



■ **GREENHOUSE ATLAS**

# Spending our way to climate change

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Environment Reporter

THE Kruse Ledet family of Woollahra is about to embark on a green home renovation that will include solar panels and a 15,000-litre water tank.

It won't be cheap but, in the face of climate change, Soren Kruse Ledet believes "it is one of the things you have to do".

When his daughters are older and less reliant on their parents to get to school and sport, Mr Kruse Ledet also hopes to use his car less, further reducing the family's carbon footprint.

But new research shows it is Australia's love affair with retail therapy, rather than direct household electricity, water and petrol use, that does the most damage

to the environment.

Work done by the Australian Conservation Foundation and the University of Sydney found a much stronger than expected correlation between rising income and rising water and electricity consumption. The Consumption Atlas, an online tool developed as part of the project, shows the more money people spend, the greater their contribution to climate change.

The atlas allows Australians to view the greenhouse pollution created by households in their suburb. In Sydney, residents of affluent Woollahra are, on average, the biggest water users and fourth-largest generators of greenhouse gas emissions.

So even if the Kruse Ledet family uses dramatically less water

and electricity after its renovation is done, the family's consumption footprint will still, to a large degree, define its environmental footprint.

Home renovations and air travel are heavy greenhouse gas emitters while food is particularly water intensive.

Mr Kruse Ledet wasn't completely surprised at the findings but he said it was difficult for consumers to make all their shopping decisions based on a product's carbon footprint.

"Like most people, I am becoming more conscious of [climate change]," he said. "I try not to waste food and we buy food every day or every second day rather than doing a big weekly shop ... but we all have to live so I try not to feel too guilty about it."



Doing what they can ... Soren Kruse Ledet and his daughters Jamilla, front, and Annika. Photo: Andrew Meares