

Council happenings . . .

with Mayor
Glenn Wall

Electricity Accounts & Energy Reduction.

The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) have approved an average 20.2 % price increase for regulated retail electricity prices from the 01 July for the 09/10 financial year. A typical Country Energy residential customer will pay around \$3.95 extra per week (dependant on usage) and small business customers will see an average increase of around \$12.40 per week (dependant on usage).

The justification for this price increase was due to higher wholesale energy costs; increased transmission and distribution charges (approved by the Australian Energy Regulator); an increase in the NSW Climate Change Fund (including Clean Coal Fund) and a CPI increase of 4.4%.

To reduce the impact of these increases and to reduce customers use of electricity, Country Energy have introduced a program "ENERGYANSWERS". This programme offers a dedicated "energy efficient" advice line on 1800 363 749. Customers would also have received an "Energyanswers" guide with their first bill after 1 July 2009.

Country Energy has also implemented a new on-line site to provide a one-stop shop for pricing and support programs (www.countryenergy.com.au/energyanswers). EnergyAnswer packs that provide a guide, a home energy audit, how to read your bill and information on Country Support are available from the Contact Centres. Community Information programs to increase awareness regarding energy efficiency will also be held throughout the Shire.

If any customers have any questions or have financial difficulties with regards to their electricity accounts contact Country Energy on 13 23 56.

"FOCUS" On Energy Reduction Kits Now Available For Loan.

The average household generates around 14 tonnes of carbon per year, and 66% of this is from electricity usage. Dungog Shire residents now have free access to Power Usage Meters providing the tools to help you conduct a home energy assessment.

The Power Usage Meter is a simple handheld device used to measure the electricity consumption and running costs of electrical appliances. The device calculates how much money it costs you to run your appliances per hour, quarter or year.

The unit can even calculate the power used by appliances like TVs when in standby mode. Standby power accounts for nearly 10% of household energy consumption. Simply turning appliances off at the wall households can save around \$100 per year.

FOCUS on Energy Reduction kits are free to borrow from local councils including Dungog. 14 Local Government Areas within the Hunter, Central and Mid North Coast are participating in the initiative which will see 120 kits available within 68 branch libraries and 3 council offices.

The FOCUS on Energy Reduction kits can be borrowed from the Dungog Shire Library at no cost for two weeks at a time. For further information about the FOCUS on Energy Reduction kits please contact Dan Bugitti during business hours on 4995 7777.

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