

## **PASSIVE DESIGN**

Passive design is design that does not require mechanical heating or cooling. Homes that are passively designed take advantage of natural energy flows to maintain thermal comfort.

Incorporating the principles of passive design in your home:

- Significantly improves comfort.
- Reduces or eliminates heating and cooling bills.
- Reduces greenhouse gas emissions from heating, cooling, mechanical ventilation and lighting.

Building envelope is a term used to describe the roof, walls, windows, floors and internal walls of a home. The envelope controls heat gain in summer and heat loss in winter.

Its performance in modifying or filtering climatic extremes is greatly improved by passive design.

Well designed envelopes maximise cooling air movement and exclude sun in summer. In winter, they trap and store heat from the sun and minimise heat loss to the external environment.

The fundamental principles of passive design, explained above are relatively simple but they must be applied to a vast range of climates, house types and construction systems in Australia.

## **DESIGN FOR CLIMATE**

### **CHOOSING A SITE**

Choosing an appropriate site, or existing home, and developing it to make the most of its natural attributes will yield significant economic, lifestyle and environmental benefits.

The usual stages of choosing a site:

- Choosing a locality and housing type.
- Choosing a site, existing home or block.
- Choosing, designing or altering a home to suit your block.

### **ORIENTATION**

A home that is well positioned on its site delivers significant lifestyle and environmental benefits. Correct orientation assists passive heating and cooling, resulting in improved comfort and decreased energy bills.

### **PRINCIPLES OF GOOD ORIENTATION**

- Orientation for passive solar heating.
- Orientation for passive cooling.

### **PASSIVE SOLAR HEATING**

Passive solar heating is about keeping the summer sun out and letting the winter sun in. It is the least expensive way to heat your home.

- **Northerly orientation of window areas.**
- **Passive shading of glass.**
- **Thermal mass for storing heat.**
- **Minimising heat loss with insulation, draught sealing and advanced glazing.**
- **Floor plan zoning to get heating to where it is most needed and keep it there.**

**Passive solar houses can look like any other home but they are more comfortable to live in and cost less to run.**

## **PASSIVE COOLING**

**Passive cooling is the least expensive means of cooling your home. It is appropriate for all Australian climates. Four key approaches should be examined:**

- **Envelope design for passive cooling.**
- **Natural cooling sources.**
- **Hybrid cooling systems.**
- **Adapting lifestyle.**

## **INSULATION**

**Insulation is an essential component of passive design. It improves building envelope performance by minimising heat loss and heat gain through walls, roof and floors.**

## **THERMAL MASS**

**Externally insulated, dense materials like concrete, bricks and other masonry are used in passive design to absorb, store and re-release thermal energy. This moderates internal temperatures by averaging day/night (diurnal) extremes, therefore increasing comfort and reducing energy costs.**

## **GLAZING**

**Windows and glazing are a very important component of passive design because heat loss and gain in a well insulated home occurs mostly through the windows.**

**With good passive design, this is used to advantage by trapping winter heat whilst excluding summer sun. Cooling breezes and air movement are encouraged in summer and cold winter winds are excluded.**

## **WERS**

**The Window Energy Rating Scheme (WERS) is a system for rating both the**

glass and the frame performance of windows in reducing heat loss and heat gain. WERS will help you to determine whether heating, cooling or both are more important in your climate. It assists you in choosing the most energy-efficient windows for your home and climate.

## SHADING

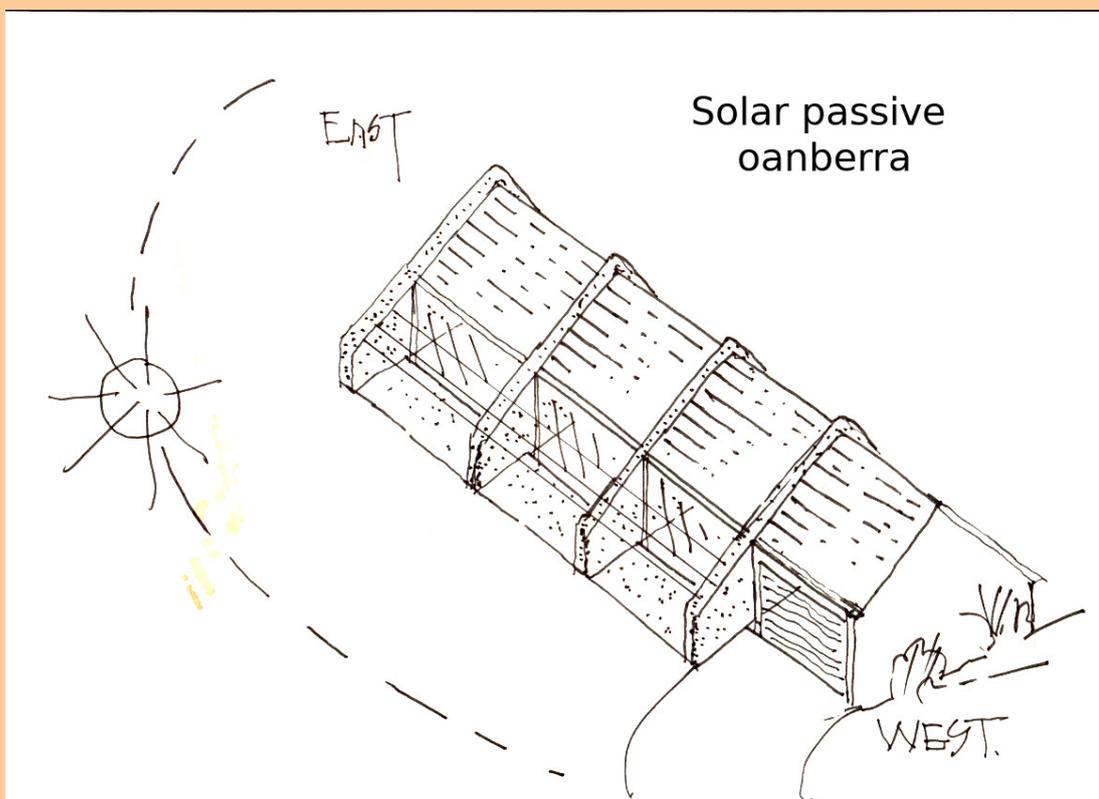
Shading of glass is a critical consideration in passive design. Unprotected glass is the single greatest source of heat gain in a well insulated home. Shading requirements vary according to climate and house orientation.

In climates where winter heating is required, shading devices should exclude summer sun but allow full winter sun to penetrate. This is most simply achieved on north facing walls. East and west facing windows require different shading solutions to north facing windows.

In climates where no heating is required, shading of the whole home and outdoor spaces will improve comfort and save energy.

## RATING TOOLS

A range of specific purpose modeling and rating tools has been developed to rate aspects of building performance for Australian conditions.



This house:

1. Is north facing to maximise solar penetration. Large picture windows at front and small only windows at rear.
2. Garage on west to minimise the effect of th hot westerly sun
3. High thermal mass with concrete slab floor and masonry wall partitions

**4. The front pergola has dense deciduous vines providing shade in summer and sunlight in winter.**

**5. An extra bonus was a hot water system circulated throughout the concrete slab insulating the pipes from a cold exterior.**