

Insulating renters

Write to *ReNew* and tell us what you did to insulate your rental house.

AFTER A LONG hot summer, which is slowly turning towards the cool days of winter, many tenants are simply dreaming of the day they live in an insulated house. Insulation decreases the need for artificial cooling or heating and thereby cuts power bills and greenhouse gas emissions. It could also mean a better night's sleep under a roof that's had some buffer from the sun all day.

Negotiating non-essential changes to a rental property can be a hard task though, so much so that some tenants just don't bother trying. Sustainable improvements are at the bottom of the list for some landlords compared to urgent matters such as a leaky roof. Asking for

these changes via a real estate agent can also be tricky for those who don't know their landlord.

Even the government is backing insulation these days with more financial incentives as part of its plans to stimulate the economy. The Energy Efficient Homes package announced in January offers up to \$1600 worth of free insulation in owner-occupied properties and a rebate up to \$1600 for homeowners who install solar hot water. But did you know that up to \$1000 is available to landlords who install insulation in a rental property?

This \$1000 rebate is available now and replaces the \$500 federal rebate for insulation in rental houses. Uptake in the past has been low.

With a higher rebate available to landlords, will this give the rebate the fillip it needs and encourage more people to install insulation in rental homes?

In an attempt to open the lines of communication between landlords and tenants, we want renters to send us their anecdotes on how they went about getting insulation installed. Write to *Re-*



New magazine and tell us how you successfully negotiated with your landlord to get insulation installed at home. Did you write a letter, offer to cover extra expenses ... what worked for you? What problems did you encounter on the way and how were they fixed? Or if you are a landlord tell us what made you take the step to insulate your rental property. Did your tenants twist your arm, or was it entirely voluntary?

Email your tips and anecdotes of no more than 300 words to renew@ata.org.au. We'll publish a selection in future issues of *ReNew* in a bid to find out what works for landlord and tenant when insulating rental properties. Share your insulation story so that others can see how it's done! *

Energy Efficient Homes package

- Free ceiling insulation worth up to \$1,600 to all Australian home owner-occupiers of currently uninsulated homes; or
- A \$1,600 rebate on the costs of installing solar hot water systems at owner-occupied homes
- A rebate for landlords on the costs of insulating their rental properties (up to \$1000 available).

New guide for renters!

Even renters can make changes to their home to make it more comfortable, save money and reduce their environmental impact. The *Renters Guide to Sustainable Living*, published by the Alternative Technology Association, shows how it's done. The 16 page booklet is a free resource for anyone looking to lighten their carbon footprint as a tenant.

The booklet also has handy information about how to negotiate changes with a landlord, rebates available as well as eligible tax deductions. There are tips for the whole

house, showing room-by-room how to cut greenhouse gas emissions.

To order your free copy email renters@ata.org.au with your address, or send a stamped self-addressed envelope to ATA, Level 1, 39 Little Collins St, Melbourne VIC 3000. Envelope should be A5 with \$1.10 stamp. Bulk copies can be ordered by emailing the address above. The guide is also available for download from www.ata.org.au

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