

Energy trial starts

Castlemaine's business and community service sectors will meet today with consultants for Castlemaine 500, the world-first energy reduction behavioural trial now underway in the city.

Households, shops, factories and manufacturing enterprises will all be engaged in the quest to cut both energy and actual costs to consumers by between 15 and 30 percent over the next two years.

The consultants, who have established a project office at the Halford Street Enterprise Centre, will give an overview of the trial at the Criterion Hotel between 2pm and 4pm this afternoon.

Project team member Geoff Brown said there would be many opportunities for local businesses and community groups

to meet and share their ideas as the project gathers momentum.

"We have invited a wide range of businesses, groups and agencies to participate in a workshop upstairs at the Criterion Hotel," Mr Brown said of tomorrow's forum.

"At the workshop, we will provide an overview of the project and, together, explore ways that local businesses and groups can be actively involved in Castlemaine 500.

"Castlemaine 500 and its partners really need to find ways of making it simple and convenient for households to reduce their electricity and gas consumption.

"That means households in Castlemaine have access to all the prod-

ucts, services and advice they need right here in the local community," he said.

Mr Brown will also facilitate the project's first series of free, household workshops, which will start on Monday, August 7, with both an afternoon and evening session.

"Participating households will attend three fun and interactive workshops, learn relevant information and develop their own household action plans," Mr Brown said.

"By the end of the workshops, every household will identify ways of reducing their energy bills and create a more comfortable home, particularly in the cold winter months we are experiencing at the moment."

Subsequent workshops will be held on

Monday, August 21, and Monday, September 4, each one incorporating an afternoon and evening session, the first between 2pm and 4pm and the later one between 7pm and 9pm. Venues for these workshops will be widely publicised in coming weeks.

The ultimate aim of the project is to appoint local community leaders to drive it after an initial stage of setting up the project parameters and putting its processes and administration in place.

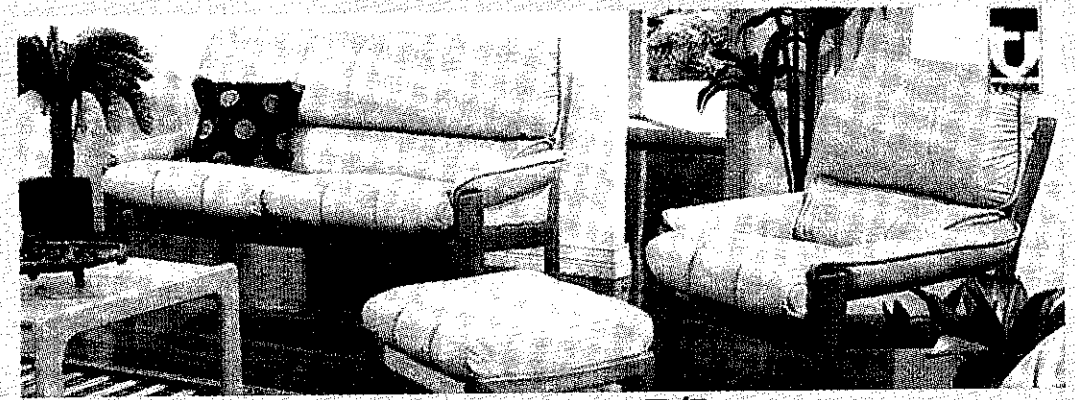
Castlemaine householders, local businesses, individuals and community groups wanting to be involved can contact the Castlemaine 500 project team by email at info@castlemaine500.org.au

Otherwise phone 5470-5934 or go to website www.castlemaine500.org.au

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