

# a cool conscience

# 150

**E**nergy demand peaks on hot days as people in Australia turn on their air-conditioners. With houses often built for size and view, passive design is often ignored – resulting in heat traps. A well-designed home should need nothing more energy-intensive than a ceiling sweep fan. Working by circulating cool air around the room, ceiling fans run at about one cent per hour, compared with 12 cents for evaporative cooling and up to 60 cents per hour for air-conditioning. Simple habits help too. Keep windows and curtains closed during the day to block out heat and open them at night to let the house cool. If you use an air-conditioner, use it efficiently. A good summer setting is between 24 and 27 degrees.

- **look for cooling solutions that are kinder to the environment**

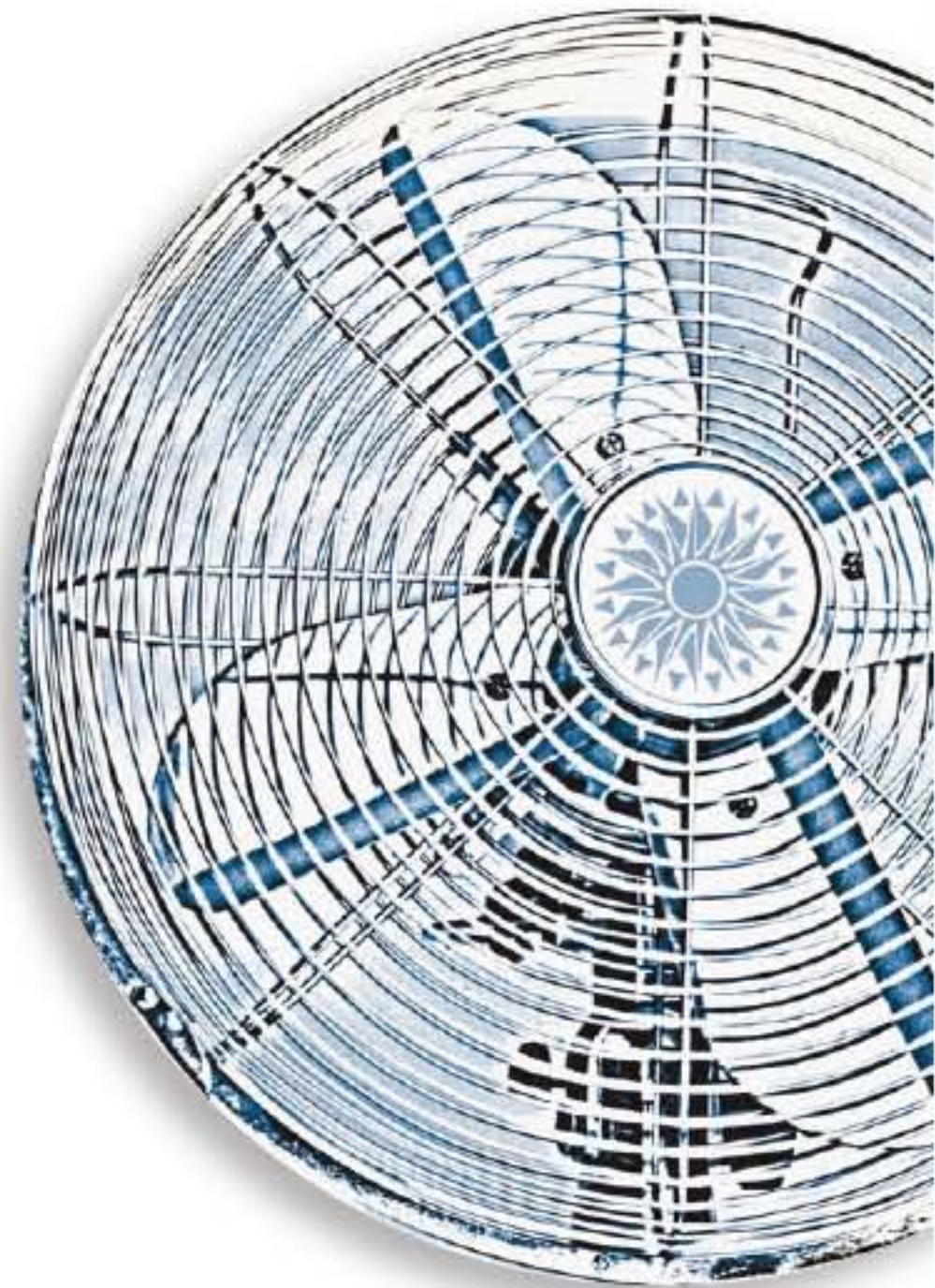


Photo: Corbis Australia

home 175

# hanging out

# 157



**A**n old-fashioned clothes line is the greener alternative to the electric clothes dryer – it produces no greenhouse gases and it's also free. Using a machine to dry your clothes three times a week can cost you \$100 a year, generating about 500 kilograms of greenhouse gases. Most people have access to a solar-powered dryer in their own backyard: the sun. Set up a winter clothes line under a covered area to dry laundry on rainy days. If you do use a dryer, make sure it has a high energy-efficiency rating. Check the machine has good airflow and keep the lint filter clean for maximum operating efficiency.

- **install a solar clothes dryer**

Photo: Corbis Australia

182 home

# 145 carpetbaggers

**C**arpets might look and feel great, but they may not mean good news for the environment and your health. Even pure wool carpet is often treated with chemicals to repel dirt and bugs. Try to source low-emission products and choose one with low pile. Or look for Interface carpets – the founder, Ray Anderson, is a hero for creating a sustainable carpet company. Clean carpets regularly, as they can trap dirt and mould and harbour dust mites. But make cleaning your carpets a more environmentally friendly process. Australians bought 1.13 million vacuum cleaners in 2006, and that's a lot of vacuum bags going to landfill, so invest in a bagless cleaner to reduce the waste. Clean filters and tubes regularly to maximise energy efficiency. Always use green carpet-cleaning professionals or do it yourself with environmentally safe chemicals or natural alternatives.

- **keep carpets clean for a healthy, homely environment**

Photo: Corbis Australia

# home

170 home

# window shopping

# 146

**W**ith up to 40 per cent of your home's energy for cooling or heating being lost or gained through windows, it makes green sense to improve their thermal performance. The Windows Energy Rating Scheme (WERS) rates the energy impact of windows in housing across Australia. Choose the right window for your environment. Wooden frames provide better insulation than aluminum. Double-glazed windows will insulate you from hot and cold temperature extremes. Louvered windows will catch the breeze on summer days. And dressing up your windows with curtains, blinds, shades, awnings and shutters will improve their thermal properties, minimising heat loss and draughts in winter.

- **have windows that are energy efficient and smartly dressed**

Photo: courtesy Caroline Plabon Architects



home 171