

Wasteful heating habits costing Australians \$1.09B this winter

- An extra three minutes in the shower comes in as the nation’s costliest heating habit costing Aussies \$365 million over winter
- Australian households could save up to \$691 a year by forgoing wasteful heating habits

Tuesday 29 May 2018: Are your energy habits costing you a small fortune over winter? More than 1 in 5 Australians are guilty of at least three wasteful, bill-boosting habits like cranking up the heating to tropical temperatures rather than rugging up, leave the heating on for hours every day for their pet and having longer showers to warm up, according to Mozo.com.au.

Based on a nationally representative survey, the comparison site calculated the potential national cost of each bad energy habit and found Australians could be blowing as much as \$1.09 billion over winter, with long showers to warm up coming in as the costliest money drain.

Keeping pets cosy and warm came in as the second costliest habit with 11% of Aussies admitting to leaving the heating on for their pets while out for the day, incurring a nationwide cost of \$249 million¹.

“The wasteful energy habits we indulge in over the cooler months like using a tumble dryer on sunny days and leaving the heating on while you’re out to warm up the home is expected to add over one billion dollars to the nation’s winter energy bill,” says Kirsty Lamont, Mozo Director.

THE COST OF AUSTRALIA'S BAD HEATING HABITS THIS WINTER			
Bad habit	% of popN	Potential household cost	Potential national cost*
Have longer showers to warm up	54%	\$81	\$365 million
Leaving the heating on for your pet while you are out	11%	\$263	\$249 million
Dry clothes in the tumble dryer instead of washing on sunny days	28%	\$62	\$144 million
Leave the heating on when you go out so your home is warm when you return	22%	\$59	\$107 million
Heat rooms to tropical temperatures so you can wear t-shirts at home	11%	\$105	\$96 million
Heating the whole house instead of blocking off rooms you don't use	17%	\$59	\$81 million
Leave heating on in empty rooms	8%	\$59	\$36 million
Use an electric blanket rather than hot water bottle	27%	\$3	\$7 million
TOTAL:		\$691	\$1.09 billion

Source: Mozo.com.au. *Estimated based on number of survey respondents who said they do the habit.

¹ Based on an Air Con on heat pump mode (1.5kWh consumption) running at full power 9 hours a day, 5 days a week for the winter period.

“Our survey found Australians have a penchant for longer showers in winter with 54% of the population guilty of this habit. We estimated an extra three minutes under the showerhead each day could come at a total national cost of \$365 million over the cooler months².”

Mozo calculated Australian households could save up to \$691 annually by ditching their bad heating habits this winter.

28% of the population admitted to using a tumble dryer rather than hanging out wet clothes on sunny days. This bill-boosting habit came in as third costliest in Mozo’s analysis at a national cost of \$144 million over winter³.

Mozo’s research shows females are guilty of more bad heating habits than males, with 61% of women admitting to taking longer showers during winter compared to 48% of men.

Females also scored higher for drying clothes in the tumble dryer and using an electric blanket. Meanwhile, males were more likely to leave the heating on when out, so they could return to a warm home and for pet could enjoy the cosiness of a well heated home.

18-24-year olds were found to be the guiltiest of bill-boosting habits with one in five admitting to leaving the heating on to keep their pet warm, compared to just 7% of those aged between 55 and 64.

Younger demographics also scored higher than older demographics for using a tumble dryer, cranking up the heating to tropical temperatures rather than rugging up and heating the whole house instead of blocking off the rooms they’re using.

Almost two thirds of those aged between 45 and 54 admitted to taking longer showers in winter while three in 10 of those aged between 55 and 64 say they use an electric blanket rather than a hot water bottle to warm up their bed.

With heating and cooling accounting for around a quarter of a household’s energy usage⁴, Mozo says there are many ways to keep warm this winter without breaking the bank.

“Simple strategies like setting your thermostat at a comfortable temperature and rugging up, using door snakes and draught excluders as well as caulking any gaps around window frames, can slash the size of your heating bill this winter,” says Lamont.

“If you need to turn on the heating, be savvy about it and only heat the rooms you are currently using.”

Mozo’s top tips for saving on your energy bills:

- Forego little luxuries like toasty towels on chilly mornings. Four heated towel rails adding around \$48 to a household’s energy bill over the winter period⁵.
- You can cut your heating costs by 25% by draught-proofing your home⁶, starting with an old-fashioned door snake and draught excluders on external doors, and caulking any cracks and gaps around the window and door frames and between skirting boards.
- Smaller spaces heat more quickly than larger spaces so keeping doors closed and separating off areas can increase the efficiency of heating and ensure you don’t pay to heat rooms not being used.

² Based on three minutes of extra shower time per person under the age of five in Australia.

³ Based on a clothes dryer using 4kWh for one hour, 4 times a week during the winter period.

⁴ https://www.ausgrid.com.au/-/media/Files/Ways-to-save/Energy-efficiency-brochures/Ausgrid_Winter-Heating_2015_final.pdf?la=en&hash=C5CF9590483A34B26D39A979C54E7C6B89E0E171

⁵ <https://www.originenergy.com.au/blog/lifestyle/finding-your-bathroom-bliss.html>

⁶ <http://www.yourhome.gov.au/passive-design/insulation>

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- Getting into the habit of paying your bills on time could get you a decent discount year-round, with energy suppliers offering 'pay on time' discounts of up to 47% off usage charges.

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Notes on calculations: Nationally representative survey of 1,000 Australians aged 18 years and above conducted by Pureprofile between 27 February to 6 March 2018. Population and household figures derived from 2024.0 - Census of Population and Housing: Australia Revealed, 2016.

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