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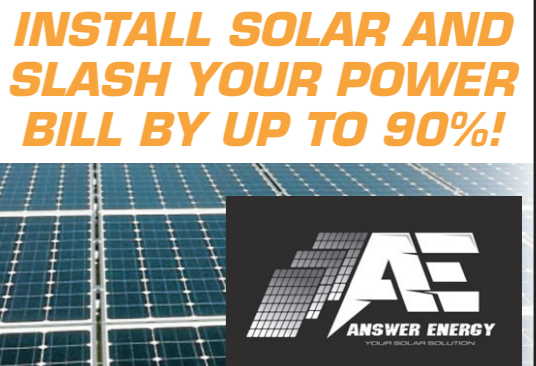
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RENOVATIONS

Renovations can improve the livability and sustainability of your home with careful planning, thoughtful design and a considered choice of builder.

Most local governments have planning policies that allow minor internal and external changes that don't alter structure or services to be made without council approval, but it is always best to check first.

Even for minor renovations, some work is likely to require tradespeople. Ask for references, sight a current licence and insurance policies, and consider a simple contract that describes the work, its cost (or hourly rates) and any warranty. Simple contracts are available from most building industry peak bodies.

IMPROVING THERMAL COMFORT

WINDOWS

- Replace windows with high performance units appropriate for the climate.
- Improve air seals as you refit sashes.
- Relocate or reduce the size of east and west facing windows and install adjustable shading devices.
- Shade problem windows (use temporary shade cloth blinds for windows that will eventually be removed, moved or replaced).
- Remove trees or plantings that are blocking solar access to north facing glass and ask neighbours to prune or remove such trees.

VENTILATION, AIR MOVEMENT AND DRAUGHTS

- Improve cross ventilation by:
 - Retrofitting fully operable, breeze catching windows and doors
 - Creating new openings in non-loadbearing walls and above doors
 - Moving doors to improve breeze paths
 - Designing landscaping planting, outbuildings or fences to direct breezes through the home
 - Removing planting that blocks breeze access, unless needed as a windbreak.
- Install fans that ventilate your roof space in summer and can be sealed in winter.
- Install doors in hallways and stairwells to control winter draughts and air movement and create heating and cooling zones.
- Draught seal the whole building.

THINKING SMART

- Replace halogen downlights with low energy models, seal openings and replace insulation over them. Electrical retail outlets can supply sealed, heatproof boxes for downlights that seal them and allow you to insulate over them without fire risk.
- Add insulation to accessible floor, wall and roof sections (it can be easily removed and reused later if these sections are demolished).
- If crawl spaces are adequate, simply install underfloor insulation in sheet or roll form with additional bulk insulation on top in cooler climates. See Insulation installation for safety considerations and further installation details.
- For cavity brick walls seek advice from insulation specialists about insulation solutions that do not breach the waterproofing integrity of the cavity.
- Where timber framed walls are being reclad, fit new insulation under the new external cladding and

create an air gap adjacent to an inward facing reflective insulation layer using spacer battens. This gap simplifies installation of new services.

• Install roof insulation when roofing is being replaced. Fit bulk insulation at ceiling level and downward facing reflective foil under roofing.

IMPROVING ENERGY EFFICIENCY

- Consider installing an active solar heating system, particularly if your home has no solar access to north facing glass.
- Upgrade your heating and cooling system with one that:
 - Has the highest energy star rating you can afford
 - Only heats or cools rooms that are in use
 - Can be expanded to include future additions.
- Install a solar or energy efficient hot water service.
- Improve natural daylighting by removing or pruning plants that obstruct light and adding skylights or daylight tubes.
- Replace low efficiency lighting with LED or other efficient lighting.
- Install smart metering and control systems when rewiring.
- Choose the highest energy star rating when replacing appliances.

IMPROVING WATER EFFICIENCY

- Retrofit the highest WELS star rated toilets, showers and taps available
- Install flow restrictors on taps that deliver too much water (e.g. handbasins, sinks).
- Install rainwater tanks (some councils require approval over a certain size so check first).
- Reduce lawn areas and convert parts of your garden to mulched, low water planting beds to save work and improve privacy and air quality.
- Restore biodiversity by planting local native plants, which also reduce your water consumption because they are adapted to your climate's rainfall regime.
- Consider reusing grey water for your garden but have a soil expert explain the implications for your soil type and plants, and check which systems are approved by your council.

