

# Big savings from energy efficiency

**T**here's praise for the dedication of the assessment team behind the recent major energy efficiency and education project rolled out in Tūrangi and the King Country, which even found innovative ways to keep going during the recent lockdown.

Close to \$1 million in potential energy savings per year were identified in homes in Tūrangi and the King Country as part of a major energy efficiency and education initiative rolled out over the past four months, with community partnerships and a grassroots approach the key to success.

King Country Electric Power Trust [KCEPT] and energy efficiency and education company Ecobulb formed a partnership supported by funding from the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment to roll out the programme.

They set a big goal to reduce electricity use and power bills for 1522 homes in the region, at no cost to households.

Ecobulb developed software which took households through how they used power and where they could make savings. But it was left for the household to decide which might work for them.

Ecobulb's database has calculated the energy savings will collectively save project participants \$841,000 per year



**Ohakune resident Darnella Hawira (left) receives her energy assessment and free Ecobulbs from lead assessor Ramona Salvador at the Te Pae Tata Community Hub in Ohakune.**

on their power bills.

The potential savings if every single option and action was implemented would be \$955,000 per year, said Chris Mardon, managing director of Ecobulbs.

"That is one of the key benefits from partnering with Taurarunui Community Kokiri Trust and Tūwharetoa Health Charitable Trust and having assessors that live and are active in the community.

"They often already had relationships with the household and so could look at everything from an overall perspective and make sure the household was in control of the

outcome."

Dr Mardon said 84.9 per cent of the households were found to be in some degree of energy hardship and the energy saving actions would save each on average \$552 per year.

Assessors also provided free devices to help reduce power bills such as energy efficient LED Ecobulbs and low flow showerheads and 28,000 Ecobulbs were given out along with 720 energy-efficient shower heads.

Another critical element was helping people identify the best electricity retail contract. People could have the assessments done at home or meet with an assessor and bring the necessary information with them.

KCEPT trustee Sandra Greenslade says the trust has had feedback that of all the energy education projects that MBIE funded in this round, this one was the most successful, despite lockdown occurring just as the project was winding up.

"We had just organised and advertised our Ohakune Assessment Expo. However we were very quickly able to change tack and did all the assessments remotely with over 100 being able to be completed. Then [after lockdown] we drove to Ohakune and distributed the last of all the lightbulbs," Sandra says.