

# 10 TIPS FOR WORKING WITH A 'GREEN LIVING' BUILDER

## 1 Show your vision. Collect your ideas in a folder

A great way to visualise your thoughts to your Builder is by collecting clippings of the things you like be part of your dream home. Even better is to find out in advance where these items can be purchased and what they cost.

## 2 Paper is cheap. Make all changes at the design stage

Take all the time you need to get your house design 100% right! It often takes many months and hundreds of changes to finally arrive at your final design. This is also the time to ensure your house meets the six star energy efficiency requirements.

## 3 Always look for a Builder who is a registered professional

A Builder should be a registered professional for a reason. It gives you, the future homeowner peace of mind that your Builder is qualified and capable of completing the project, and has the backing of a national organisation.

## 4 Ask for customer testimonials or examples of their work

A professional Builder will always be happy to provide you with testimonials from their clients, as well as information about completed construction projects. Go and visit their projects and talk to the owners about their experiences.

## 5 How can they help you build a more comfortable, energy efficient home?

Although your house plan is rated six stars for energy efficiency, it takes a quality Builder to make sure that it also performs to that standard. Precise placement of insulation (no gaps) and a well-sealed building envelope will result in lower energy bills and higher comfort.

## 6 Avoid misunderstanding. Always document your request

Although it's great to have a 'cuppa' and a chat with your Builder from time to time, it's crucially important to write down and confirm all aspects of your house construction and costs. Ask your Builder to do the same.

## 7 If you want sustainable products, be specific & make a list

There are many building products, which are sustainable in nature. If you choose to have these incorporated in you project, communicate to your Builder why you want them, where they can be purchased and what they cost.

## 8 Make sure the Builder has warranty insurance before they start

Always ask your Builder to see evidence of the warranty insurance before the start of your project. This is a mandatory requirement for all registered professional Builders.

## 9 Avoid changes during construction. They can be expensive

Understand that every change made to your house during the construction process could require additional man-hours and / or materials. This can translate into thousands of dollars extra. If you want to make a change, ask for a costing prior to carrying out the work.

## 10 Done by Christmas? Always agree on a finish date

Make sure you include the finish date in your contract. With that in mind, be realistic when it comes to the completion date of your home. It's better to allow for extra construction time, than to be caught out by delays. Even your Builder cannot predict the weather. Don't forget, this is Melbourne!

