Sustainable Homes Turn Green into Gold

Green design has turned into a substantial money making investment for renovators



Pergolas can be precisely designed to block the summer sun, and still allow the desirable winter sunshine to penetrate the home. They can be planted with deciduous vines or creepers.

Design by Architect Terence Nott

Australian home owners facing rapidly rising energy and water prices are using smart sustainable housing design to cut costs and add capital value to their homes and renovations Archicentre, the building design, inspection and advice service of the Australian Institute of Architects said today.

Ian Agnew from Archicentre said, "The rising costs of energy and water means Green Design has now turned into a substantial money making investment and a lifestyle trend. This trend is often used by real estate agents to promote the home's sustainability with the rainwater tank or bank of solar panels as a major advantage when homes are sold.
"Investors and home owners recognise that being able to design a sustainable home will save them thousands of dollars in the future and also add extra value to the home when it is sold with the value going up as energy and water prices continue to rise."

Mr. Agnew said that price conscious home buyers looking for a financial edge when offered the choice between an energy efficient well designed home including rainwater tanks and solar panels and a poorly designed home, obviously will make the choice of the home with an inbuilt cost saving program that will give increasing returns from free sunshine and water saving plumbing fixtures.

"Air conditioning, one of the most expensive appliances to run in the home and business during Australia's hot summers, and the prime driver of peak demand on days of extreme heat, can be sidelined to a great extent with sustainable design."

Archicentre has found energy efficiency to be an increasing priority for people commissioning Archicentre new home or renovation design concepts.

Mr. Agnew said **the key to year-round comfort is passive solar design which carefully combines materials, methods, building form and the sun's natural energy to help keep the house cool in summer and warm in winter.**

"This approach saves money, respects the environment and enables you to live comfortably year round.

"An energy-wise home requires a complex mix of well insulated, high thermal mass, intelligent glazing and ventilation, all arranged in a way that enhances comfort, anywhere in Australia."

Important factors in the design of an energy-wise home include:

o Insulation is paramount to the energy-wise home experience.
Lining the roof / ceiling, walls and floor can reduce heat loss in winter and heat-gain in summer.
o Materials with a high thermal mass, like stone, brick or rammed earth, take a long time to heat up and a long time to cool down.
Walls with a high thermal mass should be shaded to minimise a heat load in summer.

o Glass is a very poor insulator. In an energy efficient design think about the size, location, glazing type and window coverings like verandahs, canopies or deciduous trees.
Other important factors include: - locating windows away from the western sun, and in some areas, the eastern sun.
Closing curtains and angling blinds to reflect intense heat off the windows during summer helps keep the home cooler.

o Cross ventilation is an important design factor, and entails providing at least two carefully placed and treated openings in every room.
- Louvres can direct the air flow towards the occupant of the room.
- High level windows can allow unpleasant hot air to escape, resulting in the drawing in of cool air.
- Reversible ceiling fans are great in summer and winter. In winter they push the warmed air down to where you are sitting. In summer they disperse the air around the room.

Archicentre has further information available on green living sustainable homes at http://www.archicentre.com.au/green-living/sustainable-homes

FREE RENOVATION DESIGN CONSULTATIONS

HIA Home Show
Venue: Darling Harbour Exhibition Centre
Archicentre Stand F16

Sydney residents will have an opportunity to have a free twenty minute consultation with an Archicentre architect at the HIA Home Show on their proposed renovation and how to make their project sustainable.

Archicentre is also running several sustainability seminars at the HIA Home Show.

Dates and Times for appointments
11am - 5.30pm Thursday 16 May 2013
11am - 5.30pm Friday 17 May 2013
11am - 5.30pm Saturday 18 May 2013
11am - 5.30pm Sunday 19 May 2013

Book a Free consultation online at: http://www.archicentre.com.au/expo/sydney-hia-homeshow-2013

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Archicentre is the building advisory service for the Australian Institute of Architects.

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