# Call for energy labelling of TV screens

Most people don't realise it, but larger plasma screens for the home – some recent models measure 103 inches diagonally (2.4 x 1.4 m) – are overtaking refrigerators and freezers as energy guzzlers, according to RMIT energy expert Alan Pears.

Based on specifications for smaller models, a 103-inch screen could consume as much as 1.08 kilowatts of energy says Pears. This compares with 50–200 watts for a 31.5 inch (80 cm) conventional TV set.

The larger plasma screens also came with speakers, further fuelling the energy bill.

Pears said the wide range of energy consumption across brands, models and sizes made it difficult for consumers to judge how energy-efficient a TV screen is, and has called for energy labelling of all new units.

The call for energy labelling has been echoed by New South Wales Greens MP, John Kaye, who says that people are not aware that alternatives, such as the LCD unit, produce up to 40 per cent less emissions than a plasma screen.

'We also believe that labelling will drive the market to produce more efficient units in the long run,' he said.

# Native grasses low-cost option for mine clean-up

Australian researchers are finding that our native grasses offer a cheap, effective and environmentally sound way to rehabilitate old mines and other industrial sites.

The roots of certain native grasses – for example, wallaby grass, kangaroo grass and red grass – give a boost to microbes in the soil that break down pollution caused by fuel oil and other hydrocarbon contaminants, according to Sharyn Gaskin of Flinders University.

The technique, known as rhizoremediation (root remediation), is easier and more cost-effective than traditional clean-up methods such as digging up and treating soil. Gaskin has tested nine endemic grass species in contaminated soils and measured their growth rates.

**A clump of native *Chloris* spp, showing the strong root system.** Native Seeds Pty Ltd

Studies overseas have identified a range of grasses – particularly ryegrass and other perennials – as able to degrade organic pollution, but this is the first time Australian grasses have been put to the test.

# This year's Banksia winners


**Arron Wood (right) receives the Prime Minister's Environmentalist of the Year Award from Minister for the Environment and Water Resources, the Hon. Malcolm Turnbull.** Banksia Environmental Foundation

The Banksia Environmental Foundation awarded its 2007 Gold Banksia Award to Westpac for its outstanding achievement in the area of corporate sustainability.

The annual Banksia Awards are regarded as the most prestigious environmental awards in Australia.

The visionary young founder of the International River Health Program, Arron Wood, won the Prime Minister's Environmentalist of the Year Award.

The 2007 International Award winner was Californian Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger for his landmark efforts in demonstrating to the world 'that economic growth and the environment can co-exist'.

Among the Banksia Category Awards winners this year was Queensland's Northern Gulf Resource Management Group, which won the Banksia Indigenous Award for its Carpentaria Ghost Nets Programme (see page 11).

Other Banksia Category Awards went to Molectra, for developing new technology that re-uses all parts of used tyres; Kimberley Toad Busters, a community group in Western Australia dedicated to reducing the cane toad threat to the region's wildlife; the Paintback™ system for the recovery and safe disposal of unwanted paint; the Australian Conservation Foundation's GreenHome community education program; Victoria's Birchip Cropping Group for investigating biodiversity values of different water supply systems; and the Revive Our Wetlands program run by Conservation Volunteers Australia and BHP Billiton.

The Foundation says there was a 25 per cent increase in Banksia Award entries compared to 2006. Entries into the Banksia Climate Award jumped 200 per cent, while entries into the Banksia Water Award climbed 36 per cent.