

# climate change



**By just using energy-saving bulbs, energy consumption can be reduced by 80 per cent. Light from this low energy bulb is actually much brighter and gives out little heat.**

Principal technical officer at Senoko Power, Francis Lee, 47



IT got so hot that there were bush fires.

If you think we're talking about India or Australia, think again. It happened right here in Singapore. The bush fires occurred during a particularly hot spell at the beginning of the year. Nothing compared to the heat waves experienced in New Delhi or Bangladesh in the middle of the year, where hundreds of people died of heat stroke.

But many of us would agree that Singapore is getting hotter every year. The worldwide phenomenon of global warming is a serious long-term problem caused by greenhouse gases,

which contribute to climate change.

So, whenever you drive a car, turn on your air-conditioner, or use a hair dryer, you contribute to climate change because a large part of the electricity you use comes from burning fossil fuels. When fuels burn, they release carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas, into the air.

But don't think it's a lost cause. You can still make a difference. Driving a car or using electricity is not wrong. You just need to do so wisely.

For example, car pool instead of driving to work in different cars. Save electricity by turning off lights, the television and the computer when they're

not in use. Plant trees as they absorb carbon dioxide. And buy products that are energy-efficient.

We have a Green Vehicle Rebate (GVR), introduced in 2001 and enhanced this year, to encourage drivers to buy electric and hybrid cars, which are more fuel-efficient.

We also have an Energy Efficiency Labelling Scheme for air conditioners and refrigerators. These are environment-friendly products made specially to save energy.

It takes very little effort on our part. But these little efforts can go a long way in reducing the impact of climate change on the environment.

**With the opening up of our reservoirs, I have more options for wakeboarding. It is exciting to wakeboard in fresh water, which is what I experience at international competitions, and comforting to know that the waters are clean as well.**

2004/2005 Singapore National Wakeboarding Champion, Sasha Christian, 12

Many of us may not know or remember the inconvenience of water rationing. After all, it happened back in the '60s when Singapore was hit by droughts.

It's not that Singapore does not suffer dry spells anymore. It's just that we have in place our 4 National Taps Strategy, which ensures enough water to meet our current and future needs.

Tap 1, or local catchment, refers to water from our reservoirs and drainage system. Tap 2 refers to the water we import from Malaysia. Tap 3, or NEWater, is treated used water produced by a complex process of micro-filtration and reverse osmosis. Tap 4 is the desalinated water derived from converting sea water to fresh water.

Despite this strategy, we cannot be lax about water usage. That's why the Singapore Green Plan aims to reduce Singapore's per capita do-

mestic consumption from 162 to 155 litres per day by 2012. It hopes to achieve this through initiatives such as the Water Efficient Homes (WEH) Programme, which encourages good water conservation habits, like taking shorter showers, and the use of water-efficient products, like thimbles and cistern water-saving bags.

While encouraging us to conserve and value water, the SGP 2012 also wants us to enjoy it.

Leading this initiative is the Public Utilities Board (PUB). By opening up some of our reservoirs for leisure activities like wakeboarding and canoeing, PUB hopes Singaporeans will foster a close relationship with water. And learn to appreciate it.

This you can do by not littering in our reservoirs and waterways. Or by just making the effort to use water wisely.



# water



**If you change some of your habits at the supermarket, you can make a big difference to the environment, like looking out for refillables instead of buying new products, bringing your own carrier or using less plastic bags to bring home your groceries.**

Designer Gwen Lee, 27

Last year, we threw away close to 4.8 million tonnes of garbage. That's not unusual for an urban city like Singapore.

But when you consider that we are just a tiny island, finding sufficient land for waste disposal can be challenging.

Fortunately, measures are in place to minimise the impact on our scarce land resources.

To conserve valuable landfill space, Singapore ensures that all incinerable waste that is not recovered, reused or recycled is incinerated, a process that reduces waste volumes by up to 90 per cent. About 91 per cent of waste collected is incinerated. Only non-incinerable waste and ash from the incineration process are disposed of at the

offshore Semakau Landfill, Singapore's sole landfill.

The SGP 2012 is aiming for "zero landfill" and our solid waste management strategy involves volume reduction, reusing and recycling and waste minimisation.

That's why programmes like the National Recycling Programme, Recycling Programme for Condominiums, Recycling Bins at Public Places, and Recycling Programme for Schools, Industrial and Commercial Premises have been put in place since 2001.

The good news is that our recycling progress has been encouraging. Our overall recycling rate has increased from 40 per cent in 2000 to 48 per cent

in 2004. The aim is to raise this to 60 per cent by 2012.

We can achieve this if each of us consciously reduces, reuses, and recycles. For example, we can recycle paper in the office. Or stop junk mail by telling the sender to take us off their mailing list. Or choose refillable products and products with less packaging. We should also sort our trash and set aside things that can be recycled.

These simple steps will not only save us time and money, but will also ensure that we continue to enjoy clean land. So don't cling on to your "throw-away" mentality. Or you'll be throwing away a clean and healthy environment for your children.

# recycling