

Guides on tax

By KIRSTY JAGGER

THE proposed carbon tax continues to baffle many families and businesses but Canterbury City Council is planning to help reduce the confusion.

Council's Environmental and Sustainability Committee resolved to form a subcommittee responsible for drafting a plan on communicating the details of the carbon tax.

Federal Labor MP for Grayndler, Anthony Albanese, said money raised from the levy of \$23 per tonne of carbon dioxide, for the nation's 500 largest polluters, would be invested in renewable energy and assist lower to middle income households.

"A price on carbon sends a message to industry and households that the less you contribute to car-

What it means to households

bon pollution, the less you'll have to pay," Mr Albanese said.

"At the same time, the Government is investing in renewable energy, making it cheaper and easier for households to switch to cleaner energy."

The focus of the subcommittee will be on 'keeping to the facts rather than debate on different views' and detailing how the carbon tax will effect the cost of electricity, goods and services, once implemented.

While differences of opinion on the matter may not be the interest of the subcommittee, individual councillors have freely voiced their political perspectives.

Liberal councillor Ken Nam expressed his concern for low income households.

"Any increase in the cost of living will be quite substantial, especially in Canterbury, where most residents are living on a low weekly household income," Cr Nam said.

A strong supporter of the carbon tax, Greens councillor Linda Eisler believes renewables are the future and will ultimately reduce the cost of living.

"We've no choice but to move into the future, if we stick our heads in the sand we're going to be left behind and we will become a poor nation," Cr Eisler said.

The carbon price will be implemented from July 1, 2012, and in three years, it will be replaced with an emissions trading scheme.

They did it and you can too

THERE will soon be a price to pay for the little luxuries - tossing clothes in the dryer instead of hanging them out, switching on a light instead of opening a curtain - given only a fleeting thought before the introduction of a carbon price.

Premier Barry O'Farrell said a NSW Treasury analysis forecasted that power costs would rise by up to 20 per cent under the carbon tax, meaning the average family would see its electricity bill increase by between \$242 and \$300

in 2012-13.

Realising some time ago that a carbon tax was on the horizon, one Ashbury family decided to make some sustainable choices and reduced their carbon footprint.

Along the way, Stuart Gibb and his wife Jodie Goldney, with their daughter Finlae, 8, and six-year-old son Jesse, also managed to lower their living costs.

"We've reached that point in time where we have to start making changes as a community," Mr Gibb said.

"We can't keep using fossil fuels the way we have been, firstly, because they will run out eventually and, secondly, because they are destroying the environment."

Modest in size and therefore easy to heat and cool, the family home utilises green energy, solar panels being the latest installation.

The family also boasts a backyard that is laden with fruit trees, spotted with veggie patches and home to chickens that lay fresh



Ashbury's Stuart Gibb and his wife, Jodie Goldney, with their daughter, Finlae, 8, and six-year-old son Jesse, have managed to lower their living costs with solar panels, a veggie patch, fruit trees and chickens, with the aim of reducing their carbon footprint.

eggs each morning.

Supporting the family with a single income, Mr Gibb believes their edible garden will make family food bills - expected to increase under the carbon tax - more manageable, especially when coupled with waste reduction.

"Over 25 per cent of the food we

buy goes to waste, so if we're more careful, there will be less waste and less need to worry about price rises," Mr Gibb said.

"We're not crazy greenies. As a family we've just chosen to lead a more sustainable life, which has, in return, reduced our living expenses. If we can do it, anyone can."