



Residential Assessment Series

Queensland 5 Star –You Can Do It

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For Home Owners, Architects, Designers, Builders & Certifiers.

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Partners Energy has a commitment to keep its customers and other industry participants informed on topics that can improve their service delivery and improve the sustainability of the products and services they provide.



Queensland has just introduced 5 star energy rating for all new homes. Some in the industry have been concerned but really this is all good news and mostly common sense. Homes will be more energy efficient and hence more comfortable, and Queensland will have the same minimum standards as almost everywhere else in Australia.

Is the change to 5 stars important? Remember that for Australia to reach its energy emissions targets, all new homes will need to be self sufficient in their energy needs within 10 years. Hence it is likely that the Codes for new home will be progressively stepping toward that target over the next few years and 5 stars is an important step on that journey.

So how hard is it to get a 5 star rating? It may take some in the industry a bit of thinking and planning but it's not rocket science to produce this rating – cost effectively. Considerations in terms of orientation, ventilation, glazing and shading will generally produce the results necessary. New home requirements already include good levels of insulation so the gains are to be made in the glazing, ventilation and shading aspects of the home. Ventilation is by far the most important and understated factor in building a comfortable home in Queensland.

Consistency of assessment results are also important. Certifying Authorities in particular should be concerned about the integrity of the Energy Reports they are required to approve. The use of accredited assessors and approved simulation software is by far the safest bet. It becomes the role of the professional assessor to maintain their standards and provide consistent high quality assessments. Their ongoing business viability depends on their quality control. Newsflash 355 issued on 4 March 2009 by Building Codes Queensland clearly supports this approach.

2nd generation NatHERS software - AccuRate, FirstRate and BERS Pro are mature; having been in use for several years. Many Accredited Assessors have now considerable experience in the software use and are producing results which prove that 2nd generation software is more likely to provide reduced building costs than its 1st generation version; even with the requirement for higher star ratings. Most likely this observation can be made due to the enhanced ability for the software to better deal with 'ventilation' than the 1st generation did.

Accredited Assessors will provide you with a rating which complies with strict Codes of Conduct and Procedures, assisting to ensure consistency in ratings. As well as approved Thermal Performance Certificates, which undergo a Quality Assurance process, and a set of stamped plans with which the Certifier can inspect the final building - easily.



So what should a quality Energy Rating process look like?

1. Initial functional design – delivers schematic drawings
2. Consult Sustainability Assessor for preliminary input about orientation, ventilation, glazing and shading principles
3. Preliminary design drawings
4. Complete initial Energy Assessment and star rating by Sustainability Assessor
5. Negotiate with owner any modifications to achieve 5 Star rating
6. Complete final Energy Assessment and Star rating
7. Final Design submission for approval

Partners Energy is well equipped with software and assessors to complete energy ratings for new homes in QLD and provide advise on what the most economical steps can be in improving the energy efficiency of any building. We have been operating in this field for many years with specific experience in the northern NSW and VIC markets and with commercial buildings across QLD, NSW and VIC.

Give us a call – 5 star – we can do it.

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