

Thinking about the environment at New Acton South

We're all concerned about the environment, right?

But here's some food for thought.

Did you know that New Acton South uses more than 600,000 kilowatt hours of electricity per year for building base power alone. That is electricity for lighting, heating and cooling the common areas such as the foyer, the back rooms such as the garbage room, the office and the emergency stairs, to run plant and equipment such as the water cooling towers on the roof, to power the six lifts, the garbage compactor, lights and ventilation fans in the basements, water pumps, garage door and the main door in the foyer.

To put our base building electricity usage in perspective, it is equivalent to electricity generated emissions of more than 500 tonnes of carbon dioxide annually (source Energy Action report on our building) and it costs us about \$86,000 a year (source Owners Corporation finances 2015-16). So we are spending about \$450 per apartment per year on electricity to run the building, and generating 1.4 tonnes of carbon dioxide a day while we are at it. And that does not include the electricity you use in your apartment, or the greenhouse emission equivalents of that personal use. We also spend about \$35,000 a year on gas.

Well, the Owners Corporation Executive Committee is looking at ways to reduce the negative impacts on the environment due to the way we operate the building.

We have made some first steps, including encouraging use of the recycling room on the ground floor, putting more energy efficient lighting in some of the public and working spaces in the building, and reprogramming the exhaust fans in the basement so they run less frequently. We are also about to go to the market to re-compete our electricity and gas services, so we can get the best prices for our energy. And at the upcoming Annual General Meeting, the executive will put forward some further proposals to improve the efficiency of lighting, to reduce the annual cost of maintenance and electricity and to do our bit for energy conservation by reducing consumption.

There are things you can do for the environment too. These include using the recycling room properly (e.g. not putting recycling in plastic bags, because they then go straight to landfill). There's also a green waste compost bin in the John Avery Gardens adjacent to our building, which is free for residents to use. Idling cars in the basement also triggers to carbon dioxide sensors and make the fans run, so that's one to avoid also.

Thinking about your own energy consumption, you may wish to consider the types of appliances in your apartment and when you use them, (especially dryers and air conditioners) and how much hot water you use.

As the Owners Corporation Executive, we are always looking for new ways to improve the running of the building. If you have ideas about how we can leave a lighter environmental footprint, please let us know and we will consider them seriously.