



A foot in the right direction

Start from the ground up to make small improvements towards living more sustainably.

Sue Greenwood and her husband, Jason Garrod, have sustainable living down to an art. Their property at Willunga, named Footprint Garden Farm, was built from the ground up three years ago.

“Footprint Garden Farm is the third environmentally sustainable house we have designed and built,” Sue says. The first house was built in McLaren Flat in 1978 and the second house in Stirling in 2000.

“We decided to go through the process all over again as the renewable energy industry has improved so much over the past 20 years,” Sue says.

The house of approximately 150 square metres is rectangular in shape with long sides facing north and south. Ceilings in the living area reach to the roof space

and let extra light shine through the clerestory windows. The large windows facing north are double glazed to allow the winter sun to flood in and provide warmth to the rooms.

needs. Energy consumption is kept in check with appliances that have low energy use.

Water for the house and garden is supplied by two large rainwater tanks. Mains water is also used

“We want to be an example of what can be achieved.”

The house is well-insulated with sustainable timber, rendered eco-board and smaller-corrugated Colorbond steel. Concrete floors and internal rammed earth walls provide thermal mass, keeping temperatures reasonably constant throughout the year.

A 9kW solar panel system has been installed to generate almost all of Sue and Jason’s electricity





for extra garden watering. In future, gardening water will be supplemented by a grey-water system positioned under the deck.

Doing their part to ensure a beautiful world for their four grandchildren is Sue and Jason's main motivation for choosing to live sustainably.

"We have the resources and abilities to make sure our lifestyle is as sustainable as possible," Sue says.



"Not everyone wants to or is able to build an entirely new house. We want to show people what small alterations they can do to an existing home to boost its sustainability."

Footprint Garden Farm will feature in Sustainable House Day for the third consecutive year. This year's event on 20 September will be a virtual showcase of environmentally progressive homes that inspire sustainable action in households and communities.

From the comfort of their own homes, attendees will participate in peer-to-peer learning by seeking information from homeowners, architects, builders and other sustainability professionals through online discussions and webinars.

ECO LIVING

Sue Greenwood and Jason Garrod are living comfortably in their passively heated and cooled, light-filled and solar-powered home.



"Some of the houses featured in Sustainable House Day are architecturally designed and quite modern. We have designed our house ourselves and played a big part in its construction. It's more of a cottage style. People can see from touring our house, even virtually, that they can install a lot of the sustainable elements themselves," Sue says.

Another step towards living in harmony with the environment is by taking a self-guided tour of the council's green hub demonstration site at the McLaren Vale and Fleurieu Coast Visitor Centre. The tour showcases upgrades that households can install to reduce power and water use, along with waste to landfill and greenhouse gas emissions. Trail maps are available from the centre.

MORE INFORMATION

Footprint Garden Farm
footprintgarden.com.au

Sustainable House Day
sustainablehouseday.com

Sustainable Onkaparinga
onkaparingacity.com/Services-and-projects/Environment-and-sustainability

Making your home more sustainable doesn't have to mean a complete change or investing a lot of money. Renovate what you have and make small changes, which add up to make a big difference.

Try one or two of these low-cost tips to get started:

- Compost your organic waste using a pile or container to create fertiliser for your lawn or garden. In turn, you'll reduce your amount of waste going to landfill.
- Set your heater's thermostat to 18–21°C or as low as you can while feeling comfortable. Every degree lower may reduce the running costs by up to 10 per cent.
- Fit a low-flow showerhead to reduce the water used while showering.
- Use cold water to wash your clothes, potentially saving 90 per cent of your machine's energy use that would otherwise be directed to heating the water.
- Sealing draughts creeping through windows and any other gaps and cracks is a simple and inexpensive way to lower energy costs. Try wetting your hand on a windy day and checking for possible indoor draughts.
- Flick the switch off when you're not using electrical appliances. Gadgets left on standby, even smaller items like phone chargers, are energy suckers and can add 10 per cent to your electricity bill.

Your local Onkaparinga library has Home Energy Toolkits available to borrow. The toolkits contain easy-to-use devices to help you find out how energy is used in your home and what you can do to make savings.