IMPROVING INDOOR AIR QUALITY

- Ensure high levels of controllable natural ventilation or fans in rooms that are difficult to ventilate.
- Consider heat recovery ventilation systems in cooler climates.
- Ventilate wet areas to the outside to reduce mould and mildew.
- Check that existing exhaust fans are vented externally – not just into the roof space.
- Ensure subfloor spaces are dry, well drained and ventilated to eliminate mould growth.
- Avoid floor coverings and furnishings that harbour dust mites or allergens.



IMPROVING SPACE AND AMENITY (TO REDUCE NEED FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION)

- Build or improve outdoor living spaces close to kitchen and indoor living areas and consider summer shade, insect proofing and winter sun.
- Install additional, purpose built storage.
- Experiment with more space-efficient furniture layouts to make room for additional functions and storage.
- To renovate your kitchen (if the final position is fixed in your staged concept plan):
 - Choose durable, non-dating finishes
 - Ensure the refrigerator is well ventilated and not next to the oven or other heat source
 - Consider traffic flow and safety
 - Choose energy and water efficient appliances
 - Include effective facilities for composting and recycling.
- To renovate your bathroom (if it is to be retained in its current position):
 - Choose toilets, showers and taps with the highest WELS star rating
 - Consider a two or three way design to eliminate the need for additional bathrooms (a vanity and mirror can sometimes be located in a waste space or relocated cupboard to allow simultaneous showering (and tooth brushing).

CHOOSING A BUILDER

The processes of building a new home and renovating have much in common but your renovation builder needs a set of specialised skills, which vary depending on the stage you are at.

For example, do you require the builder to include design services, council approvals, engineering certification, construction certification (if private), and survey or geotechnical reports or is your designer handling these?

• Check the builder's history — especially in renovations and additions. Extensive renovation experience is critical.

Ask to visit a current project. Speak to previous clients and inspect their homes where possible.

Before signing a contract, make sure you are comfortable that you can work with the builder and that they have sufficient finances to carry out the project, sufficient skill and experience to build it, and are committed to sustainable outcomes.

DIY CAUTION

Within many a householder is a builder or home renovator just looking for their first (or next) project. Renovating your own home can be a rewarding experience in creative expression and skill building but inexperience often leads to unforeseen social, environmental and financial cost.

Popular television home renovation programs may make it look easy, but lifecycle outcomes from these renovations are often poor. Critical medium and long term details

such as thermal performance, and water and energy efficiency, are commonly overlooked to achieve a quick turnover that conceals problems and passes them on to the next owner.

Inexperience often skips critical steps like termite proofing, damp proofing and adequate surface preparation before fixing finishes, which reduce the life span and waste valuable resources. To be cost effective, choosing materials on an environmentally preferred basis requires careful sourcing, scheduling and quantity estimation to avoid waste.

If you choose the DIY path, evaluate your skills objectively at the outset and use professional tradespeople at critical stages. Consider using a licensed builder to get your renovations and additions to 'lockup' stage (completed structure and external building shell, so the home is waterproof and able to be locked up).

Handy TIPS

Colourbond or Tile?

Colourbond:

- 1 Long lasting
- 2 Less labour-intensive to install
- 3 Wide variety of colours
- 4 Suits heritage and modern homes

Tiles:

- 1 Sturdy material
- 2 Good natural thermal qualities (insulation may still be necessary)
- 3 Can be resurface and restored
- 4 Easy to pressure clean

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Building Your Dream Home?

Council has three (3) certified Building Surveyors accredited with the NSW Building Professionals Board to assist you in building or renovating your dream home.

If you make your appointment for a building inspection before 9am, it can be carried out on the same day.

For more information about Development Consent and Inspections, contact Council's Department of Development, Regulatory and Sustainability Services at 136 Church Street (phone 6730 2350) between 8.30am and 4.30pm on weekdays.

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