



Australian Government  
Department of Industry



Ethnic Communities'  
Council of NSW inc.

# BEST

BUSINESS ENERGY SMART TIPS

*Seasonal simple and clever actions to reduce energy costs*

## Sanook Thai Restaurant at Nelson Bay

### Background

Sanook Thai is a seasonal business that found a way to save money through the quiet months with simple and clever actions. Ms Sumalee Ommondha has been running the business for 15 years and aims 'to provide a comfortable atmosphere where customers can relax and enjoy a variety of traditional Thai cuisine.'

Sanook Thai employs Thai chefs and aims to create a dining experience in a gallery-style restaurant, with Thai decorations and appropriate lighting to create the mood. The restaurant opens seven days a week from 5:30pm-10:00pm and seats over 80 people. The restaurant has a large area with high ceilings and natural light that makes the space comfortable in winter and is air conditioned in summer.

The restaurant is located between two major centres and this location makes the business dependent on the season. During summer, the customers increase and the staff numbers triple in the kitchen and on the floor. During the low season only six staff are employed.

Sumalee had noticed that the electricity bill had increased by 50-60% in the last three years. She was concerned about this extra cost to her business and was thinking about different ways to be more energy efficient, especially in the low season.



## Measures Implemented

The Business Energy Smart Tips program (BEST) assessed Sanook Thai Restaurant and provided a report. The report showed the following breakdown of energy use in the business.

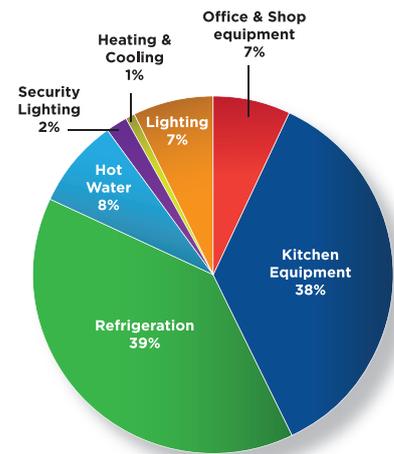
Electrical heating and cooling costs are only 1% of the total of energy consumption as the business uses a gas heater in the main room during winter.

The report also suggested some low cost and no cost actions that could be implemented to save money and energy in the low season.

In summer, it was suggested to turn the air conditioning off when the restaurant is closed during the day or at the end of the day. Further savings could be made if temperature sensors were installed. This allows the air conditioner to switch between the economy cycle and the cooling cycle, efficiently maintaining the desired temperature in the restaurant.

It was suggested to review lighting usage by using only what was necessary and installing timers on the existing switches and light sensors and also to ensure that external lighting is not in use during the day. Sumalee is already using switches and sensor devices to control indoor and outdoor lighting.

## Electricity Analysis



At night the cash register and microwave are already turned off at the power point. The report identified other similar no cost changes that reduce energy use. Staff are now being educated to switch off lights and to turn off kitchen appliances at the power point when not in use. Smaller sized rice cookers are also being used during the low season as well as using only one well of the deep fryer.

There has always been a separate wine and beer fridge. For the low season this has now been turned off and the wine and beer moved into another fridge where there was space. Similarly, the contents of a kitchen freezer have been consolidated and the freezer turned off.

The owner also defrosts the freezers 2 to 3 times per year to maintain the efficiency of the refrigeration unit.

Some low costs recommendations were made in the report such as spending around \$900 to change twenty six 50W halogen downlights in the restaurant to 11W LED down lights. This would

potentially save around \$570 every year. Twelve lights in the kitchen and toilet could also be replaced with LED tubes saving around \$235 per year.

## Outcomes

Sumalee has now been practising the no cost energy saving actions for more than two months and can already see a saving of over \$100 on Sanook Thai's energy bill.

The biggest change has been turning off the fridge and freezer in the low season when they are not needed. This is a small change but she is making savings. She is now looking at her finances and considering making an investment of nearly \$900 to change the lights.

Sumalee heard about the BEST and was then given a lot of information to help her find ways to use less energy and save more money on her bill. After seeing the savings and wanting to make changes to save even more, she would recommend a BEST energy assessment to any business owner.

