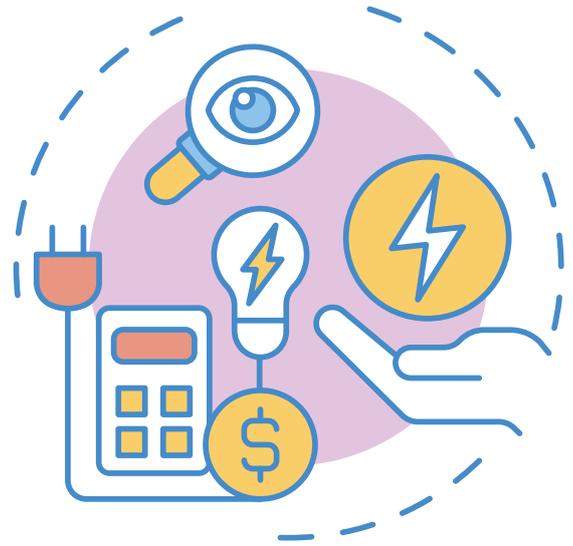# Saving Victorians millions on their power bills

Delivering the $250 Power Saving Bonus

The Victorian Government $250 Power Saving Bonus program aimed to help Victorians pay their energy bills and encouraged them to compare energy offers to save money.

The Power Saving Bonus Outreach Program ran in three 'phases' – January 2021 to January 2022, July 2022 to March 2023, and March 2023 to August 2023 and Victorians could receive one bonus in each phase. The program ended in August 2023.

Good Shepherd and Neighbourhood Houses Victoria (NHVic) collaborated to support people who may not have heard about the program, didn't have good access to a computer or the internet, or needed extra help to apply for the bonus.

Good Shepherd provided telephone support, and in-person assistance was available at over 200 participating Neighbourhood Houses across Victoria, with 57,352 applications approved and $14,338,000 of direct financial support provided.

57,352
PSB applications approved

$14,338,000
of direct financial support provided to Victorians

76%
of participants were over 55 years

95%
of participants spoke English as a first language

47%
of participants were living alone

Good Shepherd
Australia New Zealand

Neighbourhood Houses Victoria™

Funded by

VICTORIA
State Government

Working together to improve energy affordability

The program eased financial stress for Victorians

With the increases to gas and electricity prices, and recent rises in the cost of living in Australia, participants reported that they were increasingly unable to pay for their energy, rent and grocery bills. Many program participants were concerned over increases in their gas and electricity bills.

Good Shepherd and Neighbourhood Houses were able to support clients who needed additional help applying to access the $250 bonus to help them cope with these rising costs. A survey of Outreach Program clients found that:

80%

said they were experiencing financial stress (N=60)

94%

of clients who reported financial stress believed the $250 bonus would lower their stress (N=48)

The Program offered more than just the $250

Community Outreach workers at Good Shepherd and Neighbourhood Houses worked with people to make sure they were getting the best offer on their energy bills.

Outreach workers also helped people find other ways to save money on their power bills, made sure they were getting all the concessions they were eligible for, and if needed, helped them switch providers.

Victorians learned other ways to reduce energy costs and save on energy bills

Good Shepherd and Neighbourhood Houses outreach workers also provided energy affordability support.

Staff reported that the Outreach Program provided an important opportunity to sit down with people and discuss what their needs may be, help them to understand what offers may be available to them, and explain how they can go about accessing these offers.

Additional cost-cutting measures included:

- ensuring concession entitlements were applied for future and past bills
- helping participants access the Victorian Default Offer and the Utility Relief Grant Scheme,
- providing at-home energy cost saving information.

Surveys showed that program participants said that the Outreach Program increased their awareness of energy affordability supports and other ways to reduce their energy costs.

The face to face and phone service meant more people could benefit from the program and $250 rebate.

88%

of clients said the support increased their awareness of other energy saving programs and offers (N=60)

89%

of clients said the support gave them ideas on how to reduce their energy costs (N=60)

"Thank you so much to the community house for helping me and so many others in our community. I don't have a computer or family that can or will help me with all the things we now need to do on a computer. I don't like driving far, only local. They are always there to help me."

