

How to use *Your Home*

Finding the information you need in *Your Home*

Every journey to a sustainable home is unique and *Your Home* has been designed to help you find the right information at the time you need it most.

Every *Your Home* section needs to be taken into account to create a truly sustainable home. Some articles will be more relevant to your project than others. Each article links to complementary *Your Home* articles and to useful external sources of information.

Case studies from around Australia demonstrate practical examples of how the concepts in *Your Home* can be applied.

Search *Your Home* for information in two ways:

- 1. By theme or topic.** Use the table of contents, arranged by sections, to find a particular theme or topic; or use the index, arranged alphabetically, to search by keyword.
- 2. By the stage you have reached in the process of choosing, renovating or building.** Different information is 'top of mind' during different parts of the process of choosing, renovating and building a home. The following section highlights the most important 'must read' articles for each stage in the process plus the articles that would be useful background reading at that point.

*Regardless of the information-finding path you choose, *Your Home* guides you to a comfortable, affordable home that is cheaper to run, kinder to the environment and 'future-proofed' as an investment.*

The process of renovating or building a home

The process of choosing, renovating or building a home can be daunting, particularly if you haven't been through it before. Having the right information and making the right decisions early on in the process is critical for achieving a home that meets your sustainability goals in the most cost effective way. Every process is unique, but most renovation and building projects typically fall into these general stages, though not every point may be relevant. Remember, it's not an entirely linear process — keep revisiting and refining ideas in more detail as you go along.

Stage 1: Getting started

At the start decide what you want from your new home or renovation, and plan a course of action to achieve it. Now is a good time to gather information from sustainable housing magazines and internet searches, talk to friends who've built or renovated, visit home ideas centres and seek professional advice. Consider:

- where you want to live and why
- future trends in housing, and why you might want to build a sustainable home
- what's involved in the process of designing and building
- whether you'll build a new home, renovate or buy off the plan
- likely sources of professional advice
- what you can learn from analysing your current home and lifestyle
- goals and sustainability targets for your new home or renovation
- a prioritised checklist that includes your needs and 'wish list'
- your baseline budget
- building regulations, including sustainability requirements.

How to use *Your Home*

Stage 2: Concept design

Good design doesn't cost the earth – poor design does. Careful planning and expert advice at this stage pays a huge dividend.

This is a stage of great opportunity, the time to lock in the outcomes you really want in the most cost effective way. At concept design stage the floor plan and building form is determined, and often the construction system. It's the time to create a design that suits your site and works with your climate, not against it, and ensures your home is comfortable without the need for expensive heating or cooling. It's time to:

- engage a designer with a track record in sustainable housing
- seek other professional advice as required (e.g. thermal performance expert)
- create a detailed design brief, based on your checklist from Stage 1: Getting started
- design the floor plan and overall building form
- ensure your design makes the most of your local climate and site
- choose construction systems and materials
- select energy and water saving features, locate rainwater tanks
- ensure the design allows suitable roof space for solar hot water and solar electricity panels.

Stage 3: Detailed design

During this stage your design is developed to the level of detail necessary to gain building approval and be construction-ready. You'll further develop the building envelope and interiors, and specify all materials and products in detail. It's time to prepare:

- detailed building envelope design (the 'shell' – walls, floor and roof)
- interior design (also called 'fitout' design)
- detailed specification of all products, materials and systems

► Detailed design

Check that your design:

- meets your brief, including any sustainability goals and targets
- meets all applicable regulations
- suits your climate and your site
- creates comfortable and healthy interiors
- has a minimal environmental footprint – consider **all** the *Your Home* sections.

- documentation for approval by local authorities
- documentation for the construction tendering process.

Stage 4: Construction

At this stage you'll engage a builder and/or tradespeople to construct the home or renovation. The steps at this stage include:

- tender assessment and appointment of a builder
- construction supervision (usually the designer or builder manages the process)
- siteworks and drainage
- construction of the building shell (or extensions/ refurbishments to it)
- 'rough in' of electrical cables and plumbing
- fitout, including installation of appliances, joinery and finishes
- certification of the final works by the local authority
- landscaping (if part of the contract)
- handover to owner.

► Construction

When engaging a builder, ensure that:

- they know sustainability is a priority and are committed to delivering it
- they have past experience with sustainable housing
- your tender documents, including drawings and specifications, clearly specify all sustainability requirements
- your contract requires approval by you or your designer for any changes or product substitutions.

Stage 5: Living in your new home

Having a sustainable home doesn't stop at construction. A home's environmental impact is significantly influenced by the behaviour of the occupants. Find out more in the section *Energy* where the articles have many helpful hints, and visit www.yourenergysavings.gov.au.

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Navigating *Your Home* by stage of the building process

At each stage in the building process, certain *Your Home* articles are of greatest relevance.

▶ Getting started

Must read

Before you begin: Introduction; Preliminary research
Housing: Introduction

Useful/ skim-read

Before you begin: all articles
Housing of the future: all articles
Energy: Transport
Appendices: Streetscape

▶ Concept design

Must read

Before you begin: The design process
Passive design: all articles

Useful/ skim-read

Housing: Affordability
Before you begin: article on your chosen housing type
Materials: all articles
Energy: all articles
Water: all articles
Case studies: all articles
Appendices: all articles

▶ Detailed design

Must read

Passive design: Insulation; Glazing; Skylights; Sealing your home
Materials: Construction systems; articles on your chosen materials
Energy: all articles
Water: Reducing water demand; Rainwater

Useful/ skim-read

Housing: The livable and adaptable house
Water: Wastewater reuse; Stormwater; Waterless toilets
Appendices: The healthy home; Noise control

▶ Construction

Must read

Before you begin: The construction process
Materials: Waste minimisation
Water: Outdoor water use
Appendices: Sediment control; Landscaping and garden design

Useful/ skim-read

Housing: The livable and adaptable house
Passive design: Shading; Insulation installation; Sealing your home
Materials: Construction systems; articles on your chosen materials
Energy: all articles
Water: Reducing water demand; Rainwater; Wastewater reuse; Stormwater
Appendices: Safety and security