

Construction Queen
(Taken from Herald Sun, Home Feb 3rd, 07)



>> Construction Queen; photography: Shania Shegedyn

Low energy

Careful consideration to the size of your home can help reduce energy costs (left)

Window seat

Installing high-performance windows will provide long-term benefits (right)

>> maximum benefit to the family is another element of good design."

Bernard Hockings is the technical director of the Association of Building Sustainability Assessors (ABSA), an organisation he says "grew out of the new building regulations that require specially trained independent people to conduct sustainability building assessments".

Members of ABSA specialise in assessing the environmental impact of buildings.

"Most people who are building a home are willing to make their home environmentally sustainable and have a general idea of how to go about it, but need professional help to apply the skills," Bernard says.

Assessors are able to provide sustainable options and put a cost against these options.

"For example, a person may say they want to halve their energy costs. An assessor can then give them costed options for doing this, as well as showing them what the cost would be to reduce energy costs by an even greater amount," Bernard says.

Like Cate, Bernard agrees the thermal performance of a house is something you need to get right at design stage.

"You can achieve very high performance for a building at concept stage with minimal cost," Bernard says.

"Improved insulation and high-performance glazing are two things that allow you

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