

Auditing a Building's Energy Usage

Auditing Your Building's Energy Usage

Audits are important to identify areas of high energy usage and savings. The reports that are produced through building audits can help support your business case and help to persuade residents and owners to implement specific retrofits. You can self-audit, or hire a professional building audit if you have a large or complex strata scheme. You should also check to see if there are any rebates or incentives available to cover or partially cover the cost of an energy audit.

Self-auditing

You can self-audit the building by looking through energy bills. Energy bills for your building should be kept by your strata manager or strata committee. If your building is connected to the Ausgrid network you can also request up to two years of metering data via the Ausgrid website. Third party requests can also be made via this service provided you have a signed authority from the account holder. Information about this is provided in the application process. If you don't have a record of energy bills for your building, start collecting them as soon as possible, or ask your energy retailer if they have copies. You can use tools such as Wattblock to get an idea of where you could start saving, and whether your building consumes too much energy. The common areas of energy usage are lighting, car parks, ventilation systems and centralised air conditioning.

To effectively monitor your building's usage, you should:

- Keep data from all electricity and utilities bills, with the help of your building manager or sustainability consultant where available.
- Consider purchasing user-friendly monitoring software, that will visualise your usage data in an easy-to-read made, or to highlight areas that need greater attention. The data visualisations can be used to report back to your building residents about the potential savings from retrofits.

Professional Audits

Professional audits are accurate and can identify specific areas of high energy usage. However, professional audits are costlier and so are usually only a consideration for larger schemes. A level 1 audit is usually undertaken by smaller schemes, and a more detailed and costly level 2 audit might be an option for large buildings with various sources of common area energy usage. When deciding which option is best for your building, communicate to the energy consultant conducting the audit what it is you hope to achieve and find out, ask the consultant what each audit type

Common areas that are audited in a professional audit:

- Lighting (car park, lobby, corridor, outdoor)
- Ventilation
- Pumps
- Lifts
- Hot water usage
- Swimming pools
- Power factor correction
- Bill and tariff analysis
- Solar power

involves and which is most appropriate, and provide them with as much information about the building and its usage as possible.

Energy audits (which are different to 'energy assessments') need to be conducted in an impartial manner, should provide the building with a range of options and advice suitable to the building, and shouldn't be a device for selling a particular product. Professional consultants will conduct their audit up to the Australian Standard (AS/NZS 3598:2000).

During the Audit

Professional energy consultants will require energy bills for your building from the last 2 years at least. Energy bills should be kept by your strata manager or strata committee.

If you don't have a record of energy bills for your building, begin to collect them as soon as possible or ask your energy retailer if they have available copies. The consultants will then do a site inspection, and issue your building with a report that will help you decide what retrofits are most appropriate for your building. Some consultants will also provide a cost benefit analysis for your business case, and can help to manage your retrofit project.

After the Audit

If there is anything that you are not clear of in the report or in the consultant's recommendations, ask them to clarify. Use their advice to propose the most viable retrofits to the strata committee, or implement energy management strategies with your building manager if you have one. Continue to monitor your usage as the energy market changes, and being an annual or regular audit schedule depending on your building.

Additional Resources:

- [Electricity Basics, Green Strata](#)
- [Know What Your Water Costs, Green Strata](#)
- [Energy Audits, Green Strata](#)