

## Mulbury Art Studio

**Simple savings identified - \$2,273 (50%) per year**



### Introduction

Mulbury is an art studio and gallery with a retail sales area operating out of a warehouse at 26 Advantage Rd Highett. The owner of the business is keen to run the business as sustainably as possible and was interested to see if there was anything else they could be doing to reduce costs and environmental impact.

So, when the opportunity arose, they were successful in obtaining one of the limited Village Zero Energy Assessments, funded by a Bayside City Council grant and provided by Green Moves.

The business runs out of a warehouse constructed of double brick in most parts, with a high tin roof with some insulation under most parts (excluding the skylight sections). The lighting is a mix of inefficient fluro and halogen, and efficient LED. Heating is provided by infrared heat strips. There are two heat pump hot water units on the site, several refrigerators and other equipment for wood cutting (for recycling wood into products). The business has also water tanks and has installed a 12-kW solar PV system on the roof which was proving very effective at reducing energy bills.

### The assessment and opportunities identified

The energy assessor visited the site and found it is an electricity only site with solar PV (good). Heating is provided by infrared heat strips which are not as efficient as reverse cycle units but were appropriate for this site due to the building structure and use. Efficient ceiling fans assist with cooling throughout the building.

There are two heat pump hot water systems onsite which are very efficient and can run off the onsite solar, but one is unnecessary and oversized for its use. The lighting is a mix of efficient and inefficient lamps which should be upgraded when possible.



There were several refrigeration units onsite, most only used once a month for events. These could easily be consolidated and turned off and simply turned back on as needed to provide additional refrigeration on an as needed basis.

After considering the use of the building, and analysing the energy billing data, the assessor identified that the business was paying more than necessary for electricity and could save approximately \$2,273 per year (or 50%) on energy charges by simply

changing to a cheaper electricity tariff and turning off unnecessary refrigeration when it was not needed.

It is always work regularly checking the energy tariffs. This is easily done using the Victorian Compare price comparison website <https://compare.energy.vic.gov.au/> and should be done every February and July to ensure the business remains on the most cost-effective tariff.

While there were other recommendations to improve buildings lighting and potentially disconnect and repurpose the unnecessary hot water system, these will be further investigated in the future when time permits.

### **Feedback from the business owner**

Feedback from the business owner was that the assessment provide simple and viable options to reduce energy use and costs. Although keen to proceed, the main challenge has been time to implement the recommendations as they have been inundated with work so have not had a chance to focus on it. The business is very eager to reduce costs, support the environment and cut down their carbon footprint.

When asked if they would recommend an energy assessment to other small businesses, the response was 'Absolutely.'

They intend to implement some of the recommendations and are considering progressing other upgrades when the solar panels are paid off.



**If you'd like to discuss how an energy audit might help your business just [contact us](#) for a discussion.**