

Energy Efficiency To Get Higher Priority: Garrett

Federal Opposition environment spokesman Peter Garrett has launched a new plan for a 10-star appliance rating system he says will make it easier for consumers to be green.

The rating system aims to improve domestic appliance energy efficiency and halve household greenhouse gas emissions by applying higher standards for appliances.

Garrett says that Australians are currently purchasing appliances such as dishwashers and fridges that are more costly to run and less energy efficient than they should be.

The Opposition's Greenhouse and Energy Minimum Standards aim to fast-track smart efficient technology and help Australian families save money, cut energy use and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The new standards would involve industry and State and Territory Governments in improving the six-star Energy Rating Label scheme so that up to ten stars could be awarded to an expanded list of products, including TVs.

Garret says this would give manufacturers incentives to continually improve their products and give consumers more accurate information to help with their choices. He says they would also fast-track new standards for products including digital set top boxes, computers and home entertainment systems, while a formal review of existing standards would be undertaken every three years for all major appliances, such as fridges and air conditioners, to ensure they keep up with technology improvements.

The plan, according to Garrett, would also ensure any up-front costs to consumers are outweighed by savings on energy bills, accelerate the introduction of the one watt standard for standby power – which consumes up to 10 per cent of all household energy – and enhance ongoing testing and compliance measures to ensure products meet new standards.

“The average Australian family spends more than \$250 a year on running electrical appliances, but this can be drastically reduced,” says Garrett.

“For example, a 350-litre fridge with a three-star rating will cost around \$75 a year to run. This compares to a fridge with a five-star rating, which will cost around \$45 a year.”

A joint State and Federal Government study by the National Framework for Energy Efficiency estimates that Australian homes could reduce energy use by 35-70 per cent using better, more efficient technologies.

In addition to introducing the new standards, a Federal Labor Government would provide low-interest loans of up to \$10,000 to Australian families to implement household water and efficiency measures including insulation, solar hot water, rainwater tanks and solar panels.

[Source essa news]