

Energy Matters

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Green Loans

The Green Loans program is drawing to a close. It is to be replaced by the Green Start program some time in the New Year but I am not sure if I will be accepted as an assessor into the program.

Over the last 18 months, I have carried out 270 assessments but it is

DIY Double glazing can cost \$3,000 a house rather than \$15,000 if you get a professional glazier

getting difficult to get new customers since most people who want an assessment have already had one.

So, if you haven't had an assessment, or you know some who would like an assessment, or if you have moved into a different house and would like an assessment, just drop me an email.

DIY Double Glazing and Secondary Glazing

Many of you will be aware that I have been very interested in DIY double glazing. Over the last 8 months I have worked on my house and added a second sheet of glass on the outside of existing windows. Technically it is not double glazing, but rather secondary glazing. Double Glazing is when you have two pieces of glass sealed together as a single unit.

The main issue that arose was with moisture seeping into the gap between the windows, but by using a plastic cover over the wood separating the glass panes and sealing it with silicone and using rubber seals, moisture is no longer a problem.

I have completed 9 windows and only one has caused me some heart ache. For some reason it gets a film on the inside of the glass after about 3 months. I removed the glass and cleaned it, but it has returned. I plan to clean it again and see if it returns

a third time. It is not moisture, but I think it may be from the silicone or rubber out gassing.

I decided I would then complete the rest of my house and went to a friend who sells windows to see if he would give me a good discount on the glass. He could provide normal glass for around \$60/sq metre so I asked how much low-E glass would cost.

Low-E glass is supposed to be good at reflecting low energy emissions. This means that heat that normally radiates out of the house will be reflected back into the house. The cost for this glass was \$90/sq metre. So I asked for the cost of a proper double glazed unit and was surprised that it was only \$180/sq metre. This would mean that I could finish of the house for around \$5,000 and have the advantage of proper double glazing.

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DIY Double Glazing and Secondary Glazing(Cont)

I then got to thinking about what I could do with the glass that I took out of the windows, and realised that if I only bought double glazed units for half the windows, I could use the old glass to secondary glaze the remaining windows!

This halved the cost to around \$2,500 which is very affordable.

So, At this stage I am planning to buy the proper Double Glazed Units and install them myself, using the excess glass to secondary glaze the rest of my house.

My experience with home Assessments has been that many home owners want to double glaze their house, but when they find it will cost \$15,000 they think twice about it.

The reason for the high price is because it is quite labour intensive , so if you can organise to do it yourself, the price halves. However most window manufacturers discourage people doing it themselves since that is where they make their money.

The other thing is that it is more fiddly to use the existing window frames. They normally take out the old windows and replace them with new aluminium units which again pushes up the price.

Assuming it all works well when I do my windows I may consider going into business. So, in six months time I may be offering double glazed units to DIY installers at a very good price!

Solar Power for Timor

An interesting option for a Christmas present is to buy a solar powered light for a Timorese family. The ATA is offering such a present for \$50. Visit www.shop.ata.org.au

My Veggie Garden

I took out a Green loan to pay for a water tank. I connected it up to my toilets and laundry and managed to halve my water usage.

It has also encouraged me to build a veggie garden and get into composting. I haven't actually used much of the tank water on the garden, but I have been very successful with my silver beet, snow peas and rhubarb. My broad beans and radishes were less suc-



cessful. They grew well, but no one liked them!

But now my tomatoes, lettuces, and sweet corn are all taking off. I also have some self sown potatoes and pumpkins on the go. Hopefully in the New Year they will be producing.