Life Cycle Design Philosophy
Don’t get lost in the haze! Use Life Cycle Assessment and actually calculate all the impacts of your design choices in terms of carbon and cost. Quantify, compare and improve your design. Question everything; even if it was in a brochure or magazine, it doesn’t mean it will stack up in your building...

Make it financially attractive.
There isn’t much point making a carbon neutral house if it costs the earth! So invest in areas that give you the best return financially and maximise your positive impact on the planet.

Make it functional.
The more people a house can house, the less impact per person that house will have on the environment – it’s that simple! Plus the more functional you make it, the better chance it has of making it to a grand old retirement age.

Make it long lasting.
Is your design a fashion fad or a timeless classic? Something that lasts twice as long, with twice the use will halve in impact. Future proof your design and ensure it lives on after you move on.

Design for the future…make it last.
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Quality over quantity.
Australian dwellings are 40% bigger now than in 1990 but with 10% less people living in them. Meaning our environmental impact has grown by 40% while our homes have become even less functional. Build a smarter home with the right architecture that works well and feels good!

Low embodied energy materials.
Choose materials that are not responsible for much environmental damage (or zero) by asking yourself where they started life and how they were transported here.

The 5 Rs.
Reduce redundant materials and use raw finishes that don’t require ongoing maintenance.
Reuse whatever you can from the old building.
Recycle materials when the building is knocked down.

Locally local local but sometimes not...
It makes sense to use local materials, as less transport usually means less carbon. However, you may find that importing recycled products is actually better than a local material high in embodied energy. And when you’re considering transportation, investigate efficiency; could shipping from China be less than trucking from Melbourne to Perth?

Make it Climate Sensible.
After embodied energy, “heating and cooling” are the next big factors when it comes to your homes carbon footprint. Solar passive design is great, but make sure you consider exactly how much energy and cost went into making that big concrete slab you’ve used to get your thermal mass and star rating up...

Renewable Energy
We love renewables as they are a great source of clean energy, but don’t forget the embodied energy that goes into making all the components. Those extra solar panels might speed up your return on investment, but they represent carbon that can never be recovered.

Hot water…don’t land in it!
When it comes to running your home, hot water and appliances will impact your energy bills the most, so consider them right from the start. You don’t want to spend all your time ensuring a ten star design only to fill it up with inefficient systems and unnecessary appliances!

Low carbon doesn’t always mean sustainable.
Reducing your homes carbon footprint is only one metric of sustainability and it’s just as important to consider the way we behave in own homes. Don’t underestimate the impact your day to day actions have on the amount of energy your home consumes!