

FACT SHEET

The Consumption Comparator

A guide to our electricity, gas and water Consumption Comparator
December 2011

The Consumption Comparator is a simple tool (available from our website) that allows you to compare your household's annual electricity, gas and/or water consumption with other households'. If your energy and water use is higher than other households', the Consumption Comparator can help you work out why.

1.1 How the Consumption Comparator works

By entering some information about your household and your electricity, gas and water consumption into the Consumption Comparator, you can see how your household's energy and water use compares with similar households from our 2010 Sydney household survey. You can compare with 2 household groups from our survey:

- ▼ Households that use electricity, gas and water for similar purposes as you (eg, use an air-conditioners and a dishwasher) *and* that have similar characteristics (eg, number of adults and children, income and type of dwelling).
- ▼ Households that have similar characteristics to you but may use energy and water for different purposes. This is a much larger group of households.

1.2 How the Consumption Comparator can help you

The Consumption Comparator is likely to be most useful if you use fairly large amounts of electricity, gas and/or water. The Comparator will show:

- ▼ how your consumption compares with other **similar households** in Sydney
- ▼ why your consumption is high or low, eg, if you have a 2nd fridge or you don't.

We also included links to a number of useful NSW websites about energy efficiency tips and programs, help paying bills, finding better energy prices and other comparator tools.

1.3 How to use the Consumption Comparator

Follow the link to our website (either click on the link or paste this address into your web browser):

http://www.ipart.nsw.gov.au/files/efd24b50-a161-4530-aa68-9fc000e8bb87/Determinants_of_demand_-_Consumption_Comparator_-_Web_site_version_-_APD_-_21_December_2011.xls

The Consumption Comparator is free. It is a Microsoft Excel file that includes simple instructions to guide you through the process.

You will be asked to answer a number of simple questions about your household and what you use energy and water for. You will also be asked to find a year's worth of bills, then to fill in the information (electricity, water and/or gas, depending on what you pay for).

The information you provide is not recorded and we do not have access to it. However, if you prefer, you can save a copy of the Consumption Comparator on your own computer before you fill it in.¹

1.4 Limitations of the Consumption Comparator

The Consumption Comparator is based on our analysis of survey data for the Sydney region. As a result, it has a number of limitations:

- ▼ It does not calculate how much energy or water you use. It can only compare your consumption with the **average** used by similar households in Sydney.
- ▼ The average amount of energy or water use for dishwashers, 2nd fridges and washing machines as per the Comparator is more than the amount suggested by technical data.²
- ▼ If you use electric heaters a lot, or you have ducted gas heating it will underestimate your consumption.
- ▼ It does not take into account small appliances, lighting or the capacity and efficiency of appliances.
- ▼ It does not take into account use of special equipment such as respirators or humidifiers.
- ▼ If you live in an area where the climate is very different from Sydney, it will not be accurate.

¹ The Consumption Comparator is a Microsoft Excel file – it requires you to have Excel installed on your computer but you do not need to have knowledge of Excel in order to use it.

² Our regression model over-estimates the consumption associated with these uses because these particular ones are associated with others that we did not have information about. For example, households that use dishwashers often may also use small appliances more often. The over-estimation applies in particular to dishwashers.

- ▼ If you use very small amounts of energy and water, it will not be accurate.

1.5 Where to find more detailed information on this topic

We have released 2 reports with more detailed information in them:

- ▼ To find out more about our regression analysis, you can see a Fact Sheet or the full report.³ Both are available on our website at

http://www.ipart.nsw.gov.au/Home/Industries/Research/Reviews/Household_Survey/Determinants_of_residential_energy_and_water_consumption

- ▼ To find out more about the Sydney (2010) household survey, go to our website at

http://www.ipart.nsw.gov.au/Home/Industries/Research/Reviews_All/Household_Survey/IPART_2010_Household_Survey_of_Electricity_Water_and_Gas_Usage_-_Sydney_Blue_Mountains_and_the_Illawarra.

³ IPART, *Determinants of residential energy and water use in Sydney and surrounds - Regression analysis of the 2008 and 2010 IPART household survey data*, December 2011.