Narrabundah, ACT

At 580 metres above sea level and 150 Kms from the coast Canberra winters can be as cold as Europe but most houses are built to suit Brisbane's climate. Project homes only pay lip service energy efficiency so we had to go to the drawing board to get the house we wanted.

Our research led us to ICF and we choose Insulbrick. Our builder was a 'Young Turk' and keen to try this relatively new technology (the B.A. was in my name as an owner builder but Nick from Autumn was the mover and shaker). With advice from Insulbrick and photos from another build, three novices had the walls up and poured in a week! The trusses arrived the following week. Using ICF must have sliced a month off the build time.

We have just spent our first Canberra winter in our new ICF house and it was the coldest for ten years - but our house performed brilliantly. On -2 degree mornings it was a comfortable 16 inside. A month after everyone else started heating we invested in a $80 2KVA oil column heater which we run off the solar cells between 3 and 5pm and that got us through the nights.

Gas and power bills have just arrived and friends are comparing horror stories, $1K power bills are the norm for the winter quarter and we are feeling pretty smug as power has not cost us a cent!

ICF is an amazing, versatile, energy efficient material and it is a mystery to me why the building industry is persevering with brick veneer. If you are thinking of building, do yourself a favour, research ICF.

Kind regards

Peter