

EASY WAYS TO GO GREEN

Going green is becoming an essential consideration to ensure the future of our planet and there are many ways you can reduce energy usage, water consumption and resource wastage.

The range of green issues associated with building is extensive and can embrace 'big-picture' thinking about building life cycles as well as specific system choices such as for heating or cooling of buildings. Life cycle issues start with accounting for the energy used to make materials and end with consideration of how materials can be recycled after a building is demolished.

It is important to think about which choices make the biggest impact. Solar water heating for example addresses one of the biggest energy requirements in the family home. It takes more energy to heat water than air so water heating can be more important than room heating. While the installation cost of the solar system is sometimes viewed as expensive this can

Long-term savings on energy bills can be significant once you've had solar panels installed.



Recommended resource

www.urbanimpact.com.au

This article was written in conjunction with D6 Architects who specialise in designing environmentally sympathetic buildings. Visit www.d6.com.au to find out more.



Carl Hinton, director of the multi-award-winning development company Urban Impact, gives you the insider knowledge to help you create your renovation dream.

be offset by several government subsidies and the long-term savings on energy bills can be significant.

Another option that's easily installed is insulation, not only in the ceiling but also the walls and floors of your house. There are a wide range of insulation products on the market, from bats to spray on foams to polystyrene panels, giving a multitude of insulation choices. As windows can be a major source of heat loss, their position and size is an important consideration. A lot of people will instinctively look towards air-conditioning when the house starts to get hot in summer, but in many instances effective cooling can be achieved by just increasing the volume of airflow. There are many ways this can be achieved, such as using louvre windows or by the strategic removal of a wall to allow cross ventilation through the space.

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Solar control is also very important on windows that are facing north and west; options to achieve this range from a simple coating on the glass through to motorised blinds that react to sunlight. While internal window coverings like blinds and curtains do help, external solutions tend to be far more effective.

Using recycled materials is an area that's quite often overlooked. It is now possible to obtain a wide variety of recycled building products that help reduce use of new resources as well as decreasing landfill waste. A carefully chosen recycled feature timber can add real character to a renovation.

Going green can save you money and potentially the environment so it is well worth taking the time to consider the best way you can incorporate green design features and products into your renovation.