

Call for 7-star home rating

By JULIEANNE STRACHAN

BUILDERS could be pushed to construct new ACT homes to a mandatory seven-star energy rating, with Greens planning spokeswoman Caroline Le Couteur flagging it as a "natural progression for the territory.

The industry has already moved to six stars, but the Housing Industry Association has warned that more stars will add to the costs of new homes.

The association's ACT and Southern NSW executive director, Stuart Collins, said the move to six stars had added an estimated \$1500 to \$3000 to a single-storey home, which could go higher if it was in an existing suburb with a poorly oriented block.

The Greens have called for homes at the Molongio development to be built to a seven-star level, which Ms La Couteur said could be applied more broadly afterwards.

"It's very cost-effective to be seven stars if the house is oriented the right way, if it's oriented north it is a lot easier," she said.

"We are not trying to say 'seven stars before we have the north facing blocks', but once we have the north facing blocks with the draft Territory Plan Variation 301 in about a year's time, it would be a natural progression to move to seven stars for new developments."

Ms Le Couteur said research undertaken by RMIT University had revealed that seven-star homes were more affordable than six-star homes.

"Though they are slightly more expensive to build, they are better to run and the additional cost of doing the work is micro compared to the cost of the building," she said.

"And where the Greens are coming from is that houses should last a long time and it's vastly more cost-effective to build a house that's energy efficient than to try to retro-fit it afterwards."



Brothers Tommy, left, and Dane Kasunic in front of the eight-star energy-efficient home that they designed and built.

Photo: GRAHAM TIDY

Energy-efficient design can cut your bills in half

IT MAY look like any other modern four-bedroom home, but this one should be able to cut your running costs in half.

Designed and built by brothers Dane and Tommy Kasunic, the home at the Bonner Living Showcase has an eight-star energy rating.

It comes with some flash gizmos, including gas-boosted solar hot water and a photovoltaic electricity generation system.

Architect Dane Kasunic said a combination of passive solar design and clever construction techniques had helped cut its energy requirements.

"We have used reverse



brick veneer, which helps it stay cool in summer and warm in winter," he said.

"There is a burnished concrete slab which has a hydronic heating system.

"It pumps water through pipes in the slab and once it's heated the concrete takes considerable time to

cool down and it radiates heat throughout the home."

Mr Kasunic said the result was the heating only needed to be on for about 20 per cent of the day and the home would retain the warmth for the remainder of the day.

The house also has insulation, argon gas-filled

The reverse brick-veneer design ensures the home stays warm in winter and cool in summer.

windows, energy-efficient taps and incorporates recycled materials, just to name some of its virtues.

Mr Kasunic said the home would cost about \$680,000 to build, but the owners' bills would be reduced by about 50 per cent.

The Bonner Living Showcase has 12 demonstration houses and is open to the public from 10am to 4pm, Friday to Monday. It is on the corner of William Cooper Ave and Muriel Stewart Circuit, Bonner. The homes in the showcase range from a minimum six stars to 6.5, seven, 7.5 and eight.

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