

Dear Just Change Supporters

We hope that 2009 has got off to a great start for all of you. Just Change has had a very busy past few months, with many exciting developments.

We are retrofitting houses!

Our pilot study working with ten homes has begun. We recently completed the retrofits of our first two houses in Footscray, and will complete our third house in Laverton next week. Our voluntary House Managers are currently managing the retrofits of our remaining houses by the middle of June.

If you know a tenant who is privately renting, who has a Health Care Card, does not have any existing insulation in their ceiling, and who may be interested in receiving a free energy saving retrofit in May/June or the second half of 2009, please get in touch with Just Change as soon as possible.

We received some great feedback from the tenants, home owners and real estate agents involved in our first retrofits. We have also had an increase in the number of organisations contacting us to provide support, referrals and to express interest in our work. Thanks particularly to Simply Energy, the Western Carbon Reduction Action Group, Laverton Community Centre, Altona Meadows Real Estate, the Alternative Technology Association, Good Sheppard, Kildonan Uniting Care, Community Welfare Northcote, Environment Victoria, SAIL, Neami North East, RMIT, Connecting Communities, MEFL, and the Moreland Community Legal Centre.

Spreading the good news

On March 21 our first retrofit was featured in *The Age*. The article is available here: <http://www.theage.com.au/environment/winners-all-round-as-renters-get-the-chance-to-go-green-20090320-94hr.html>.

Some of the good news messages featured in the article included the benefits of energy efficiency retrofits for tenants, such as an increase in their comfort and health and an annual reduction in their energy bills of approximately \$350.



Nick and Talitha, tenants in the first house retrofitted by Just Change. *The Age*, 21-09-09.

The article also promoted the benefits of energy savings installations to owners, including possible increases in tenancy periods of up to 400% (shown in a recent New Zealand study) and free retrofits worth approximately \$2000.

It was great to publicise an outcome where a tenant was able to improve the energy efficiency of their home with Just Change. "These are things we had thought about but never thought we would be able to do in a rental house," said Nick Ray (pictured) the tenant of our first retrofitted house in Footscray.

Just Change's second house will be featured in an upcoming article in ReNew magazine. Tenant of the house, Jonathan Cornford, said that he and his family had tried and failed many times to find a way to insulate their rental home using existing programs. They were relieved to hear about Just Change, as "insulation is such a big need in terms of rental properties" and Jonathan and his family had been considering whether they could put old mattresses in the ceiling to keep in the heat over winter.

We were also interviewed on Triple R radio station in February and we will be presenting at Sustainability Victoria's Connecting Communities Forum later in May.

We are in the process of organising further media to highlight Just Change, our partners and the benefits of energy efficiency. A big thank you to Imogen Schoots who is advising Just Change on media.

Likely savings from Just Change installations

In the average Victorian house:

- Savings from ceiling insulation are \$200 per year for 15+ years¹.
- Replacing six incandescent lights with CFLs will save \$48 per year for 10 years²
- Upgrading to a low flow showerhead will save over \$100 per year³.

Just Change's installations can create an estimated savings on energy bills of \$348 a year

The above is a guide only. Rental properties often use less energy than the Victorian average.

Insulation rebate for renters

The new Federal Government rebate scheme for up to \$1000 of ceiling insulation will be used in our ten-house pilot. Working with the Federal Government, we have been able to refine the regulations to allow the rebate to be paid back to either tenants or owners in an installed home.

These changes will make the process easier for tenants and owners wanting to install insulation, and make the rental homes warmer in winter and cooler in summer.

For more information on the insulation rebate for renters go to <http://www.environment.gov.au/energyefficiency/insulation/renters/guidelines.html>

Also check out our post at <http://www.greenrenters.org/2009/05/special-insulation-rebates/>, guiding renters through how to install up to \$1,000 of ceiling insulation for free.

Thank you!

Thank you all for your continued support.

We would like to particularly thank our volunteer house managers who have donated their considerable time and energy to this project, as well as our funders Sustainability Victoria and the Real Estate Institute of Victoria who make our installations possible. We'd also like to acknowledge Simply Energy, Ecovantage, Construct Ramsay and Camberwell Roofing for their support and goodwill as we pilot an improved process that helps tenants, agents and owners make rental properties more energy efficient.

Finally, our advisory board members continue to provide us with direction and support, so thank you to John Thwaites, Alan Pears, Mike Hill, Ian Porter, Annie Bolitho, Enzo Raimondo and Katrina Woolfe.

Coming next...

News of our completed houses, our pilot research report with all our learnings from our pilot, and plans for taking energy savings to more low income households in 2009/2010....

**Wishing you all a cosy winter,
The Just Change team**

¹ DEWHA, *Energy Efficient Homes Package*, see <http://tinyurl.com/baofez>

² Sustainability Victoria, *Victorians urged to change the globe and save*, see <http://tinyurl.com/cgs838>

³ AAP. *Cut your energy use and save hundreds*, see <http://tinyurl.com/dhq9td>