

MASTER BUILDERS

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



THE QUESTION

*I understand that six-star is the minimum standard for houses, but the scale goes up to 10 stars. Sustainability is definitely enhanced or reduced by how the homeowner uses the home, but I would like to know how the builder can be more sustainable with the construction. Do builders consider this?*

THE ANSWER

When we talk about a 'sustainable building' we mainly focus on the energy the building is likely to consume and how the building can be designed to be more sustainable, but the design and construction of the building impacts the environment well before we occupy it.

Following passive-solar design principles like good orientation, including thermal mass and insulation, providing cross-ventilation and reducing air leakage help in lowering greenhouse gas emissions by reducing the amount of heating and cooling required. As occupiers, we can further improve the efficiency by landscaping to shade windows in summer and allow warm sun through in winter, opening and closing blinds and curtains and using efficient lighting and appliances – all reduce our operational energy and save on operational costs.

The environmental impact of a building is more than just its running costs. The energy used to produce the materials from natural resources, the transportation costs from where the materials are manufactured to the site and then the energy used to construct the building as it stands – this is the building's embodied energy. Each building is unique. Each home or commercial building will have its own set of components depending on the selections of the client, the location of the building and the contractor's work methods to put the building together.

The lifecycle of appliances, computers and motor vehicles, for example, can be quite accurately calculated and any variables easily accounted for, as they are made on production lines.

Although the materials and components may be sourced from a range of raw materials and from other countries, these manufactured products are much less complicated when compared to the construction of a building.

Unlike vehicles and computers, buildings have a much longer life span. In the last five years, there has been a large shift in the way construction and demolition sites are managed for waste.

More and more materials are reused and recycled.

As landfill costs continue to rise, we are becoming more efficient with ordering materials, and selective of what remains waste that cannot be reused or recycled.

There are many passionate architects, designers and builders that exceed the minimum standard for energy efficiency and consider the use of recycled materials or materials with lower embodied energy. You can look them up on the Australian Institute of Architects, Building Designers Association of WA and Master Builders WA websites.

[www.mbawa.com](http://www.mbawa.com)  
[www.architecture.com.au](http://www.architecture.com.au)  
[www.bdawa.net.au](http://www.bdawa.net.au)

# TOP BUILDER RE-ELECTED AS PRESIDENT

*Rob Spadaccini has been re-elected president of the Master Builders Association for a third year in 2018. Master Builders director Michael McLean explains what the president does and who else is on the Master Builders board this year.*

THE head of the Master Builders Association is the president, who is elected each year by its board of management, comprising 10 builders, an accountant and a lawyer.

Rob is the managing director of Spadaccini Homes and a director of New Choice Homes and AMG Homes.

Spadaccini Homes received the top home award at both Master Builders' and HIA's national awards last year for two different homes – the first time that any builder has achieved this feat.

Some of the president's duties include chairing monthly board meetings, making speeches at member functions, attending important meetings with politicians, bureaucrats and members and liaising closely with senior staff in relation to important operational matters.

Rob is the 55th president of the Master Builders Association since it was formed in 1898 to represent the interests of its members in their dealings with governments, statutory authorities, unions and the general public.

As a membership-based organisation, the Master Builders Association relies on representative groups of members to guide its direction.

These groups form committees and meet regularly, including in major regional centres, to discuss topical issues that are relevant to the well-being of the industry.

Most of the nearly 2000 Master Builders members in WA specialise in the residential sector – from luxury homes, to first homes, renovations and modular homes.

Rob says he is looking forward to his final year as Master Builders president and helping to make the building and construction industry a better, safer and more attractive place in which to work.

"Since the McGowan government was elected in March last year, it has been reviewing everything. This has kept our association busy, as we are responding to

a whole range of regulatory reforms," he says.

"This year will provide us with a better insight into the State Government's direction and strategy to get our economy moving again.

"On an industry level, the top priorities are to improve housing affordability, streamline the planning approvals process, maintain industrial relations stability and minimise additional red tape in carrying out business.

"The building and construction industry is a key barometer to the health of our economy and the well-being of our community, so it is important to keep the industry viable, affordable and attractive to young people choosing their career path."

The other people elected to Master Builders' board of management in 2018 are:

- David Crothers – Crothers Construction – vice president
- Grant Burgess – Ernst & Young – treasurer
- Jack Pleiter – Genesis Homes Master Builders
- Dan Perkins – Perkins Builders
- Jason Kunkler – PACT Construction
- Robert Shaw – Daly & Shaw
- Michael Van Dongen – Encon
- Michael Vermey – Affordable Living Homes
- Phil Kemp – Alliance Builders
- Steve McConkey – Multiplex
- Isla McRobbie – Jackson McDonald
- John Ripp – EMCO – immediate past president

Isla is the first female elected to the Master Builders board.

As a former architect and practicing construction lawyer, Isla has the ideal credentials and building industry experience to make a first-class contribution to the Master Builders board.

The Master Builders board meets monthly, generally at the association's head office in West Perth.

