



HOME SUSTAINABLE HOME

Sustainability consultants, Cameron Rosen and Daphna Tal share their secrets to creating a sustainable home, which is easier (and cheaper) than you may think.

IN THE SYDNEY suburb of Rose Bay there's a quiet street with a lot of noise surrounding one of its neighbours; it's not the kind of noise that would cause neighbours to pack up and leave, but the kind that can change the way we all live by actually altering our environmental footprint.

Managing director of Australian Living, Cameron Rosen and sustainable interiors consultant, Daphna Tal have designed and built a truly sustainable home, which they take great delight in showing and sharing with those who are keen to learn more.

How does Australia compare in the sustainability stakes?

When it comes to designing and building sustainable residential homes, Australia lags behind the UK, USA, Sweden, Germany and, even, China and India. Cameron attributes this largely to our favourable climate and affordable energy costs. He feels that we simply

need more awareness and education about how to create a sustainable living environment because, if done right, the building costs are on par with, or can even be less expensive than a home built to minimum standards.

What classifies a home as 'sustainable'?

It goes far beyond simply installing solar hot water and using energy-saving light bulbs. A truly sustainable home is one that is constructed with sustainable building materials and techniques, is energy and water efficient, and uses permaculture as a way of completing the sustainable cycle. It's about fusing sustainable practices and products into every single stage of the building or renovation process.

To Cameron, building a sustainable home is more than just bricks and mortar; or, rather, recycled timber and cement. 'The home never needs to change, never needs to have its

'IT'S NOT ONLY ABOUT THE HOME; IT'S ALSO ABOUT THE IMPACT IT HAS ON THE PLANET AND FUTURE GENERATIONS.'
— DAPHNA TAL

windows changed, never needs to have its insulation changed, never needs to have more or less thermal mass, the cross ventilation is correct from day one. That makes today's home current forever; and that is what a sustainable home is,' he explains.

Soaring electricity prices signify bad news for Australian households as home heating and cooling costs represent about 38 per cent of the total of energy consumed. Cameron says that it's all related to design and 'if you have an energy-challenged home, then chances are you have a poor design that uses poor products.'

This is because a sustainable design

maximises the thermal mass, which is the key for temperature control. 'Thermal mass is your heat sink that allows you to control your temperatures inside. Insulation then goes over that; it's the ring of protection, like putting a jumper on over your body.' When used with appropriate cross-ventilation and house and window positioning, there is actually no need for any additional heating or cooling.

Sustainable living also includes consideration of your outdoor space; for example, planting a garden that includes food production such as in Cameron's showcase home, where you don't actually notice that every plant is edible or bears fruit or a vegetable. 'You can mix your garden landscape with aesthetics and food produce, without it having to look like a typical vegetable garden,' explains Cameron.

Cameron's partner, Daphna, says the garden is as important for sustenance as it is for education. 'I think it's very important for the kids to learn that food doesn't come from a supermarket shelf. They really enjoy picking the veggies too,' she adds.

The interior design is as meticulously considered as the construction of the home itself. Daphna has been designing interiors with sustainable and environmentally sound products for eight years and says that from a health perspective, this is the way to ensure there are no chemicals being slowly released from low volatile organic compounds (VOCs), which can be commonplace when using standard products.

Choosing to build a home for future generations and the future of the planet is about taking responsibility. 'I am a responsible developer because I have built a home that is good for me today but is also good for me tomorrow, also the next person after that,' says Cameron.

For more information about creating a sustainable living environment visit www.yourfuturehome.com.au/ or www.australianliving.info/

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BENEFITS OF SUSTAINABLE LIVING:

- + Energy – dramatically reduces power bills and energy consumption by making your house thermally comfortable through design.
- + Water – saves water by integrating water management systems such as rainwater, grey water, black water and edible gardens.
- + Health – using sustainable products that have very low volatile organic compounds content and allowing the house to breathe by creating cross-ventilation and using specific construction methods.
- + Environment – minimises your impact by choosing materials that are efficiently produced and installed.
- + Lifestyle – creates an aesthetically pleasing and healthy home that saves you money on energy, water and food.
- + Valuation – lower operating costs equates to more cash to pay off the mortgage quicker. Sustainable homes are also attracting higher price tags in the sales market.

KEY FEATURES OF CAMERON AND DAPHNA'S SHOWCASE HOME:

- + Three water tanks storing a total of 6,600 litres.
- + Integrated grey water diversion system.
- + Irrigation system feeding citrus trees, lawns, herbs, olive trees, banana trees and passionfruit vines.
- + Energy efficient appliances.
- + LED lighting throughout the home.
- + Garden wall.
- + Insulation externally, internally, under concrete slab and on the roof via a combined roof panel.
- + High WELS rated showerheads, taps and dual flush toilets.
- + A three-kilowatt PV solar system.
- + Sustainable interiors.
- + Double glazed windows only where required.
- + All timber used is certified plantation or recycled.
- + Green concrete used during construction.
- + Pre-fabricated walling system.
- + Plasterboard with a high content of recycled material.



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