

Ecosmart – getting more bang for your energy buck

FIRST THERE were Ecobulbs ... now it's all going one step further with EcoSmart homes.

North Canterbury is effectively the guinea pig for the trial project launched by MainPower and Energy Mad. Its aim is to make homes warmer and healthier, while also slashing power bills

It all began in October with a small number of randomly selected homes in Rangiora and Kaiapoi being posted an offer to take part. Fifty homes chose to participate and now another 500 homes are being invited to get involved.

MainPower sees EcoSmartHome as a step up from the Ecobulb project. MainPower's commercial manager, Todd Mead, described it as "a logical extension" to MainPower's warm homes project.

The way it works is participating householders get a free home visit from an energy assessor, who calculates household appliance power usage and recommends ways to reduce power consumption.

In the case of 82-year-old Ian Sutherland, of Rangiora, that resulted in a decision to have a Fujitsu heat pump installed in the hallway.

"We already had a heat pump in the lounge, but it wasn't doing anything for the back of the house and the bedroom area. Matthew Cutler-Welsh, the assessor, came along and did a really good job and ended up recommending a heat pump in the hall," he said.

The project partners have secured bulk deals for a range of energy efficient appliances including not only high quality heat pumps, but also clean forms of wood and pellet fires, insulation, solar water heating, Ecobulbs and low flow showerheads.

Participating homes can choose a five-year, interest-free finance option to pay for the appliances.

MainPower and Energy Mad say the main North Canterbury project alone would save North Cantabrians \$7.5m on power bills over 10 years.



Getting "EcoSmart" in Rangiora is Ian Sutherland, just one of a number of North Cantabrians taking part in a new MainPower and Energy Mad initiative.

PHOTO: KIM NEWTH

■ For more information, phone 0800 4 ECOSMART (4 326 762) or go to www.ecosmarthome.co.nz