

book boosts eco building

A new book on building sustainability is the first comprehensive publication of its type for New Zealand.

The issue of environmental sustainability has now moved from a fringe to a central position of public concern. And while we may carry our groceries in reusable bags, and recycle our glass, paper and plastics, a more holistic approach starts much earlier on – when we design and construct our homes and buildings.

It is estimated that the building sector uses roughly half of all the energy generated in this country, a very high proportion of materials and creates huge volumes of landfill wastes. This means that to make a difference we need to look at how we build, how we can reduce energy use and costs, how we future proof our buildings and minimise their carbon footprint.

Earlier this year, the building sector received a boost with the launch of the first comprehensive book on this subject, *A Deeper Shade of Green: Sustainable Urban Development, Building and Architecture in New Zealand*, edited by Johann Bernhardt.

Green building concepts have been applied for many years and environmentally friendly houses and buildings can be found across the country. But existing regulations, prevailing technologies and building materials, general levels of expertise, and conventional investment considerations have not helped to achieve high levels of sustainability.

Apart from a few notable exceptions, the level of sustainability we have achieved locally so far must be classified as a 'light shade of green', says Johann, who is also a sustainable architect. He has compiled essays from 50 experts in their fields, including architects, research fellows, university lecturers, Government advisors, private researchers and consultants. The 232-page book contains more than 300 colour photographs, plans, graphs and illustrations.

This book offers an introduction into the new realm of sustainable thinking, concepts and solutions and aims to give as wide an overview on sustainable topics and issues as possible. It also offers a glimpse of what we have achieved to date with a selection of sustainable projects featured in a series of case studies.

The book is directed at a multitude of stakeholders whose contributions are vital for a successful shift, including central and local governments, professional groups, manufacturing and construction industries, investors, non-government organisations and the public.

Resene is one of the proud sponsors of the book and wholeheartedly supports its focus on providing knowledge on sustainable building relevant to New Zealand.

A Deeper Shade of Green: Sustainable Urban Development, Building and Architecture in New Zealand retails for \$69.95 and is available in all good bookshops or directly from the publisher, Balasoglou Books: j.balasoglou@xtra.co.nz or ring John on 09 529 2211. **H**

WIN one of five copies of *A Deeper Shade of Green*, worth \$69.95 – see page 73 for details.

Existing homes

Building a new house using eco principles is one thing, but what about existing houses? Don't despair, as Brenda Vale points out in her chapter in the book, there are many measures to make your house eco-friendly:

- > Maintain a house well to avoid major renovations. The longer the house lasts, the better for the environment.
- > Make sure the house is well insulated – an uninsulated house wastes energy through extra heating and thereby puts greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.
- > Installing a tank to collect rainwater is simple and effective. In urban areas its use is limited to toilets, washing machines and gardens but in rural areas, it can be used for all household purposes.
- > Use a waste minimisation policy incorporating containers for reusable and recyclable materials, and a compost bin.



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