

recommended best practice

Do these things whenever you can. Living smart - it's easy to do!

Imagine if your home was cheaper to live in, better for the environment, flexible to meet your current and future needs, and modern looking. Wouldn't that be a smart way to live? The truth is that most of the items highlighted in this brochure can be done quite simply, and will be rewarding in the long term. Some of the ideas should be implemented when designing your home; others can be incorporated in any home at any time. No matter what your lifestyle, these ideas can help you to live smarter. Sustainable housing is simple, common sense housing design to make your house environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable.

General Living

1. Step-free thresholds make it easier for people in wheelchairs, with prams, or carrying heavy loads to move throughout the home. A maximum 10mm change in level is acceptable.
2. Large rocker-style light switches are easy to operate for people of varying abilities.
3. Window glass has added film with a high rating under the Window Energy Rating Scheme to help keep the home more comfortable in summer and winter.
4. Design your home so that the street can be viewed from a living area. Potential intruders will have the sense that they are under surveillance.
5. Power points located 600 mm off the floor are easier to access from sitting and standing positions.

6. Efficient compact fluorescent lighting should be used where appropriate. Twelve-volt down lights should be used for task lighting where lights might only be used for short periods.

7. Insulation keeps the home cool in summer and traps heat in winter, reducing the need for air conditioners, and saving money in the long term.

8. Use materials from those with a low volatile organic compounds (VOC) emissions.

Around The Kitchen

1. Choose energy-efficient appliances with a high "star rating". A six-star fridge will emit 500kg less greenhouse gases per year than a three-star fridge.
2. D-shape or bow-shape handles on cupboards in the kitchen and throughout the house are easier for people of all abilities to use.
3. Install kitchen taps that have an 3 Star water conservation rating and flow restrictors.
4. Exposed bench corners should be rounded to minimise the risk of injury.
5. An electric fan-forced oven and a gas-stove top provide a greenhouse gas efficient and practical cooking solution.
6. Use a separate bin for recycling items such as glass, paper, plastic and metal from the kitchen. Check with your local council to find out what is collected in your area.
7. Kitchens should be designed so they are

not a thoroughfare. This reduces the risk of collisions with people carrying hot food or sharp implements.

8. A smart meter can be placed in the kitchen to monitor electricity, water and gas use in real time units or dollars.

9. Be careful what you put down your sink. 85% of oil in the ocean that has harmful effects on marine animals and plants comes from household sinks.

In The Bathroom

1. Lever taps installed in the shower make it easier for people of varying abilities to use.

2. 3 Star rated showerheads cost less than \$40 and cut down on water usage by more than 16 litres per minute on conventional showerheads, without reducing spray pressure.

3. Step-free showers reduce the risk of tripping and are accessible for people of varying abilities. A step-free shower is also easier to clean and looks more modern.

4. Reinforced walls enable grab rails to be easily fixed in any position near the bath, shower and toilet at any time in the future at minimal cost.

5. Fix leaking taps and toilets immediately. A leaking toilet can waste up to 96,000 litres of water a year.

6. Replace your old toilet with a dual flush system to save three litres of water per flush.

7. Greywater from the laundry and bathroom

may soon be able to be used for garden irrigation (check with your local council).

8. Reduced-slip floor surfaces can prevent injuries in high traffic and wet areas.

Outside The House

1. Install a solar hot water system to save up to 80% on your hot water bills. Other recommended energy saving systems are those with a minimum of 24 Renewable Energy Certificates; natural gas; or a gas system with a five-star AGA energy rating. For more information, refer to the sign near the hot water system.

2. Use native plants in well-mulched gardens to minimise the need for watering.

3. Rainwater tanks allow you to use rainwater for watering gardens. An automated system can be installed to use rainwater storage when the tank is filled above the minimum level.

4. Use an external clothes line to reduce the energy used by clothes dryers.

5. Position trees to maximise shade on your property, while minimising the potential for damage from roots or falling branches. Plants outside can significantly reduce the temperature inside your home.

6. Compost bins and worm farms are useful for encouraging recycling of all food wastes.

7. Prominent house numbers help visitors and Emergency Services to easily locate your home.

8. Balustrades should be built so that it is

difficult for children to climb them.

9. A sensor light will make the house more safe and secure and will also conserve energy.

10. Wide eaves over windows help to keep the house cool, provide sun protection and allow the windows to be opened when it is raining with less chance of water coming inside.

11. A covered entrance protects people from the elements.

Other Good Ideas

1. For additional security, external doors should have a solid core and double cylinder deadlock.

2. Clear glass louvres allow good visibility from the front door to view visitors before opening the door and allow for good airflow through the house. For security purposes, ensure louvres are not placed next to the door lock.

3. Light coloured roofs and walls will absorb less heat from the sun, keeping the home cooler.

4. Design your home so that the street can be viewed from a living area. Potential intruders will have the sense that they are under surveillance.

5. Lever door handles are easily operated using one hand or an elbow.

6. Door handles should be approximately 900-1000mm from the floor to be easily accessible by people of all abilities.

7. A lockable cupboard, inaccessible to children, is suggested for the safe storage of poisons, medicines and household chemicals.

8. Steel is a recyclable framing option that is extremely resistant to warping and settling. Steel house frames will also discourage termites from your home, without reducing your design flexibility.