Christine*, PSB4 program participant

"Having people come in to access this service has helped us reach more in our community. They have engaged with the Community House more than ever before."

Neighbourhood House staff member

"It's not just about the money,… but it's also about providing the information about the other supports and the Utility Relief Grant. So many people that just would never have had the opportunity to even hear about it through their electricity providers or their gas providers… a lot of people don't know that it's even available. So, I think while we have them on the phone, we're able to just provide so much more."

Good Shepherd staff member

Pictured: Minister for Climate Action in Victoria, Lily D'Ambrosio (2nd from the left in the back row) and community members

Saving Julie more than $250

Julie*, a woman aged over 70 who is living alone, attended Seville Community House to submit her PSB application. Seville Community House staff reviewed how much Julie was paying on her electricity bill and tried to compare her plan on Victorian Energy Compare. However, when this was attempted, the portal did not accept Julie's rates as they were so high. Julie was on high percentage pay on time discount and did not realise her rates were so high until she failed to pay on time, which cost her an extra $300. Staff phoned Julie's provider on her behalf and spent over an hour discussing this with them. Julie just wanted to leave her plan as it was. Knowing that this would only benefit her provider, staff persisted and managed to successfully move Julie to a better plan. Julie decided to return to Seville Community House when she receives her next bill, so staff can support her to do a thorough comparison and determine if there is a better offer with an alternative provider for her.

About Good Shepherd Australia New Zealand

Good Shepherd has worked in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand since 1863. We provide programs and services that support women, girls, and their families to be safe, well, strong and connected. Our clients are at the centre of what we do. We are focused on responding to their emerging needs and on providing innovative, locally tailored responses. Our services are complemented by research, advocacy, and policy development that address the underlying structural causes of injustice and inequality to pave a way for a better tomorrow.

About Neighbourhood Houses Victoria

Established in 1979, Neighbourhood Houses Victoria (NHVic) is the peak body for the Neighbourhood House sector in Victoria. As the peak body, we represent a membership of more than 400 independent, community-based organisations spread across rural, regional, and metro Victoria. We are a trusted source of strategic leadership, state-wide advocacy, advice and information, timely research and data analysis, professional development, and sector promotion. We aim to support Neighbourhood Houses in the ongoing development of vibrant, inclusive, and connected communities through effective community development. Overall, our vision is to create strong, safe, and vibrant communities that value diversity and gender equity.

Working with over 200 Neighbourhood Houses

Alamein Neighbourhood & Learning
Alexandra Community Hub
Allwood Neighbourhood House
Amaroo Neighbourhood Centre
Anakie & District Community Group
Anglesea community House
Angliss Neighbourhood House
Ararat Neighbourhood House
Arrabri Community House
Attwood House Community Centre
Avenue Neighbourhood House at Eley
Bairnsdale Neighbourhood House
Balla Balla Community Centre
Ballan & District Community House & Adult Education Centre
Ballarat East Neighbourhood House
Ballarat Neighbourhood Centre
Ballarat North Neighbourhood House
Banksia Gardens Community Services
Bass Valley Community Group
Beaconsfield Neighbourhood Centre
Beaufort Community House & Learning Centre
Bellarine Living and Learning Centre
Belvedere Community Centre
Bemm River Community Recreation Centre
Bendigo Neighbourhood Hub
Bennettswood Neighbourhood House
Berwick Neighbourhood Centre
Birallee Park Neighbourhood House
Birchip Neighbourhood House
Bonnie Doon Community Group
Boort Resource and Information Centre
Box Hill South Neighbourhood House
Brentwood Park Neighbourhood House
Briagolong Community House
Burwood Neighbourhood House
Camperdown and District Community House
Castlemaine Community House
Caulfield South Community House
Central Ringwood Community Centre
Charlton Neighbourhood House
Chelsea Heights Community Centre
Cheltenham Community Centre
Chiltern Neighbourhood House
Churchill Neighbourhood Centre
Cire Services
Cire Services-Chirnside Park
Cire Services-Yarra Junction
Clota Cottage Neighbourhood House
Cloverdale Community Centre
Clunes Neighbourhood House
Cobram Community House
Cohuna Neighbourhood House
Colac Neighbourhood House
Comm Unity Plus Services Ltd
Corinella and District Community Centre
Corryong Neighbourhood Centre
Cranbourne Community House
Creeds Farm Living and Learning Centre
Creswick Neighbourhood Centre
Crossenvale Community Group
Dallas Neighbourhood House
Dandenong Community and Learning Centre
Dargo Community House
Darley Neighbourhood House and Learning Centre
Daylesford Neighbourhood Centre
Deans Marsh Community Cottage
Diamond Valley Learning Centre
Dingley Village Neighbourhood Centre
Dixon House Neighbourhood Centre
Djerriwarrh Employment & Education Services
Donald Learning Group
Doveton Neighbourhood Learning Centre
Duke Street Community House
Eaglehawk Community House
Echuca Neighbourhood House

