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We pay through nose

# Aussie homes zapped

John Rolfe

WE pay 130 per cent more for electricity than Canadians, a power premium that will rise to 250 per cent once the carbon tax and locked-in price increases take effect.

Households pay 70 per cent more than the US average, research for the Energy Users Association of Australia says. That will grow to 160 per cent in two years.

Australians are charged about 12c a kilowatt hour, meaning average annual consumption of 7000kw/h costs \$840. A similar bill in Canada would be \$630, based on 9c a kilowatt hour.

The Carbon Market Economics report argues the way power prices are set in Australia needs urgent reform.

The energy users' association — which represents 100 big power users including BHP, Coles and the Commonwealth Bank — will use the research to reject claims Australian electricity is relatively cheap.

Energy Minister Martin Ferguson recently said Australians paid less than the OECD average.

This relied on a document called *Energy In Australia 2012*, which the Bureau of Resources and Energy Economics published three

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## POWER PAIN

Are you feeling the power bill pinch? Have your say

weeks ago based on 2009-10 electricity prices.

"That data is old," EUAA executive director Roman Domanski said. In 2010-11 the national price had risen by 16 per cent.

The comparison of prices in 92 jurisdictions — including more than 35 countries, individual US and Australian states — found Victoria was fifth costliest behind Denmark, Germany, South Australia and NSW.

The price of electricity is the No.1 cost of living concern in Victoria, a Galaxy poll found this month.

Mr Domanski said: "Add in the carbon tax, further network price increases and renewable energy subsidies and our prices are pushed to the point where they are challenging Denmark and Germany as the most expensive in the world — unless something's done."

The report found Australian power prices had risen about 40 per cent since 2007.