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NAGA CASE STUDY

Hume City Council: Hume Energy Savers

What is the Hume Energy Savers program?

From June 2015 Hume City Council has partnered with Energy Makeovers, an accredited VEET (Victorian Energy Efficiency Target) business, to promote and deliver free energy saving upgrades to residents.

Upgrades included the following VEET approved products:

- efficient LED downlights to replace energy guzzling halogens
- compact fluorescent lights
- under door draught stoppers,
- chimney balloons and
- water-saving showerheads.

Concession card holders also received a free inhome energy displayworth \$100.

More than 1,800 Hume households have participated in the program (as of April 2016). 11,596 downlights have been upgraded saving \$384,350/year. Total greenhouse gas emissions savings from all upgrades of 1,290 tonnes/year have been achieved to date.

A promotional graphic for the Hume Energy Saver program. It features a blue header with the text "Free! HUME ENERGY SAVER" and "Saving energy has never been so easy!". Below the header are three small images: a LED downlight, a person installing a door draught stopper, and a water-saving showerhead. The main text area says "Energy Makeovers, supported by Hume City Council, are proud to offer a free* Energy Saver service to Hume residents**." It lists "Free upgrades include:" (efficient LED downlights, compact fluorescent lights, chimney and door draught stoppers, water-saving showerheads), mentions concession card holders receive a \$100 monitor, and provides contact information (1300 788 776, www.energymakeovers.com.au/hume). Fine print at the bottom explains the offer and funding source.

Why did you do it? What prompted it?

The key objective of Hume Energy Savers is to benefit Hume residents by providing free energy efficiency upgrades for the home, delivering potential energy, greenhouse and financial savings and increased home comfort levels.

Council's involvement in promoting the program ensured that more residents knew about the offer and trusted it enough to participate.



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How does it align to existing policy?

The Hume Energy Savers program aligns with a number of Hume objectives including environmental leadership, reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and social justice. The program is an action in Hume's *Live Green Plan (2015-2019)*.

How was it developed?

Energy Makeovers are an accredited business under the Victorian Government's Energy Saver Incentive (VEET) and has an offer available to Victorian households that includes a range of free products including installation for households with a certain number of halogen downlights that can be upgraded.

Hume already had a partnership with Energy Makeovers for the Energy Smart Neighbourhoods project and negotiated the partnership arrangement and offer to households from this basis.

Financing and budget issues

The program was very cost effective for Council as the offer to residents was made possible by the State Government's VEET scheme.

The VEET scheme is a Victorian Government initiative promoted as the Energy Saver Incentive. It commenced on 1 January 2009 and is administered by the Essential Services Commission (ESC). The scheme was established under the *Victorian Energy Efficiency Target*

Act 2007 and is administered in accordance with the *Victorian Energy Efficiency Target Regulations 2008*.

The VEET scheme is designed to make energy efficiency improvements more affordable, contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gases, and encourage investment, employment and innovation in industries that supply energy efficiency goods and services.

Under the scheme, accredited businesses can offer discounts and special offers (including free provision) on selected energy saving products and appliances installed at homes, businesses or other non-residential premises. The bigger the greenhouse gas reduction, the more Victorian Energy Efficiency Certificates (VEECs) awarded to accredited installers (and therefore the larger the discount to the end user). The program is funded through electricity retailers, who have an obligation to purchase an annual quota of VEECs.

Council promoted the offer with a mail-out to all rate payers (59,000 letters). The mail out was made possible through Hume's Lighting the Way project, funded by the Australian Government's Community Energy Efficiency Program (CEEP).



How was it implemented and by who?

Hume's main role was to promote the free offer to the Hume community. A targeted mail-out with a letter from the Mayor and promotional flier (pictured) was sent to all rate payers.. The mail out was staged, commencing with Roxburgh Park residents, to spread responses to Energy Makeover's call centre and to allow for evaluation of take up prior to proceeding in other suburbs.

Residents would take up the offer directly with Energy Makeovers as per the requirements of the VEET scheme. Energy Makeovers were fully responsible for customer liaison, implementation of retrofits and resolution of any potential problems and liabilities. A MoU was developed between Hume City Council and Energy Makeovers outlining the agreement, processes for the resolution of any problems and to minimise reputational risk to Council.

Only a very small number of complaints were received through the program and were handled by Hume's Sustainable Environment team. Some of the complaints related to residents previously attempting to contact VEET providers in the past and never receiving a call back. This pointed to a perception that all VEET providers were the same company, though this was not a major issue.

Contact for further information

Dean Kline

Hume City Council

e: DeanK@hume.vic.gov.au