Elwood St Kilda Neighbourhood Learning Centre
Endeavour Hills Neighbourhood Centre
Farnham Street Neighbourhood Learning Centre
Fawkner Neighbourhood House
Flowerdale Community House
Forrest & District Neighbourhood House
Foundation Learning Centre
Fusion Oakleigh Youth and Community Centre
Geelong West Neighbourhood House
Gellibrand Community House
Girgarre Community Group
Glen Eira Adult Learning Centre
Glen Park Community Centre
Glenroy Neighbourhood Learning Centre
Goonawarra Neighbourhood House
Greenbrook Community House
Grovedale Neighbourhood House
Haddon Community Learning Centre
Hallam Community Learning Centre
Hamilton Community House
Hampton Community Centre
Hampton Park Care Group
Harrow Neighbourhood House
Healesville Living and Learning Centre
Heathcote Community House
Heyfield Community Resource Centre
Holden Street Neighbourhood House
Hopetoun and District Neighbourhood House
Horsham Neighbourhood House
Inglewood Community Neighbourhood House
Inverloch Community House
Jamieson Way Community Centre
Jika Jika Community Centre
Kangaroo Flat Community Group
Kensington Neighbourhood House
Kerang and District Community Centre
Kerrie Neighbourhood House
Kerrimuir Neighbourhood House
Kew Neighbourhood Learning Centre
Kilmore Community Centre
King Valley Learning Exchange
Kinglake Ranges Neighbourhood House
Koonung Cottage Community House
Kororoit Creek Neighbourhood House
Kyabram Community and Learning Centre
Kyneton Community & Learning Centre
Lakes Entrance Neighbourhood House
Lancefield Neighbourhood House
Langwarrin Community Centre
Lara Community Centre
Laurels Education and Training
Laverton Community Integrated Services
Leongatha Community House
Leopold Community and Learning Centre
Lilydale Community House
LINK Neighbourhood House
Living & Learning Nillumbik - Diamond Creek Centre
Living & Learning Nillumbik – Eltham Centre
Living & Learning Nillumbik - Panton Hill Centre
Living & Learning Pakenham
Living and Learning @ Ajani
Livingstone Community Centre
Loch Sport Community House
Lockington District Business Centre
Long Gully Neighbourhood Centre
Lorne Community House
Louis Joel Arts Centre
Louise Multicultural Community Centre
Lyrebird Community Centre orporated
Mackie Road Neighbourhood House
Maffra Neighbourhood House
Maldon Neighbourhood Centre

