

Case study – Mittagong RSL Club



RSL slashes power consumption by one quarter

Mittagong RSL Club has reduced its electricity consumption by 25 per cent and saved an estimated \$130,000 in annual energy costs by implementing recommendations from its recent Energy Saver audit. The audit not only allowed the club to counteract soaring power prices, but was completed with little or no business interruption.

When Mittagong RSL Club General Manager Craig Madsen found out about the Office of Environment and Heritage's Energy Saver program he was immediately interested.

'We had a pretty good idea about where potential energy savings might be made, but needed to quantify and qualify them to justify the capital expenditure,' says Madsen. 'The advice from Energy Saver was brilliant and the audit helped validate our plans.'

'A lot of people approach our club with energy saving opportunities. If we're unsure about how to proceed, we now refer their proposals to our energy auditors. I highly recommend that any business looking to achieve energy savings do an audit first.'

The Mittagong RSL Club building began life as a function centre in the late 1960s. The club moved into the premises in 1976. Today, the club has 125 employees and its facilities include a 380-seat auditorium, 160-person capacity function rooms, the Springs Restaurant and The Homestead Bistro. ►

In brief

An Energy Saver audit helped Mittagong RSL Club identify and price a range of opportunities for reducing its power consumption including an upgrade to the air conditioning system and a lighting retrofit. Completed with little or no business disruption, these projects have enabled the club to reduce its power consumption by 25 per cent and keep a lid on rising energy costs.

Results

- Reduction in power consumption of 25 per cent.
- Estimated annual savings of \$130,000 (at 2010 electricity prices).
- Average payback period of 3.3 years for all projects.
- Annual reduction in carbon pollution of more than 750 tonnes.



- Following the Energy Saver audit in early 2010, the club has implemented seven energy saving opportunities at a total cost of \$436,000. 'These initiatives have enabled us to reduce our energy consumption by around 25 per cent,' says Madsen. 'Our energy contract came up for renewal recently and our power costs increased by 22 per cent. So these changes have meant we were able to keep a lid on our power costs and even save some.'

Mittagong RSL's improvements ranged from relatively simple projects, like replacing energy inefficient lights (e.g. halogens with LEDs) and de-lamping over-lit areas, to a major upgrade of the club's heating, ventilation and air-conditioning (HVAC) system.

As part of the HVAC upgrade, two water cooled air-conditioning cooling towers were replaced with an air-cooled system and 14 refrigeration compressor motors with a single rack compressor at a cost of \$365,000 and a payback period of six years.

'The old cooling towers were a real headache because of the potential for legionella,' says Madsen. 'From a risk management point of view, not having to test our systems every month is so much simpler.'

'And the [refrigerant] gas for the old compressor motors was being phased out, which made them very costly to run. The new rack compressor will pay for itself in five years and uses more environmentally friendly gases.'

The audit also identified that motion detectors for outdoor heaters weren't working and had to be adjusted, and it recommended timer switchers be installed on equipment in the function rooms.

From an energy saving perspective, Madsen says the club's biggest challenge now is continuing to encourage positive employee behaviours regarding energy saving. 'We don't have an automated building management system, so we still rely on staff to flick off switches when a room is not being used,' says Madsen. 'Our community has become far more conservation conscious in the past two years, so everyone from our staff to our Board of Directors and customers is now very interested in our energy saving initiatives and want to know that we're doing our bit for the environment.'

'In the first year after completing our Energy Saver audit, we reduced our carbon emissions by 445 tonnes. With the new HVAC system installed towards the end of the 12 months, we'll continue to see further significant reductions in carbon emissions.'

Your next step

To find out how your business can access a subsidised Energy Saver audit contact the Energy Saver team:

Email energysaver@savepower.nsw.gov.au

Call 02 8837 6000

Visit environment.nsw.gov.au/sustainbus
savepower.nsw.gov.au/energysaver