

# RYMAN VILLAGE OPEN DAYS



ADVERTISEMENT/ WHAKATAIRANGA

## Meet the Chch company helping families save hundreds in power bills

**Sinead Gill** | THE PRESS | TE MATATIKI

May 13, 2024

[Share](#)



Chris Mardon aims to help people save money by making their homes more energy efficient.  
**KAI SCHWOERER / THE PRESS**

The founder of a Christchurch-based company making homes more energy efficient says his work wasn't sparked by a desire to save the planet, but to save people money.

Yet, Chris Mardon, managing director of Ecobulb, says if every household in Aotearoa got an energy assessment and used less power - based on the work his team has already done - the amount of carbon emissions saved could equate to a year without cars on the road, and save up to \$1 billion in power bills per year.

Mardon, a mechanical engineer who at one point worked in plastics manufacturing, has led Ecobulb and its predecessor, Energy Mad, for two decades.

His products are in over a dozen countries, but it was a \$50,000 grant from the Christchurch City Council's sustainability fund in 2022 that kicked off the company's most recent project of going into low income homes in Ōtautahi Christchurch.

That, plus two other successful applications to the fund in the last three years, has resulted in about 1000 Christchurch households shaving over \$750 a year in power bills on average.



Gladys Herbert noticed her power bill went down by at least \$60 in just a month after getting an energy assessment, funded by the Christchurch City Council's sustainability fund.

**KAI SCHWOERER / THE PRESS**

For Gladys Herbert, 67, it just took swapping her light bulbs for LEDs (Ecobulb has its own branded products), changing her shower head and switching to a cheaper power provider for her electricity bills to drop by at least \$60 a month.

Herbert, who got an assessment in late 2022, saw the impact as soon as the next power bill. As a grandmother who is heavily involved in her mokopuna's (grandchildren) lives - often looking after up to 10 at a time - she said every dollar saved could go towards other expenses.

She and her husband have been able to save for their first cruise, and hope to set sail in early 2025.

She said she'd been reluctant to let one of Ecobulb's assessors come in at first, despite the assessment and products being funded, because she thought she already did a good job. But she was surprised to hear it could cost between \$300 and \$400 a year to power their old spare fridge with a dodgy seal.



**SINEAD GILL • REPORTER**

sinead.gill@press.co.nz

Mardon said the council funding (totalling about \$105,000 over three funding applications, then boosted by \$60,000 in funding from Orion and \$115,000 from central government) also went towards training energy assessors who could educate people in person about the impact shorter showers, a lower temperature on a heat pump, and shopping around different energy providers could have.



Herbert took the challenge a step further, and now her household had broken the habit of filling the jug to the maximum when only one cup of tea was wanted.

The council's sustainability fund may not be renewed in its [upcoming long-term plan](#) (due to be debated and finalised in June). Mardon has asked the council to keep it so companies like his can keep doing good in the community.

Councillor Sara Templeton said people were often surprised to hear the sustainability and other contestable community funds may not be continuing, considering its success and popularity.

She plans on advocating for it to remain, pointing to Ecobulb and [other companies like Locky Dock](#) and the Workride e-bike scheme as examples of how a small investment from the public has huge knock on effects.

- THE PRESS | DE MATATIKKA

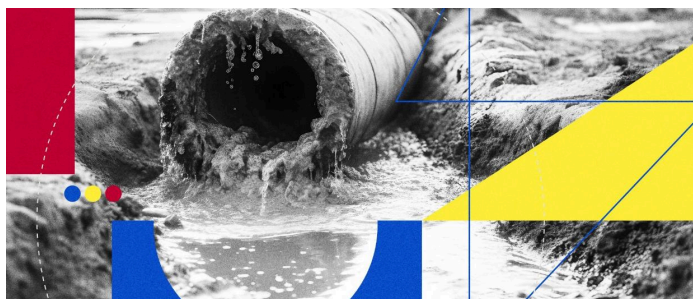
↗ Share

## More from The Press



### Dad who killed baby daughter had no desire to harm her, defence says

Michael John Topp killed his 3-month-old daughter by shaking her, but denies it was murder.



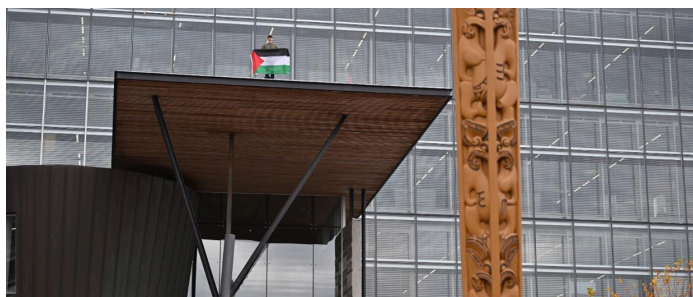
### Greater Christchurch councils yet to figure out future of three waters

Councils within greater Christchurch are still a long way off figuring out the future of their water services despite Auckland already achieving a solution.



### Dame Ngaio Marsh's last mystery

There's a little green garage missing its lavish sports car it once homed. The renowned crime writer has left a mystery of her own for the public to help solve.



### Palestine protester climbs onto entrance of council headquarters

A lone protestor forced the closure of Christchurch's Worcester Blvd after clambering onto a 15m canopy to unfurl a Palestinian flag and speak out about their cause.