Manna Gum Community House
Mansfield Adult Continuing Education
Marong Neighbourhood House
Maryborough Community House
Melton South Community Centre
Meredith Community Centre
Merinda Park Learning and Community Centre
Mernda Community House
Mill House Community House
Milpara Community House
Mitcham Community House
Moe Neighbourhood House
Moongala Women's Collective
Mooroopna Education and Activity Centre
Mordialloc Neighbourhood House
Mount Eliza Neighbourhood House
Mountain District Learning Centre
Moy-Yan Neighbourhood House
Mt. Beauty Neighbourhood Centre
Murrayville Neighbourhood House
Murtoa and District Neighbourhood House
Myrtleford Neighbourhood Centre
Nagambie Lakes Community House
Nathalia & District Community Association
Neighbourhood House Murchison (Vic)
Nhill Neighbourhood House Learning Centre
Noble Park Community Centre
Norlane Community Centre
North Carlton Railway Neighbourhood House
North Dandenong Neighbourhood House
North Melbourne Language and Learning
North Ringwood Community House
North Shepparton Community & Learning Centre
Notting Hill Community Association
Numurkah Community Learning Centre
Oakgrove Community Centre
Old Courthouse Community Centre
Open Door Neighbourhood House
Orana Neighbourhood House
Orbost Neighbourhood House
Orwil Street Community House
Outlets Co-operative Neighbourhood House
Outlook Community Centre
Ouyen Neighbourhood House
Pangerang Community House
Park Orchards Community House & Learning Centre
Patterson Lakes Community Centre
Paynesville Neighbourhood Centre
Phoenix Park Neighbourhood House
Port Fairy Community Group
Portarlington Neighbourhood House
Power Neighbourhood House
Prahran Community Learning Centre
Preston Neighbourhood House
Pyramid Hill Neighbourhood House
Quambatook Community Resource Centre
Quantin Binnah Community Centre
Queenscliffe and District Neighbourhood House
Rainbow Learning Group & Neighbourhood House
Red Cliffs Community Resource Centre
Reservoir Neighbourhood House
Reynard Street Neighbourhood House
Riddells Creek Neighbourhood House
Robinvale Network House
Rochester Community House
Romsey Neighbourhood House
Rosanna Fire Station Community House
Rosewall Neighbourhood Centre
Rushworth Community House
Rye Community House

Sale Neighbourhood House
Sea Lake Neighbourhood House
Segue community hub and arts cafe
Seville Community Group
Simpson & District Community Centre
Somerville Community House
Sorrento Community Centre
South Barwon Community Centre
South Shepparton Community Centre
Southport Community Centre
SpringDale Neighbourhood Centre
Springvale Learning and Activities Centre
Springvale Neighbourhood House
St Albans Community Youth Club
St.Arnaud Neighbourhood House
Stawell Neighbourhood House
Surrey Hills Neighbourhood Centre
Sussex Neighbourhood House
Swan Hill Neighbourhood House
Tatura Community House
The Basin Community House
The Centre Connecting Community in North & West Melbourne
The Grange Community Centre
The Salvation Army Support in Public Housing Program
Tongala Community Activities Centre
Toolangi Castella District Community House
Torquay Community House
Traralgon Neighbourhood Learning House
Trentham Neighbourhood Centre
Trudewind Road Neighbourhood House
Venus Bay Community Centre
Vermont South Learning Centre
Vines Road Community Centre
Violet Town Community House
Wallan & District Community Group
Wallaroo Community House
Waminda Community House
Warracknabeal Neighbourhood House and Learning Centre
Warragul Community House
Warrandyte Neighbourhood House
Warrnambool Neighbourhood & Community Centre
Watsonia Neighbourhood House
Waverley Community Learning Centre
Wavlink
Wedderburn Community House
Wendouree Neighbourhood Centre
West Footscray Neighbourhood House
West Warrnambool Neighbourhood House
West Warrnambool Neighbourhood House
Whelsea Community House
Whittlesea Community House
Williamstown Community and Education Centre
Willum Warrain Aboriginal Association Corporation
Wonthaggi Neighbourhood Centre
Woodend Neighbourhood House
Woori Community House
Wurruk Community House
Wycheproof Community Resource Centre
Wyndham Community & Education Centre
Wyndham Park Community Centre
Yarra Glen & District Living and Learning Centre
Yarram Neighbourhood House
Yarraville Community Centre
Yarrawonga Neighbourhood House
Yarrunga Community Centre
Yea Community Service Group