

Thermal Survey of High Thermal Mass Earth Wall Buildings.

Survey ends 15 Sept 2011.

This is a final request for home occupiers to complete a survey about their earth wall homes. To assist, in the long term, owners and builders of buildings having their walls made of unfired earth (be it mud brick, pressed earth brick, rammed earth, stabilised earth, cob, etc).

The full recognition of the benefits of earth wall buildings under the thermal provisions of the Building Code of Australia remains an ongoing problem.

Many people have put a lot of effort into this but more help is needed to keep this moving forward to make approvals easier and to have regulators better recognise the thermal benefits of earth wall buildings.

There is currently a study being done of the thermal benefits of all types of earth wall buildings throughout Australia. There is strong anecdotal evidence that earth wall buildings perform much better than the thermal rating tools endorsed by the Building Code of Australia predict.

The current study by Prof Terry Williamson of Adelaide University is targeting to gather data from over 300 occupants of earth wall homes throughout Australia and to see if there is a higher level of comfort than the rating tools would predict. If a positive result to this study is achieved i.e. that most occupants of earth wall buildings claim that they are thermally comfortable then this is valuable data to show the authorities, to begin the process of changing the rules of the Building Code of Australia (BCA). Without a large number of occupants of earth wall homes completing the 15 minute survey, the argument is not so strong. So far 180 home occupiers have completed the survey which is a little over half of the number desired. More survey results are urgently needed.

Further studies are also planned into the thermal comfort of high thermal mass, earth wall buildings in the future. This present study however is a critical study as it is an overview of existing buildings and hopefully it will show solid statistical reasons for challenging the present rules in the rating tools endorsed by the BCA, which are making it progressively harder (as the years go by) to get thermal approval of high thermal mass earth wall homes and other buildings.

If you live in an earth wall building, or know someone who does, then please contact me or EBAA or NMA or Prof Williamson to get a paper copy of the survey mailed to you or to your client/friend etc. Paper copies can be posted out or the survey can be done online, and an email address for the online survey form appears below. Any home owner can complete the survey. It is all anonymous and there will be no follow up unless requested by the person completing the survey form. There is no cost, as a prepaid return envelope is sent out with the paper survey forms, or it is done electronically.

Your support of this ongoing research is important for the ongoing process of getting easier approvals to build earth walled buildings.

**We MUST rustle up the numbers of survey respondents.
From any type of earth wall home.
Anywhere in Australia.**

A good response could be of major help to all builders of earth walls in Australia. Ditto for homeowners who may want to sell one day and thermal rating certificates prior to sale may then be law and it is very likely that the same rating tools will be used for such pre-sale assessments.

It can be done online (See the link below) or by post. Professor Terry Williamson will send out forms to any requested address with blank forms included and a stamped addressed return envelope.

It is VERY professional, what he is doing and what he sends out. Everyone needs to get behind this project.

The on-line survey is set up and can be accessed by the following URL (it is best to NOT just click on this link, please separately copy this URL and then move out of your email environment and then separately paste it into your browser....being away from your email system seems to make it work better):

http://www.architecture.adelaide.edu.au/research/earthbuilding?utm_source=eaa&utm_medium=text_link&utm_content=survey&utm_campaign=earth_building_research

This URL will take you to a "landing page" that explains the project and provides the link to the survey itself....which is done by clicking onto, toward the bottom of the "landing page", a spot that says to click here for the survey. Then the survey is easily filled out online.

There are 40 questions. Responses are entered into the data base as you go.

At the end there is a sentence

on the last "Thank You" page to make this clear that the survey is finished.

Please on forward this letter to any contractors or builders or occupiers of earth homes, old or new. Anywhere in Australia. 300 responses are wanted by the researchers. The results of the research that follows from the survey will be widely distributed when it is complete.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any queries. Email is best.

Thanks and regards

Stephen

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