

Resource Responsibility

When yesterday's buildings were designed and constructed there were no such things as water restrictions or high energy costs and there was little concern over volumes of waste. There is now enough scientific evidence that our lifestyles today at home and in the workplace, are having a major environmental impact on the earth. A key goal of FPB is to minimise our impact on the planet. When building, renovating, or improving your home, choosing more eco-friendly products, recycled materials and renewable resources all help to reduce your carbon footprint, and protect the planet for future generations.

Water Efficiency

One of the biggest issues facing New Zealand each summer is water, or the lack of it. With the imminent introduction of the Water Efficiency Labelling Scheme (WELS), labelling products with a star rating based on their overall water usage allows you to choose products for your home that will not only save on your water costs, but also help protect this vital resource.

Alongside water ratings systems look at products that will fit your lifestyle, for example dishwashers are available in half sizes, or that can run genuine half loads so only the necessary water is used. Washing machines are also available with an automatic water level feature, these products decide the correct water level ensuring only the required water is used for each wash load.

Rain Harvesting

Another key way to reduce water consumption is through rain harvesting. Already many New Zealand homes are on tank water and the average roof produces 180,000 litres of water a year. It is a cheaper and more environmentally friendly way to supply water to your home and garden and worth considering when building.

Grey Water

When you're renovating your kitchen, bathroom or laundry, take the opportunity to install a grey water

system. By collecting grey water (waste water from laundry tubs, washing machines, showers, baths and basins to be re-used in your garden or for toilet flushing) an average household can reduce its water usage significantly.

Environmental Accreditation

Most major New Zealand building manufacturers and suppliers are aware of the importance of reducing our environmental footprint. Look for products that state their impact on the environment or have an Environmental Choice accreditation or similar. You can also support manufacturing companies that provide recycling facilities for their products.

Use of Sustainable Products

In a world facing dwindling resources, atmospheric pollution and global warming, the use of sustainable building products is crucial. Select products that have been manufactured using sustainable practices and resources. Avoid imported timber that isn't from a certified source. Under New Zealand law, both exotic and indigenous grown species are subject to high environmental management standards to achieve sustainability.

Waste Management

Every month, New Zealanders dispose of enough rubbish to fill a rugby field to 30 storeys high. Include into your design a recycling receptacle, trash compactors, in-sink waste disposal units, and the recycling of re-usable materials such as paper, glass and plastic - so that landfill usage can be reduced. If you can reduce your energy and water consumption and your waste, both during construction and whilst living in the house, you will have taken significant steps towards a greener home and a more sustainable environment. Better still, it will provide financial payback both now and in the future. To minimise your environmental footprint, look for products that have been awarded the Environmental Choice award.