



PRICING PUSH: Karen and Joe Shlegeris and their environmentally friendly house.

PHOTO: GEOFF POTTER

Politics 'drives' power hikes

By **PETER GARDINER**

A NOOSAVILLE sustainable energy advocate who lives by example believes the latest electricity prices will financially punish those who seek to conserve their power output.

And Joe Shlegeris, whose Weyba Dr house has been a public showcase on previous Sustainable House Days, says the new regulated electricity prices to take effect on July 1, is using the carbon tax as a smokescreen for an unrelated price-hike.

Mr Shlegeris said the Queensland Competition Authority fact sheet claims that power consumers would enjoy a \$119 saving if the tax was repealed, but is "nonsense" that distracts householders "from the main game" which he calls a "stealth charge".

"This same fact sheet fails to mention the huge 66% rise in the fixed connection charge," he said.

"This charge is not

affected by the carbon tax and follows an increase of 92% the previous year.

"The fixed charge, paid whether you use any electricity or not, has increased by more than three times in just two years, from 29.6c to 91.8c per day."

Mr Shlegeris said the fixed charge is payable on

"The price changes will cause everyone's electricity bill to increase..."

— JOE SHLEGERIS

every electricity connection and has increased by \$227 per year in just the last two years to \$335 per year.

This comes, he said, as the cost per kilowatt-hour has increased by 4.8% to

30.8c per kilowatt-hour.

"The price changes will cause everyone's electricity bill to increase, but they will have a far bigger impact on careful users of electricity.

He said a careful power user with no swimming pool pump costs, LED lighting drain with solar water heating, no extra fridge and a small solar PV system would draw an average of 5 kilowatt hours per day.

However, he said the bill for this household will increase by 21.5% while a careless user drawing 20 kilowatt-hours per day will suffer a rise of 10.1%.

"A magnificently wasteful user who gets up each day thinking about how to burn even more coal, who uses 50 kilowatt-hours per day, will scarcely notice an increase of just 7.0%. People who take steps to waste less electricity will be punished. The State Government has bet the state's finances on propping up the declining industry of coal fired, grid-delivered electricity."