



**SERIOUS:** Jan Boynton and Prue Mansfield make every effort to be energy-conscious in their offices.

## Council staff take energy challenge

SO seriously did employees of the City of Greater Bendigo take a 15-day green challenge, some worked without light, others turned off the hot water for hand washing in the toilets.

The challenge to reduce energy use was accepted by three separate buildings operated by the city — the first floor of the Lyttleton Terrace main office, the Economic Development Unit building next door and the ground floor of the Hopetoun Street office — in the form of a competition, the winner of which

would bask in raised status.

For three weeks, ancillary fridges were decommissioned, computer monitors were switched off overnight, as were lights and hot water urns.

The heater was turned down, without complaint, and weather-proof strips were adhered to exterior doors to keep out cold air.

Staff at the Hopetoun Street office brought their own coffee mug, rather than use disposable cups — although the competing EDU team insisted they

would have to drink out of the stainless steel cup for more than a year to offset the energy embedded in them.

So dedicated was strategy director Jan Boynton, she worked by natural light for most of the day rather than switch on the overhead bulb.

Lights were also switched off in the EDU's hallway, but risk management saw fit to reverse the decision for reasons of occupational health and safety.

The unit is planning to install skylights instead,

made from recycled materials, of course.

Staff recycled paper and ensured double-sided printing, many planted trees and made an effort to walk, car pool or take public transport.

The staff met yesterday to discuss the initiatives, make jokes about lemon trees and decide on a winner.

Polar bears were the winner, they concluded.

The city took the initiative from the online green challenge, [www.greenyourbusiness.org.au](http://www.greenyourbusiness.org.au).