

Not only greener, this home is a lot healthier

Sacha Molitorisz

SINCE moving into his Rose Bay home in December, Cameron Rosen has been pleased with the way it has stayed cool in summer and warm in winter. He is even more pleased that it is not killing his three children.

"People are building homes using toxic stuff," Mr Rosen, a builder and project manager, says. "Then they bring in all their brand new furniture and they live with this cocktail of chemicals. We've got to focus more on providing a much healthier environment."

For Mr Rosen, health is a key component of sustainability, and sustainability was the guiding principle during the construction of his four-bedroom home in Strickland Street. Tomorrow, his home will be one of the showpieces for Sustainable House Day, for which nine Sydney homes will be open to the public to promote greener living.

For anyone who equates greener living with yurts, Mr Rosen's home will be an eye-opener. It is spacious and comfortable, with a swimming pool out back. At its heart is an internal courtyard with a roof of motorised louvres that can open to allow the sun to penetrate the home's southern half.

Recycled materials were used extensively for the 270-square-metre home. But for Rosen, temperature is the key. So far, his family has not needed to turn on a single fan or heater. Thanks to rebates generated by their solar panels, they haven't had to pay a single electricity bill. Rosen says architects, builders and owners focus too much on issues of water, power and light fittings at the expense of heating and cooling.

"There's very little focus on removing the heating and cooling requirements out of a home,

OPEN HOUSE

Forestville 17 Edinburgh Rd
Fairlight 32 Thornton St
Waverton 2 Balls Head Dr
Rose Bay 5 Strickland St, pictured
Randwick 6 Barrett Place
Phillip Bay 2 Oorana Ave
Redfern 88 Pitt St
Marrickville 53 Riverside Cr
St Clair 9 Phar Lap Place

Houses open 10am to 4pm tomorrow. Entry is free.



which is actually 38 per cent of most people's energy use."

In summer, Mr Rosen says, his home is like an Esky: the lightweight single-stud walls of the exterior is like the Esky itself; the solid walls of the interior, which retain cold air, act as ice blocks.

Surprisingly, he says his eight-star home was no more expensive to build than a standard home. A nearby home with an identical footprint took longer to build, cost \$100,000 more and will cost more to run. It is also less healthy.

When Mr Rosen had a Volatile Organic Compound, or VOC, analysis done on his house, the results were impressive.

"Health is a huge issue," he says. "My focus with this project has been to transfer and share the information."

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