

Title	Consumers want energy- efficiency facts on homes – new research shows
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Zero carbon house - South Australia

Overwhelming support for a national voluntary home energy efficiency disclosure system, designed to empower consumers to rate and value homes with lower running costs and health, comfort and sustainability benefits, was revealed in new research published today by the *CRC for Low Carbon Living* (CRCLCL).

Results show that 92 per cent of housing consumers want energy efficiency details revealed in building inspection reports; 82 per cent at open inspection and 72 per cent in property advertising, with half of home

buyers and renters willing to pay for this information.

Funded by the CRCLCL, industry members of the *EnergyFit Homes* initiative* and the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage, the two-year research project also revealed that 90 per cent of building professionals and tradespersons supported providing this information at the time of sale or lease.

Called the *EnergyFit Homes Project*, the research was carried out by teams from the CSIRO and Common Capital and overseen by CRCLCL program leader Dr Stephen White.

“The research’s key focus was to understand industry and consumer support for a national voluntary disclosure system that would measure, benchmark and communicate information on the energy performance of existing homes, especially at the time of sale or lease, and provide recommendations on how to implement such a system,” said Dr White.

“The results overwhelmingly show that such a system would be accepted in Australia. It would also bring financial benefits. For example, in Europe and North America where mandatory home energy rating schemes exist, the value of energy efficient homes rose between 3 per cent and 14 per cent when high energy efficiency performance was disclosed to buyers.”

“The research echoes this overseas experience. Using a simulated property marketing website as part of our research, Australian home buyers expressed more interest in visiting high energy-efficiency star rated homes than homes without a rating, and placed more value on these homes as well.” he said.

The study's key recommendation was that a single, national home energy rating system be established and delivered by the market with credible, independent oversight by government, industry research and consumer groups. This system would provide ratings, information and tips on the energy efficiency and comfort of homes, and could be delivered at low cost, by a broad range of trained existing building trades and property professionals.

The recommended system design is estimated to deliver a net public benefit of between \$42 to \$535 million, 158 GWh to 1,827 GWh in annual electricity savings and \$63 million to \$733 million in annual household bill savings, and \$437 to \$5,068 million for industry from additional investments in household energy efficiency.

Lead research author, Henry Adams – a policy specialist on the project and director of [Common Capital](#) – said it was time an energy rating system for consumers was introduced, similar to what has been created with GreenPower or NABERS for commercial buildings.

“A national home energy ratings system is a no brainer: Government, industry and consumers alike agree that we need a common language to understand and communicate the comfort, efficiency and running costs of existing homes,” he said.

Luke Menzel, CEO of the [Energy Efficiency Council](#) (EEC) – which recently launched [Australian Energy Efficiency Policy Handbook](#) and also helped fund the study – said that smart energy use can drive economic growth and improve health and wellbeing across the board, including the residential property market.

“Disclosure of home energy performance is a basic consumer protection. A national voluntary disclosure scheme would help inform home buyers and renters on two critical issues – comfort and ongoing energy costs – that are really hard to judge before moving into a new home,” he said.

For more information email info@lowcarbonlivingcrc.com.au

*The *EnergyFit Homes Initiative* is a collaborative approach to unlocking the value of energy efficient homes for buyers, renters and investors. This project examines the factors that motivate the purchase and lease of low carbon homes. It involves industry (CSR, Stockland, the Australian Windows Association, Fletcher Insulation, Knauf Insulation, AGL Energy, the Clean Energy Council, the Energy Efficiency Council, Low Energy Supplies & Services and the Centre for Liveability Real Estate), government (NSW Office of Environment and Heritage) and research organisations (CSIRO, Swinburne University and UNSW).

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The CRC for Low Carbon Living (CRCLCL) is a national research and innovation hub that supports Australian industry to be globally competitive in the low carbon built environment sector.

It brings together property, planning, engineering and policy organisations with leading Australian researchers to develop new social, technological and policy tools for reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the built environment.

A key aim of the CRCLCL is to help cut Australia's residential and commercial carbon emissions by 10 mega tonnes by 2020. It will do this by developing opportunities for lower-embodied carbon manufacturing, creating efficiency and productivity in the built environment sector, empowering and engaging communities, increasing the evidence base for government policy and planning, and building the sector's capacity for high quality research, education and training.

The CRCLCL is supported by the Cooperative Research Centres programme, an Australian Government initiative.