

Energy plan 'kills two birds with one stone'

AN ENERGY saving programme that started in North Canterbury is about to be rolled out nationwide.

Celebrating the success of the EcoSmartHome project in Rangiora recently were some of the key players involved in making it happen, including Energy Mad director Chris Mardon, MainPower managing director Allan Berge, and chairperson of the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (EECA) Roger Sutton.

North Canterbury has been the trial area for the project, which aims to make homes warmer and healthier, while also slashing power bills.

Participating householders get a free home visit from an energy assessor, who calculates household appliance power

usage and recommends ways to reduce power consumption. Householders can choose to take up a range of energy saving options, funded via five-year interest-free loans.

In North Canterbury, the goal over the next 18 months is to roll out the project to 1000 homes, with savings over 10 years potentially adding up to \$7.5 million.

Chris Mardon's vision in fact goes further than that: "You roll it out across the country and you could save all the power currently used by the Huntly Powerstation."

Central government has agreed to work with Energy Mad to help get the project up and running in other parts of New Zealand.

Government Spokesperson for Energy Efficiency, Jeanette

Fitzsimons, said: "To use that politically incorrect saying, 'it kills two birds with one stone.' In fact, here we have something that kills four birds with one stone: the climate change bird, the expensive power bird, the

low lake levels bird and the child asthma bird. It's one solution with multiple benefits," she said.

Mr Mardon thanked MainPower for their support in seeing the potential of the EcoSmart Home project. "There's a chance now for all of us to make a big difference and it started right here in North Canterbury," he said.

EECA has also been a key partner in the project as a funder. Mr Sutton praised Energy Mad's tenacity in getting the project into people's homes.



Celebrating the upcoming nationwide roll-out of EcoSmartHome projects: (From left) Chris Mardon (Energy Mad), Roger Sutton (EECA), Jeanette Fitzsimons, and Allan Berge (MainPower). PHOTO: KIM NEWTH