

MASTER BUILDERS

ROMINA DE SANTIS, technical adviser at Master Builders WA, answers your questions about home building



THE QUESTION

We are looking at display homes to decide on a design and builder that would suit our site. What value should we place on award-winning homes when we select our builder?

THE ANSWER

The 2018 Master Builders-Bankwest Housing Excellence Awards are coming soon on February 24, which means a new wave of winners will be able to showcase their homes recognising their hard work.

There are two main associations that present annual awards to builders – HIA and Master Builders. Master Builders recognises builders in a number of categories including display homes, custom homes, best new builder, innovative construction on small lots, water and energy efficiency, and customer service (and this is only a few).

As they are builder awards, the judging of the homes focuses on the quality of the construction and finishes, not so much on the design.

The rigorous judging process selects a number of finalists and winners for each category.

The quality of the submissions is very high, so even being a finalist for the awards is an enormous achievement.

The award winners have well and truly earned their awards.

They are often proudly displayed in their offices, display homes, on their websites and in their advertising material.

Your experience through the building process is dependent on your understanding of your contract, plans and specification.

Good communication with the builder or supervisor is critical and perhaps should be one of the questions you ask when signing up with the builder.

If you have any concerns along the way, you should be able to discuss them openly.

Reputation is everything in the building industry, so builders are keen to keep their clients happy through this exciting and sometimes stressful process that is building your home.

Enjoy your new home. Perhaps your builder will enter it into next year's awards.

For more information about building, visit the Master Builders A-Z Building Information Directory at www.mbawa.com. If you have any questions about home building or purchase issues, email romina@mbawa.com

WASTE NEED NOT BE A DIRTY WORD

Waste Authority WA has published a consultation paper entitled 'Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy'. Master Builders director Michael McLean explains what this is about.

MOVING to a low waste society is a goal we would all agree with.

Achieving it will require a change in our behaviours in relation to how we dispose of and recycle some of our waste.

Changing the behaviours of individuals and businesses can often take a long time because of habits and cultural issues.

Incentives to change might include the introduction of a statewide container deposit scheme in 2019 and a ban on lightweight single-use plastic bags, which starts on July 1 this year for community recycling bins.

According to Waste Authority chairman Marcus Geisler, waste disposal to landfill has decreased 30 per cent and the amount of material recovered for recycling has increased since 2012.

The recycling rate in the construction and demolition sector has increased to five per cent, which is higher than the national average, but household waste recycling in the metropolitan area, at 36 per cent, is lower than acceptable.

Marcus says Waste Authority WA is working to help the State Government achieve its waste strategy target of diverting 65 per cent of metropolitan waste from landfill by 2020.

Not only will our efforts towards waste minimisation benefit the environment, they will also result in some positive economic benefits.

Recycling creates more jobs than landfill – 9.2 full-time equivalent jobs are generated by recycling 10,000 tonnes of waste compared to 2.8 jobs when you send the same amount of waste to landfill.

Reducing the volume of waste being generated can help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, pollution and biodiversity loss.

Any initiatives that help to protect our environment from the impacts of waste and litter and which maximise the economic benefits of effective waste management are supported by the Master Builders Association.

Construction and demolition materials such as concrete, asphalt, bricks, sand and rubble are major waste contributors in WA.

The recovery of these materials with the objective of recycling them will be an ongoing challenge for the building industry.

We also need reliable recycling outlets to be able to utilise the materials being deposited.

Some builders like PACT Construction, Homebuyers Centre and Arklen Developments have won MBA awards for their initiatives to recycle construction waste.

Clearly, a lot more can be done to encourage and make it easier for builders to recycle their waste.

Fortunately, there are now several companies who specialise in waste management and recycling. These include Instant Waste Management, Cleanaway and SUEZ.

Separating toxic and dangerous materials like asbestos and oils from construction waste is critical, as is the proper disposal of these materials.

The risks of recycling polluted waste need to be avoided at all costs because of their harmful impact on the environment and people.

Appropriate strategies to educate producers of waste and to penalise illegal dumping need to be reinforced.

All of us have a role to play in reducing our waste by using common-sense and thoughtful approaches to recycling on a daily basis.

Learning from overseas will also be helpful in conjunction with a concerted education campaign including in our schools, universities and TAFE colleges to change our mindsets.

It is pleasing that Waste Authority WA is focused on proactive strategies to better manage our waste disposal and to help us to recycle more.

Anyone can make a submission to the Waste Authority's consultation paper until the closing date of March 1 by emailing wastestrategyreview@wasteauthority.wa.gov.au.

Alternatively you can respond to an online survey, which can be accessed via https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/waste_strategy_review.

