

Castlemaine's energy trial underway



Energy targets: Castlemaine 500 consultants Russell Fisher, Geoff Brown and Mark Sanders.

Castlemaine's two-year energy savings trial got underway last week when consultants for the Central Victoria Greenhouse Alliance met business and community leaders.

Castlemaine 500 is a world-first energy reduction behavioural change project, which will involve some 500 households.

Tangent Consulting's Geoff Brown said while the project intends to expand after its initial trials, it is concentrating on Castlemaine households in the first instance.

"There has been much interest from community groups and small businesses," he said, "let alone people from areas outside the trial. At this stage, C500 is concentrating its efforts on households."

He said the aim of the last week's workshop was to build a base of community leadership from which to springboard the next 48 months of trials and energy use changes.

"Our goal is to make it easy and convenient for local households to access the products, advice and services needed to reduce electricity and gas consumption.

"Support from local businesses and groups will be crucial."

Mr Brown said the two key criteria determining household eligibility for the trial are post-

codes (if your postcode is 3450, you are in!) and the length of time you plan to live at your current address.

Mr Brown said people who intend to be living at their current Castlemaine address for the next 12 months at least can register.

COLLECT DATA

"Because this project is all about the measurement household energy savings, we need to collect electricity and gas data to allow comparisons," Mr Brown said.

He urged all households to register and he also welcomed business and community group interest.

Registrations can be lodged at website www.castlemaine500.org.au or by leaving a message on the project hotline at 5470-5934.

"If taking control and reducing your electricity and gas bills is a priority for you, then please register," Mr Brown said.

A series of free householders workshops will start on Monday, August 7. Subsequent workshops will be held on Monday, August 21, and Monday, September 4.

There will be an afternoon and evening session on each day, the first between 2 pm and 4 pm and the later one between 7pm and 9pm.

Workshops will be held at Castlemaine's Theatre Royal.

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