



An artist's impression of the completed eco-friendly homes

## At home with sustainability

### Four new project homes that will showcase the very latest thinking in environmentally friendly building designs and products are nearing completion.

Australian Living, a sustainable building management and consultancy firm, is currently building four homes that will demonstrate just how sustainable residences of the future can be.

Located on one large block in Rose Bay, NSW, each home has a different owner who has chosen their own architect. As part of the project known as The Eco-Challenge, Australian Living has been helping the owners and architects to create homes that go well beyond current government requirements around sustainability.

"We define a sustainable home as one that minimises the energy requirements to operate the home by not relying on traditional energy sources and one that has minimal impact on our environment.

The combination of smart design, thermal comfort technology and the use of eco-friendly products can allow homeowners to not only reduce their eco-footprint but also to save money in reducing energy and water costs," says Cameron Rosen, Director of Australian Living.

The company has researched sustainable building products and services, and is bringing together a team of suppliers—including CSR—to assist them in designing and delivering sustainable homes.

"We are aware that many people claim that their building products are 'green', but we are conducting research to find out how sustainable these products and services really are," says Cameron.

"We follow the Green Building Council of Australia (GBCA), Good Environmental Choice Australia (GECA) and ISO rating systems to help us make these decisions. Where a product doesn't fall under these guidelines, we investigate the manufacturer, how they produce their products, and how much recycled content their products contain."

Study has been conducted around thermal mass and insulation to ensure that each room in the homes is thermally stable. "Each house will only use about 20 megajoules of energy per square metre to heat and cool it

over a whole year, whereas a regular BASIX-committed house uses about 132 megajoules." says Cameron. "In fact, one of the four homes has scored the equivalent of eight-stars for thermal comfort."

Once the required thermal comfort performance was achieved, Australian Living was then able to address infrastructure. "Once you have a building that essentially warms and cools itself, then it becomes

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energy-consuming items. When you don't need air conditioning, essentially the only power needed is for appliances and lighting. You can then afford the appropriately sized solar PV system to supply energy to operate appliances and lighting. Using such small amounts of energy will obviously save the owners money," says Cameron.

The next step was to look at building products and materials to improve the sustainability of the home by reducing embodied impact. "We specially selected insulation, recycled concrete and treated timbers in line with project goals," he adds.

### Gyprock™ on board

When it came to planning the walls and ceilings, Cameron says he looked closely at what was on offer from different building product manufacturers.

Australian Living arranged a meeting with product reps from CSR, influenced by the fact that the company is Australian-owned as well as its reputation as pioneers in the industry.

The decision was made to use Superchek™ because it could be used in a residential context and because of its recycled content.

"We also liked the fact that CSR collects discarded board for reuse," Cameron explains.

Each home uses Superchek™ for all walls

and ceilings, as well as fibre cement and the wet-area board Aquachek™ in the bathrooms.

CSR's Residential Market Segment Manager, Tim Ohlback, says that CSR is pleased to be involved in cutting-edge environmental projects like Eco-Challenge.

"CSR Gyprock products like EC08™ and Superchek™ are important for us because they are the first steps towards making building products that have no negative consequences for the environment. We don't claim that these products will solve climate change, but they are an important part of our investigations into making plasterboard more environmentally safe.

"Australian Living is doing the same thing. Cameron is building homes to see how they can be made more sustainable. He's not saying he has some kind of panacea for environmental problems, but he's developing real-world solutions. That's exactly what we are doing with our product development," Tim adds.

### Cost savings

Australian Living was set up in 2008 to develop high-energy-efficient housing, way above current industry standards. The company also aims to promote sustainable building by establishing a template that others can follow.

According to Cameron Rosen, architects

and builders are becoming aware of the importance of considering sustainability when making choices about what materials to use in homes. But there are still certain barriers that prevent people choosing environmentally sound products, he says. These include the time it takes to research the best products, people sticking with what they know, and clients' perception that sustainable products cost more.

"Of course, sustainable building doesn't cost more if you take everything into account," says Cameron. "The key is to balance the scales by understanding what you need and where you can compromise. For example, when designing the structure of the house you have to know where you need thermal mass and when you don't. You might pay where you need thermal mass but make savings by lightening the structure where you don't. Individual sustainable products will probably always seem to cost more when considered in isolation. But when you take into account the overall cost of a sustainable project they end up costing less."

The Eco-Challenge homes are scheduled to be finished by the end of July this year. ■

**i** To find out more about CSR's range of sustainable building products, call 1300 306 556. More information about Australian Living is available from [www.australianliving.info/](http://www.australianliving.info/)

## Rondo expands Top Hat range

**RONDO®**

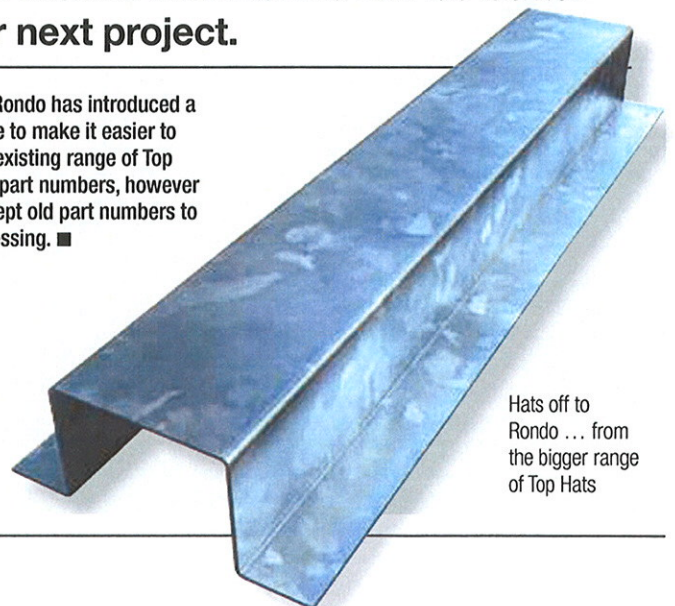
**An increased number of Top Hat sizes means that Rondo will be better able to meet the requirements of your next project.**

Due to market demand for steel top hats suitable for a variety of applications, Rondo has significantly increased its range of standard, off-the-shelf profiles.

Through extensive market research, Rondo has identified 22 Top Hats that will meet a wider range of customer requirements, consisting of 11 different sizes in both 0.75bmt and 1.15bmt. Additional sizes can be made to order, although lead times and minimum order quantities may apply.

In extending the range, Rondo has introduced a new part number sequence to make it easier to identify each Top Hat. The existing range of Top Hats will also take on new part numbers, however Rondo will continue to accept old part numbers to ensure smooth order processing. ■

**i** For more information on Rondo's new range of Top Hats, including an expanded range of Span Tables to suit the new profiles, visit [www.rondo.com.au](http://www.rondo.com.au), or contact one of our Technical Representatives at your state Rondo Sales Office on 1300 36 7663.



Hats off to Rondo ... from the bigger range of Top Hats