

# Signed up for seachange

More than 120 households have already signed up for the Castlemaine 500 sea-change that is now underway round town.

And now the call has gone out to find home handy people who can help participants with their energy efficient retrofits.

After just the first round of workshops in what is going to be a 12 month community building endeavour, almost a quarter of the target 500 households have committed to monitor and then change their daily energy using habits.

Further rounds of workshops will be held in November as well as next year.

Although commitment requires a bit of effort in the first instance, the lifestyle change on offer with this national-first energy saving trial will save a lot of people a considerable amount of money, as well as giving them environmental "greeny-points" for helping reduce their emissions of climate-harming greenhouse gases.

"We are looking to develop a list of tradespeople, as well as suppliers," consultant Geoff Brown told *The Express* last week.

The Castlemaine 500 team want to be able to provide participants with a listing of local builders and hardware operators, as well as housing designers and architects, who can readily assist them as the



It's time: Castlemaine 500 project team members Geoff Brown, at left, and Mark Sanders.

project proceeds into the home-adaption phase.

"One thing where there is still a point of confusion is over eligibility," Mr Brown said last week.

"We are dealing only with people in the Castlemaine postcode area in this round but we have had such strong feedback from people in Campbells Creek, Chewton and Wesley Hill, who want this as well.

"It is very clear these people feel they are part of the Castlemaine community," he said.

"In the future, we will be involving them in any way we can."

## NEXT STAGE

Mr Brown said the next stage was an important one as it involved developing the community links that will allow people to make adaptations to their homes that they may not be confident of undertaking themselves.

"Also, there will be work around plumbing and solar installations but 90 per cent of the retrofits will use commonly available, off-the-shelf products," Mr Brown said.

Products such as seals against drafts and low-flow shower heads are within the scope of most householders but when one's only power source is fuelled by brown coal – the burning of which is the world's single greatest contributor of greenhouse gas pollution – minimising the use of electricity is critical.

"The key is to switch appliances off at the wall," Mr Brown said.

"Somewhere between 10 and 15 per cent of energy use is on stand-by power – the little red lights on TVs and DVDs.

"Printers and computers, even when not in use, drain a lot of power," he said.

"A lot of the tips we are giving are no-brainers – they don't cost anything and can save hugely."

Other sensible moves can be made by checking the temperature of hot water, or even the living areas, and adjusting the temperature controls.

Turning a hot water service down from 75 degrees to 60 degrees can save 10 per cent of the cost of heating that water and will not impact on hot water needed for the nightly showers, similarly with temperature settings in fridges and freezers.

Builders and home handy people, appliance and hardware suppliers wanting to

be involved in this exciting Castlemaine 500 project, contact the project team by email at [info@castlemaine500.org.au](mailto:info@castlemaine500.org.au), phone 5470-5934 or visit [www.castlemaine500.org.au](http://www.castlemaine500.org.au) website

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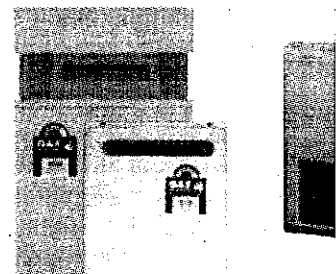
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