



ENVIRONMENTALLY-FRIENDLY BUILDING MATERIALS

While consumers are increasingly expecting sustainable development principles as standard in their new homes – from waterwise gardens to passive solar orientation – few people consider the environmental impact of the materials that are used during the construction process.

Wesbeam, Western Australian based manufacturers of Laminated Veneer Lumber, believe that is set to change as consumers become more sophisticated in their appreciation of sustainable development.

“People are already quite knowledgeable about some of the things builders can do to create sustainable homes,” says Denis Cullity, Wesbeam's Sales and Marketing Manager.

“The next logical step is for consumers to look at the materials that are used during the construction process, to ensure that their home is as environmentally friendly as possible.”

Ensuring that their new home is constructed using Wesbeam LVL is one way that consumers can minimise the environmental impact of their new home.

An engineered wood product, Wesbeam LVL is manufactured from plantation pine and is a cost-effective, high performance replacement for traditional hardwood timber or steel.

Dale Alcock Homes already includes a raft of cost-effective but environmentally friendly initiatives in their house building, including using Wesbeam LVL wherever possible.

“Building in a way that ‘touches the earth lightly’ is possible if you take the time to source the right kinds of materials,” says Dale Alcock, a HIA GreenSmart Professional of the Year.

“At Dale Alcock Homes we work hard to find suppliers that share our commitment to sustainable development and innovation.”

Dale cites Wesbeam LVL as a classic example of a product that creates a win/win for the housebuilder, the customer and the environment.

“Wesbeam LVL has strong environmental credentials,” says Dale.

“Not only is it manufactured from a renewable resource, but the actual act of harvesting that resource is creating positive environmental outcomes, from the restoration of native vegetation, to reducing pressure on one of Perth’s main water sources.”

The product is also easy to work with, being lighter than hardwood timber or steel, and this in turn can help to speed up the building process.

“Good environmental outcomes are usually achieved by innovation and smart thinking – finding new ways of doing things that either do no harm or actively benefit the environment,” says Denis Cullity.

“Translating that smart thinking into practical solutions is something that we like to think we do well at Wesbeam.”

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WESBEAM LVL BACKGROUNDER

- Wesbeam uses 100% of every log that comes through the factory gates – nothing is wasted.
- Wesbeam LVL is manufactured from maritime pine from the Gnangara Pine Plantation - a renewable resource.
- Engineered to be strong and straight, Wesbeam LVL is a replacement for traditional hardwoods that are sourced from old growth forests in the South West of WA or South East Asia.
- In harvesting the Gnangara Pine Plantation, Wesbeam is supporting the Western Australian State Government in honouring its commitment to revert 20,000 hectares of the Gnangara Pine Plantation back to Banksia woodland.
- Harvesting the pine plantation also reduces pressure on the Gnangara Water Mound, which supplies around 60 per cent of Perth's water.
- Wesbeam is implementing a \$1,000,000 a year tree planting program, effective from 2009. The company is partnering with the Forest Products Commission and farmers to create commercial tree plantations on their properties.
- In working with the Forest Products Commission to implement a tree planting program, Wesbeam is helping to address the issue of salinity caused by the removal of trees from the landscape.
- Research is currently being undertaken to assess if the stumps, branches and treetops left on site after the logs have been harvested can be used to fuel a wood-residue power station.

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