



12 Jul 2015

Sunday Telegraph, Sydney

Author: Ben Pike • Section: General News • Article type : News Item

Classification : Capital City Daily • Audience : 489,257 • Page: 31

Printed Size: 74.00cm<sup>2</sup> • Market: NSW • Country: Australia • ASR: AUD 5,122

Words: 188 • Item ID: 433381202

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# Rising cost of power is dangerous

**BEN PIKE**

ELDERLY Aussies squeezed by sky-high energy bills are risking life and limb in an effort to save a few dollars.

A joint University of Wollongong and Macquarie University study of 1000 of the state's low-income residents aged over 60 revealed many were forgoing basic energy needs at the risk of personal safety. It also found many people were only turning on the heater when friends or family came to visit.

"We found one couple who reported that when the gentlemen got up in the night he had a bad fall in the toilet, all because he didn't want to switch on a light," Energy+Illawarra social marketing project lead Dr Ross Gordon said.

"Other participants spoke of balancing precariously on stools to try to unplug their microwave from the wall socket to save energy.

"We also found people who spoke of only turning on heating and cooling just for when friends and family visited, masking what temperatures they usually live in from those closest to them."

The study comes after at least two deaths and a spate of injuries from people looking for cheap ways to heat homes.