



# Green start to the New Year for council

By Shane Desiatnik

Blue Mountains City Council will use green power sources for the next two years to supply 10 per cent of its energy needs for large building sites.

Green power is electricity generated by clean, renewable energy sources.

The move is estimated to offset about 485 tonnes of carbon dioxide per year, but will add an extra \$20,000 per year (5.5 per cent) to council's power bill.

Councillors decided the potential environmental benefits of using green power outweigh the financial burden, unanimously supporting the recommendations of a council report presented at the last meeting of 2007.

That report acknowledged using green energy would not reduce energy consumption or generate associated cost savings, but would offset greenhouse gas emissions, support the renewable power industry and allow council to use the green power logo.

Council's large building sites include leisure and aquatic centres, civic centres, caravan parks, works depots and Katoomba Emergency Centre.

The 10 per cent green power commitment began yesterday and concludes on December 31, 2009.

Council spends \$123,747 per annum on energy performance contracts that identify ways to save energy, funded by actual savings made.

The Energy and Water Strategy 2007-2010 identifies further measures that cost about \$25,000.

If implemented these would offset 700 tonnes of carbon emissions.

Council's report calls for a review of its green energy use policy within two years and suggests further green power purchases could be funded if energy savings increase.

**Behind the banner:** Members of the Fresh Espresso and Food Bar Gav, Gerry, Nicole, Aurora, Lea, Guy and family and Ian celebrate going carbon neutral last Friday. Member for Macquarie Bob Debus (third from left) was there to congratulate them.

## Cafe goes carbon neutral

By Shane Desiatnik

A Katoomba cafe will no longer leave any permanent carbon footprint from its operations after going through a rigorous carbon audit by the Carbon Reduction Institute (CRI).

Katoomba's Fresh Espresso and Food Bar gained "No CO2" certification in the last week of 2007 by committing to purchase carbon credits from CRI for the equivalent of 330 tonnes of carbon per annum it has been found to produce.

The cafe's co-owners Guy Nathan and Lea Shannon found the overall process easy, but admitted they were startled at the three-figure carbon emission calculation.

"The 330 tonnes were a bit of a shock!" Guy said.

"But for every tonne we will pay a fee to fund energy efficient programs through CRI to offset the carbon."

Electricity use (21 per cent) was the single biggest contributor to Fresh's carbon emissions total.

Nearly three-quarters of total emissions were found to come from the manufacture, distribution and refrigeration of ingredients used by the cafe.

Natural gas accounted for 2.7 per cent of the total, disposable products 8.2 per cent and employee travel only 1.4 per cent, due to most staff members walking or catching a train to work.

CSI recommended measures to reduce emissions such as installing a solar hot water system, energy efficient light bulbs and turning organic waste into compost scraps.

Guy said the detail involved in the survey part of the auditing process was "a bit confronting at first", but the end result — certification — is empowering.

"Lea instigated the process and we all felt we wanted to do something positive to empower us, our customers and other businesses.

"Apart from voting, most of us can feel powerless to do anything about climate change, but anybody can do this (become carbon neutral certified)."

Member for Macquarie Bob Debus said Fresh's move shows what one business can do and how much of a difference it can make.

"It shows that reduction of energy use and offsetting carbon emissions through a trading arrangement has massive and immediate benefits," Mr Debus said.

"It makes the idea of solving climate change by building nuclear power stations look completely silly."

Fresh Espresso and Food Bar will undergo another carbon audit by CSI in a few months.

For more information about CSI, go to [www.noco2.com.au](http://www.noco2.com.au)

•What is your business or household doing to reduce or offset carbon emissions? Let us know by sending an email to [editorial.bmgazette@ruralpress.com](mailto:editorial.bmgazette@ruralpress.com).