

Flick The Switch To Green

Having recently seen the movie by Al Gore, "An Inconvenient Truth" – showing the clear link between rapidly rising CO₂ in the atmosphere and Global Warming – I left the cinema feeling an urgent need to do something to make a difference, but what? The suggestions made at the end of the movie all seemed like such trivial, token gestures, that were hardly likely to make any difference at all.

When I returned home I looked at our last electricity bill – a standard bill from Energy Australia. I turned it over and was horrified to see that in just one quarter our modest three bedroom home had consumed enough electricity to pump 3,254 kg (3.2 tonnes) of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. This being an unavoidable result from our current reliance on coal fired power generation, I knew following the kids around the house, turning off the stream of lights and radios etc. left in their wake would barely make a dent in this, so I looked into alternate sources of energy supply.

After considering the range of options, I rang Origin Energy – simple. I could chose power from Hydro, Wind or Solar, or a mix of these. I chose the simplest option being a mix of Hydro and Wind. For the cost of a local phone call and the princely sum of \$2 per week, I have now eliminated our 3.2 tonnes per quarter (approx. 12-13 tonnes per annum) of CO₂ being pumped into the air we breathe.

When I told a friend what I had done, he assumed I had somehow climbed up onto the roof and installed solar panels and a wind turbine. Hardly! This was all done with just one phone call. They sent the confirming paper work the next day and I have a 10 day cooling off period in case I get buyers remorse. Now, every time I pay our electricity bill my money will go to a "green" supplier of sustainable energy for their hydro-generated or wind-generated power and that amount of power I have used will be fed into the national power grid by those "clean" producers. More importantly 3.2 tonnes of carbon will not be pumped into the atmosphere every three months, thanks to me. I now really feel like I have made a difference.