in classifications Class 1b-3 and 5-9 are required to comply. It is the responsibility of the owner to ensure all Essential Safety Measures are maintained and remain in full working order.

*Continued on page 2*

## Essential Safety Measures cont. from page 1...

Some Essential Safety Measures in a building include fire extinguishers, emergency power, lighting and lifts, air conditioning systems, exit signs, fire isolated stairs, fire resistant shafts and structures, paths of travel, exits and fire doors.

The Victorian Government has imposed strict penalties under the *Building Regulations 2006* (Vic) of up to \$50,000 for each instance of non-compliance. Failure to comply with the requirements listed on the building's Occupancy Permit, or those required at the time of construction may result in the revocation of the Occupancy Permit. The most important detail building owners need to remember is that non-compliance poses a serious threat to the health and safety of the people in or around the building in the case of a fire.

To ensure your buildings compliance, contact Solutions IE for an Essential Safety Measures Assessment on 1300 136 036, or visit [www.solutionsie.com.au](http://www.solutionsie.com.au) for more information.

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## How environmentally friendly are you? Cont. from page 1...

- White goods appliance rebates -
  - \$100 rebates on washing machines with a minimum 3.5 star energy rating and 4 star water rating.
  - Fridges with a minimum 4 star energy rating.

Some other rebate schemes the Government has employed are:

- \$150 rebate on water tanks.
- \$50 rebate on dual flush toilet systems.
- \$30 rebate on water conservation audits.
- \$30 rebate on high pressure cleaning devices.
- \$10 rebate on 3 star shower heads.

These rebates have been put in place to encourage residents to be more environmentally friendly.

### Renewable Energy Target Scheme

The Victorian Government introduced the Victorian Renewable Energy Target scheme on 1 January 2007. This scheme aims for 10% of Victoria's electricity consumption to be

generated from renewable sources by the year 2016. As part of the scheme, all electricity retailers and wholesale purchasers of electricity in Victoria will have a legal liability to contribute towards the generation of additional renewable energy by acquiring Victorian Renewable Energy Certificates (VREC's).

The Australian Government has also introduced a number of initiatives to increase the ecological sustainability of the entire nation.

### Green Building Fund

The Green Building Fund is a \$90 million initiative running from 2008-2012 with an aim to reduce the impact of greenhouse gas emissions on Australia's built environment, by reducing the energy consumed in the operation of existing commercial office buildings. The Government will provide grants under two streams of activity:

#### *Stream A*

Activities under Stream A targets owners of existing commercial office buildings. The scheme encourages them to reduce their energy consumption by retro-fitting and retro-commissioning the buildings.

#### *Stream B*

Stream B targets the relevant industry associations and provides a limited number of grants to develop the knowledge, skills or capability of those involved in the operation of commercial office buildings, to improve their energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions.

Another initiative devised by the Australian Government is the \$4.2 billion insulation scheme. The home insulation program provides rebate assistance of up to \$1,200 for the installation of ceiling insulation. The program is available to eligible owner-occupiers, landlords and tenants.

For more information on the Victorian rebates, please visit

<http://www.resourcesmart.vic.gov.au/for-households/rebates.html>.

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## **What is the Government doing to control climate change in Victoria?**

To tackle the growing issue of climate change, the Victorian Government has implemented a number of initiatives to decrease their carbon footprint.

### *Vic LandCarbon*

This initiative involves modeling the amount of carbon stored in Victoria's forests. This is done using the carbon accounting system proposed in the Commonwealth Government's Carbon Pollution Scheme. Victoria will be the first Australian State to model the amount of carbon kept in State forests, parks and reserves.

The carbon accounting system is more commonly referred to as the cap and trade scheme. Large corporations in Australia are required to identify their carbon footprint by June 2010. They are issued with permits indicating their allowable emissions level and a cap on the allowable carbon emissions. Companies have the opportunity to purchase credits from those with lesser emissions to increase their own emissions. Suppliers with accurate information on their carbon outputs are favoured.

The main objective of the Vic LandCarbon is to inform Victorians and help them gain a better understanding of carbon in their state. They are also hoping to increase the number of available green jobs and the future investment into carbon storage on both private and public land.

### *Green Roofs Research Program*

The objective of the Green Roofs Research Program is to research and identify which plants are the most appropriate and adapt best to being grown on roofs.

Vegetation on roofs has been found to help cool the urban environment. The vegetation assists with the heating and cooling of the building, improves the quality of storm water flows, creates an urban habitat and reduces noise pollution.

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## **Environmental solutions from Solutions IE**

As concern about energy costs and environmental issues become driving forces in mainstream thinking, many companies are doing their bit to reduce their carbon footprint. Solutions IE are developing a new service that will make it easy for Strata Managers to improve the sustainability of their buildings and are adding to their services a web-based environmental reporting program.

The program gathers client data and creates customised reports complete with recommendations for reducing the environmental impact of their buildings. It also provides details on the costs and payback periods associated with implementing recommendations.

The initial service will include an environmental statement and a building asset environmental audit.

The environmental audit includes three parts.

- *Onsite inspector audit:* An inspection through the property to gather information of all environmental aspects of the building including electrical assets such as lighting, appliances and cooling towers, waste management, water consumption activity and other aspects such as air filtration, ventilation, awnings and window glazing.
- *Asset and activity register:* Data gathered during the inspection and supplied by the client will be entered into the program for analysis and be used to make recommendations.
- *Environmental management plan:* A list of recommendations and opportunities for reducing the buildings environmental impact.

Future service options are also presented to clients including establishing a green building rating system and certificate for clients, used to promote their building as environmentally sustainable and to provide options for offsetting their carbon emissions.

Watch this space for more information on our eco-services reporting coming soon.

# Humour

The ATO decides to audit Grandpa and summons him to the ATO office.

The ATO auditor was not surprised when Grandpa showed up with his Lawyer.

The auditor said, "Well sir, you have an extravagant lifestyle and no full-time employment, which you explain by saying that you win money gambling. I'm not sure the ATO finds that believable."

"I'm a great gambler, and I can prove it," says Grandpa. "How about a demonstration?"

The auditor thinks for a moment and says, "Okay, go ahead."

Grandpa says, "I'll bet you a thousand dollars that I can bite my own eye."

The auditor thinks for a moment and says, "It's a bet."

Grandpa removes his glass eye and bites it.

The auditor's jaw drops.

Grandpa says, "Now I'll bet you two thousand dollars that I can bite my other eye..."

Now the auditor can tell Grandpa isn't blind, so he takes the bet.

Grandpa removes his dentures and bites his good eye.

The stunned auditor now realises he has wagered and lost three grand, with Grandpa's Lawyer as a witness.

He starts to get nervous.

"Want to go double or nothing?" Grandpa asks. "I'll bet you six thousand dollars that I can stand on one side of your desk and pee into that wastebasket on the other side, and never get a drop anywhere in between."

The auditor, twice burned, is cautious now but he looks carefully and decides there's no way

this old guy could possibly manage that stunt, so he agrees again.

Grandpa stands beside the desks and unzips his pants, and although he strains mightily, he can't make the stream reach the wastebasket on the other side, so he pretty much urinates all over the auditor's desk.

The auditor leaps with joy, realising that he has just turned a major loss into a huge win.

But Grandpa's own attorney moans and puts his head in his hands.

"Are you okay?" the auditor asks.

"Not really," says the attorney.

"This morning, when Grandpa told me he'd been summoned for an audit, he bet me twenty-five thousand dollars that he could come in here and piss all over your desk and that you'd be happy about it!"



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