

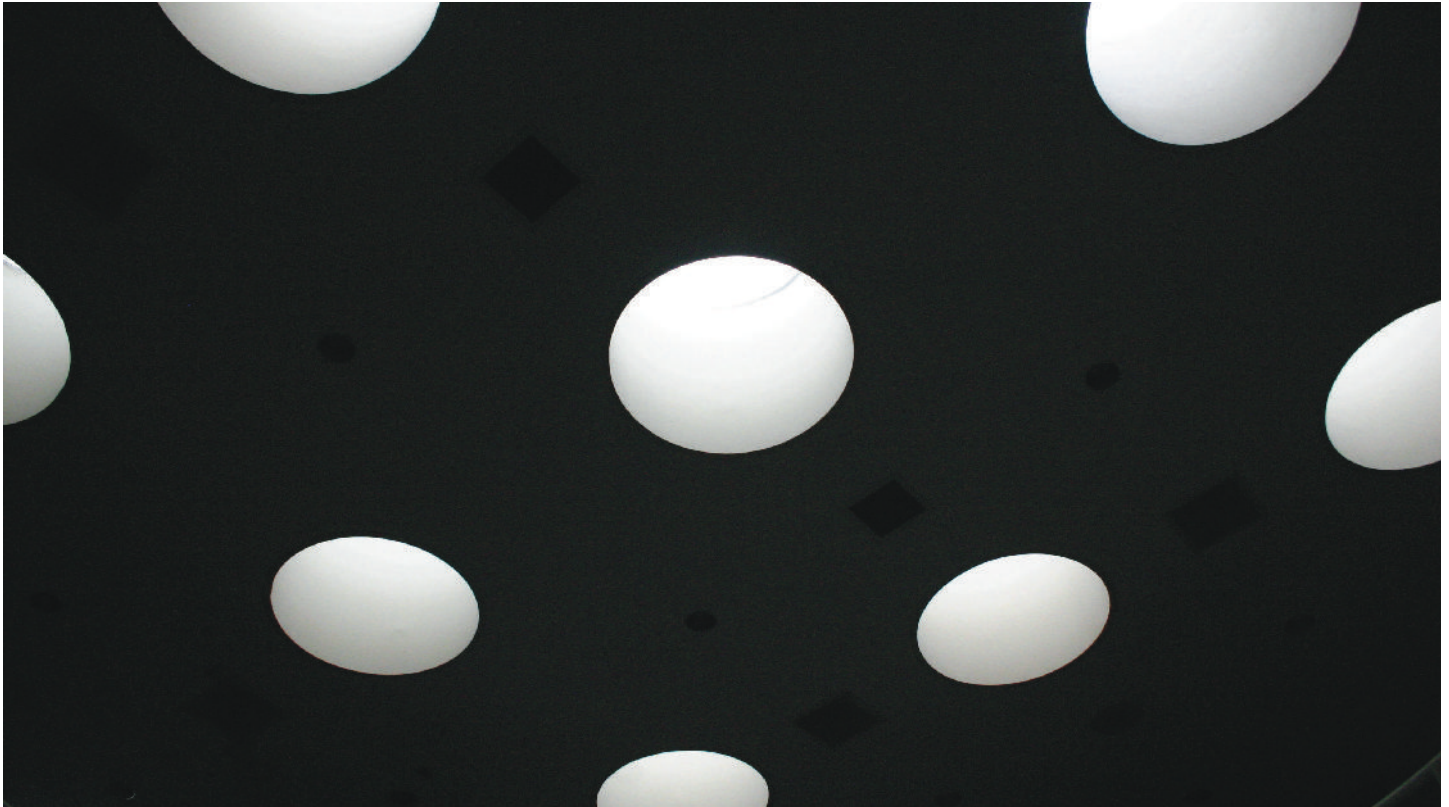
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Skylights Fact Sheet



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The benefits of natural lighting

Natural lighting can help reduce energy use and bills because electric lights aren't needed as much. Good natural lighting can come from well-placed windows, and from skylights.

A skylight can let in more than three times as much light as a vertical window of the same size¹. Even on a cloudy day, a good skylight can provide enough light so that it feels like the electric light is on.

But poorly designed skylights can allow a lot of heat to escape in winter, and make rooms hotter in summer. They can also mean you need to use additional heating or cooling to keep the room at a comfortable temperature.

We felt it was important to choose energy efficient skylights. It is also now possible to retrofit older-style skylights to make them more energy efficient.

¹ Your Home: Design for Lifestyle and the Future. Technical Manual 4th Edition, p127.
<http://www.yourhome.gov.au/technical/fs411.html>



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Greener Houses chose Solartubes

We installed *Solartubes* as our research found that they use technology that allows a large amount of light in from a small surface area, and they look like ceiling lights. They are well sealed, and are “double, double-glazed”, reducing heat gain and loss.

It can be hard to compare the energy efficiency of one skylight with another. An ‘Energy Rating Scheme for Skylights’ is being developed, but it isn’t yet available for consumers to use².

Until a rating scheme is available, important information to look for is:

- U-value - how well a product prevents heat from escaping - expressed as a number between 2.0-10. A low U-value is good, a high R value is good
- Solar Heat Gain Coefficient (SHGC) – how well a product blocks heat caused by sunlight - written as a number between 0 and 1.

The lower the U-value and the SHGC the better. *Solartubes* have a U-value of 2.44 and a SHGC of 0.33. We felt they would give good performance combining effective transfer of natural light, with good insulative properties.

Dimmable solartubes

Standard, residential-sized solar tubes can also have dimmer switches. These allow you to choose the amount of light you want in the room. Volunteers at our other Greener Houses chose dimmers for computer classrooms where it can be important to reduce light and glare on computer screens and show films during the day.

You can see dimmable Solartubes at three of our other Greener Houses:

- Creeds Farm Living and Learning Centre, Cnr Redding Rise and Snugburgh Way, Epping North, 8320 3973
- Richmond Community Learning Centre, 92-94 Lord St, Richmond, 9428 9901
- Watsonia Neighbourhood House, 47 Lambourne Rd, Watsonia, 9434 6717

Belle Skylights installed Solartubes

We would like to thank Belle Skylights for their help and support
<http://www.belleskylights.com.au>

² If you are installing new windows in your home you can compare the energy performance different types of windows using the Window Energy Rating Scheme <http://www.wers.net>



Experience with Solartubes at Jika Jika Community Centre

The windows in our Hall face south and provide only a small amount of natural light. We felt the Hall would be much better with more natural light.

Three Solartubes have been installed in our Hall. We already had skylights in the toilets and hallway. Most of the time, we can now use the Hall during the day without needing to turn on the lights!

We had to install large, commercial-sized Solartubes because of the Hall’s high ceiling and large floor area.



For more information call The North East Neighbourhood House Network on 9457 7900, or Jika Jika Community Centre 9482 5100

Greener Houses Growing Greener Neighbourhoods is transforming five Neighbourhood Houses into ecolving demonstration centres. It is a unique collaboration involving community volunteers, six Neighbourhood Houses, five local Governments, and tertiary institutions. The project is supported by the Victorian Government Sustainability Fund, managed by Sustainability Victoria and two Charitable Trusts.

