

Introduction

Welcome to *Your Home*, Australia's most comprehensive guide to environmentally sustainable homes. *Your Home* continues a long-standing effort by the Australian Government, in partnership with the building and design industry, to give comprehensive, expert and independent advice to everyone interested in building homes for a sustainable future.

As a resource for people aiming to build, buy or renovate a sustainable home, *Your Home* has proven its value many times over. As energy and water costs increase, along with community awareness of climate change and the need to protect our environment, *Your Home* has become even more relevant.

Your Home was originally published as a technical manual in 2001 in parallel with the *Your Home* website. It was the first Australian publication of information on sustainable building practices aimed at ordinary householders as well as building professionals.

The intent has always been to keep *Your Home* up to date, to match significant changes in the building industry. For example, energy efficiency standards were added to the Building Code of Australia in 2003 and have been progressively increased over time; water efficiency requirements have been introduced in a number of jurisdictions.

Changes to *Your Home* respond to user feedback and reviews. Major recent changes include:

- the transition to a single website and book incorporating the previous technical manual, buyer's guide and renovator's guide
- the free-to-download Design For Place energy-efficient house plans and elevations along with guidance. The architect-designed suite of plans is a significant resource for anyone planning a new home (*the Design For Place house plans and content are only available on the website and not in the book*)
- a set of case studies showing examples of sustainable houses in a variety of climate zones.

The text and diagrams in all sections of *Your Home* have been checked for currency and accuracy and updated where necessary. References to other documents and websites have also been updated. The principal and updating authors are listed at the end of each article.

Your Home combines the efforts of a large number of committed people over a considerable time. Industry and cross-sectoral support for its development has been

part of the project since its inception and crucial to its success.

The people include: principal and contributing authors and photographers, many who have given input as members of advisory committees; technical advisers, industry and community representatives; reviewers of articles.

The residential building industry has openly embraced the idea of green buildings and a number of programs now promote sustainable approaches to building; however, the need for clear and comprehensive information on design and construction options for householders, builders and design professionals remains undiminished.

The authors hope that you find *Your Home* useful in creating your own sustainable home.