



Energy Efficiency First

Why your home's thermal performance matters

ACROSS EUROPE, THE ENERGY EFFICIENCY FIRST PRINCIPLE IS GUIDING SMARTER, MORE SUSTAINABLE BUILDINGS – AND IT'S A CONCEPT AUSTRALIANS SHOULD PAY ATTENTION TO.

At its core, Energy Efficiency First means making homes as energy efficient as possible before investing in other technologies like solar panels, heat pumps, or batteries. It's about doing the basics right – and in buildings, that starts with the **thermal shell**.

WHAT IS THE THERMAL SHELL?

Your home's thermal shell includes the insulation in your walls and ceilings, the quality of your windows and doors, and how well your home is sealed from unwanted air leaks.

A high-performance thermal shell keeps your home warm in winter and cool in summer without relying on energy-hungry systems.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

- **Leaky homes waste energy.** Without good insulation and airtightness, heating and cooling systems work overtime just to keep you comfortable, leading to higher energy bills and unnecessary emissions.
- **Thermal performance affects everything else.** A home that holds its temperature well doesn't need oversized or expensive heating and cooling equipment. That means lower upfront costs, lower running costs, and greater comfort all year round.
- **You get more out of your solar and battery.** If your home isn't losing heat or letting it in, your solar power goes further, reducing reliance on the grid and cutting your energy use overall.
- **Poorly sealed homes harm our health and wellbeing.** Cold, damp, or overheated homes are strongly linked to respiratory illness, worse mental health, lower productivity, and higher healthcare costs. People in thermally uncomfortable homes are more likely to get sick and less likely to feel happy and secure in their own space.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Whether you're **building new** or **retrofitting**, putting energy efficiency first (especially through a strong thermal shell) is a smart investment in comfort, cost savings, and climate resilience.