

# VICTORIAN HEALTHY HOMES PROGRAM

## CASE STUDIES

The case studies and testimonials below are from a home upgrade program undertaken in Victoria between 2013–2016<sup>1</sup>. The project was very similar to the Victorian Healthy Homes Program and the examples provided are designed to assist you, as a potential participant, with an understanding of the possible improvements and benefits that your household could receive.



## CASE STUDY 1: EDNA<sup>2</sup>

Edna was an elderly pensioner with significant health issues and little income. She lived alone in her small, semi-detached house that was in poor repair.

Edna had severe arthritis that was made worse by the cold weather. In an effort to reduce the pain and stiffness of the arthritis she used four heaters throughout the house, an electric blanket on her bed and a throw rug when in the living area.

Despite all her efforts she was having difficulty keeping warm and was concerned about the cost of running all these appliances.

Edna received several support services from the local council community care team and therefore was invited to participate in the government-funded, free, home upgrade program.

**“...I have noticed it is a lot better, more comfortable. The heater is very easy, it works at the press of a button. The most important thing for me has been the improved comfort and hopefully it will cut down bills a bit. I would recommend having insulation and a new heater to anybody else”**

Edna said “I decided to become involved in this study because I was told it could make me more comfortable and aimed to help me reduce my bills. My greatest concern about the energy usage in this house is the heating.”

When the assessor visited Edna’s home they discovered that the portable heaters weren’t functioning very well and were costing more to use than a single permanent heating system would cost to heat her home. They also concluded that the ceiling insulation could be improved to keep her warm.

As a result of the assessment, additional ceiling insulation and an efficient reverse-cycle heater/cooler was installed.

As a result of the home upgrade there was a 50 per cent reduction in electricity usage and a \$150/month reduction in energy costs.



## CASE STUDY 2: MAUREEN<sup>2</sup>

Maureen lived in her brick veneer home with her son. The home was really cold in winter dropping as low as 8 degrees Celsius.

Maureen signed up to the program to see if the home upgrades could improve the warmth of the house without increasing the cost of energy usage.

When the assessor visited Maureen's house they discovered that in order to keep the home warm Maureen's energy usage was five times that of a well-insulated two bedroom home.

Following the assessment Maureen's home received upgrades including additional ceiling insulation and draught sealing.

As a result the indoor temperature increased by 7 degrees Celsius to an average of 15 degrees in the winter. The electricity used in the house reduced by nearly 30 per cent compared to the previous winter. Maureen saved over \$20/month on her energy bills.

### **Additional testimonials from householders that received home upgrades in the Energy Saver Study:**

Julie<sup>2</sup> had reservations initially when she was offered free home improvements, but after the home upgrade works she said:

**"I had my doors sealed and insulation placed in the roof. Now it stays warmer when days are cooler and it warms up quicker and holds the heat."**

When Mary<sup>2</sup> was asked about the home upgrades she said:

**"The minute that the draught seals were put on I noticed... there is something different here and you wouldn't think that a small thing like a draught seal around a door or window could make such a difference. I felt it immediately and similarly, with the new insulation, it was just like a warm blanket had descended over the house, I was thrilled."**

<sup>1</sup> Case studies are from the Energy Saver Study, a program delivered by the South East Councils Climate Change Alliance <http://www.seccca.org.au/project/energy-saver-study/>

<sup>2</sup> Not real names