



Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why change over from incandescent light bulbs to LED or compact fluorescent bulbs?

The Federal Government recently legislated to ban incandescent light bulbs from sale in Australia by 2010. What this means is that everyone will HAVE to change. The purpose of this is that it is a simple action to reduce energy usage and thus greenhouse gases.

2. Why the urgency?

There is real urgency here for ALL of us to act. An article in the Melbourne AGE on Tuesday May 22nd (<http://www.theage.com.au/articles/2007/05/22/1179601340054.html>) reports that studies of the most recent data shows that reality is worse than the worst-case scenarios predicted by the scientists. If the trend of water and energy usage continues even our coal-fired power stations will be vulnerable – with the subsequent cascading impacts on us all.

3. Where did the Change a Million Light Bulbs Project begin?

The project began in 2006 as an idea of a year 10 student (Linh Do) from Braybrook Secondary College in Melbourne's western suburbs (www.changeamillionlightbulbs.org). The project was one designed within the guidelines of the ruMAD program run by the Education Foundation (www.educationfoundation.org). The intention of the project was to empower young people to make a difference to climate change. The fund raising business arose out of looking at how the idea could actually be made real.

4. What is the purpose of the Change a Million Light Bulbs Project?

While one intention is have over a million light bulbs changed - this is not the main intention. The main intention is to empower people to see they can make a difference to climate change. Climate change is THE global issue of this generation. Like the cold war and the threat of nuclear war previously, many people experience fear, powerlessness and resignation about this issue. This fear, resignation and powerlessness affect the fabric of society and the attitude of individuals and society. If people experience being able to make a difference and individually act on this issue then they are empowered to act on other issues in their lives.

5. Why don't we just buy the compact fluorescent bulbs from Coles or Bunnings? They appear much cheaper!

As with most things, you get what you pay for. The cheaper pack versions of CFLs that you can buy at certain retail stores look excellent on face value. However, those CFL bulbs are made from cheaper quality materials. This means that the light bulbs have a poorer quality light output and, as they are used, their quality of light diminishes quickly (even if they are rated as lasting longer). It is these quality of light bulbs that give CFLs a bad name.

6. What other advantages do the mini-Aladdin light bulbs have over other light bulbs?

The mini-Aladdins are much smaller than other equivalent CFL bulbs. One of the issues people have with the normal CFL bulbs are that they are very long (particularly the 20 watt versions). The mini-Aladdin bulbs provided were chosen because they fit within most light coverings. They can be up to 2 centimetres shorter than other equivalent wattage CFLs.

7. We have downlights – what can we do about them?

In 2008 we have been able to source two forms of downlights. We have 240V GU10 fitting CFL downlights (available upon request) and LED downlights (12V MR16 and 240V GU10). LED lighting is an exciting new innovation which is just starting to come on the market. In many applications LED lighting is used for mood lighting (in stores, lighting up walls, etc). They do not yet have the same amount of light output as a standard 50 watt downlight.

8. Where are the best places to use these compact fluorescent light bulbs?

The best places for CFL bulbs are in places where the lights are on for a while. Dining rooms, lounge rooms, kitchens, bedrooms, reading lights, night lights, etc. **The CFL bulbs provide by us cannot be used with dimmers.** Avoid using these bulbs in area where the lights are switched on and off continuously (eg. hallways) as this will shorten the life of the bulbs.

9. Are there dimmable versions of the CFLs?

There are dimmable CFLs which are naturally more expensive. If you want to find out where you can get them please contact us.

10. What do people do about disposing of CFL bulbs (and even the fluorescent tubes that most schools use?)

This is from Tanya Ha's article in a great Green lifestyle magazine www.gmagazine.com.au

. "CFLs and fluorescent tubes contain small amounts of mercury, which is toxic to wildlife and animals. Behind the scenes at Australia's waste authorities there is a mad rush to develop appropriate collection, recycling and/or disposal programs for CFLs. The NSW and Victorian governments are collecting CFLs through their existing hazardous waste collection programs: Household Chemical Cleanout (www.cleanout.com.au) and Detox your home (www.sustainability.vic.gov.au) respectively. If you break a fluorescent light put on a dust mask and carefully sweep up all the fragments and particles and put them in a plastic bag. Wipe the area with a damp paper towel and also put the towel in the plastic bag and seal it. Dispose of it through the hazardous waste program. Do not use a vacuum cleaner to clean up as this can disperse the mercury. Finally ventilate the room."

11. But if there is mercury in the CFLs why should I buy them?

The mercury that is in a CFL bulb is as much as the dot on this i. This is far, far less than what used to be in the mercury thermometers we used to have 15 – 20 years ago. Also, burning coal causes mercury to be released into the atmosphere. In fact, we will release less mercury into the environment by replacing the incandescents with CFLs (or better yet – LED lights!).

12. Are there any good websites to check out so I can understand better how to take action on climate change and saving energy around the home?

There are many great websites. We recommend you begin with the following:

<http://www.greenhouse.gov.au/energy/cfls/index.html>: Government information about compact fluorescent lights (and the legislation)

<http://www.greenhouse.gov.au/local/motivating/index.html>: Handbook for motivating home action on energy saving

<http://www.greenhouse.gov.au/local/households.html>: What households can do about saving energy

<http://www.onebillionbulbs.com/> : A global climate change project!

<http://www.climatecrisis.net/> : An Inconvenient Truth website

<http://www.acfonline.org.au/> : The Australian Conservation Foundation

13. Are there any other campaigns that you support?

Check out what we are doing about standby (www.standbysaturday.com.au) and offering a range of energy saving products (www.coolgreen.com.au).

14. Who do we contact if we want someone to present a talk about climate change and getting into action?

Contact Adrian on 0413 036 382 if you want presenters for schools, or organisations, want audits done, or want someone to talk about climate change and how people can take simple actions to save energy, money and the environment.