

ZERO CARBON AUSTRALIA BUILDINGS PLAN

Australia's buildings were not designed to meet many of the challenges we face today.

In an era of inexpensive energy little attention was paid to insulating houses because we could heat and cool them affordably with gas and electricity.

Even when much of the hot and cool air escaped outside almost immediately, it didn't seem to matter.

Were we also less aware of the damage that burning coal and gas were doing to the atmosphere by creating greenhouse gases.

In the past, we lacked the extraordinary materials that now allow us to insulate our houses so that they require very little energy to heat or cool. We now also have more efficient technologies to provide heating and cooling, lighting and other services. These use much less energy than in the past.

An electric heat pump (air-conditioner) can now provide our living room with the same amount of heat as a gas heater, using one-fifth the energy and for less the cost. It will also keep the room cool in summer.

A heat pump driven hot water systems can provide similar cost and energy savings compared to the old gas and electric systems.

And this is even before we experience the steep export-driven gas price rises expected over the next few years.

A modest investment in insulation and draft proofing can cut down energy use and bills even more.

While there is no doubt that individuals can benefit enormously from insulating their building and swapping their gas heaters for electric heat pumps, if Australia is to meet the challenges of climate change and rising energy costs within a meaningful timeframe, we need to act decisively on many levels.

If we act decisively, the benefits and savings that can be achieved by individuals can also be achieved by the nation as a whole.

The Zero Carbon Australia Buildings plan is the first national plan to transform Australia's building stock to meet these challenges.

Source: <http://decarboni.se/publications/zero-carbon-australia-buildings-plan/1-summary>