

FAILURE OF AIR-CONDITIONING DUCTWORK INSULATION IN HOT ROOF SPACES

IT IS A KNOWN FACT that aluminium foil insulation with an adjoining airspace will reflect approximately 97% of all radiant heat it is subjected to and only emit 3% on its other side (reference - 'Foil Batt Facts - 13' at www.concertinafoilbatts.com).

Insulation in a roof space can take many forms and is dependant on climatic conditions. In general for a hot/cold dual climate Wren recommends R2.5 bulk insulation in ceilings to control winter heat loss and Concertina FOIL BATTS laid over the bulk insulation, with their cleverly designed triangular aluminium foil airspaces, to act as a summer radiant heat barrier.

However, whilst this combination will work well to keep a house cool in summer and warm in winter there still exists a problem for air-conditioning and in particular the ductwork that exists in the roof.

Air-conditioning ductwork needs to be insulated to protect cooled air from heating during transit to the vents in the house. Commonly fibrous or bulk insulation (typically R1.5) is wrapped inside a layer of plastic around the duct as the only form of insulation with a foil coating that is not a radiant heat barrier. The problem is that the air temperature in the roof cavity on a 'hot day' can vary between 60 to 80 degrees Celsius while the air being generated from the air-conditioner starts at around 9 degrees C – a huge variation.

Bulk insulation works well in cold climates to trap warm air. It has millions of tiny air pockets that slow the rate of heat transfer down and act like a doona does on a bed in winter. The testing regime (referred to as Steady State) for bulk insulation was devised from northern hemisphere conditions. To determine its R-value the product is placed between two fixed temperature plates set at 33 and 13deg C over a 4 hours test period and a measurement is taken of the rate of heat transfer and presented as an R-value. The problem with this test is that in the ducting condition above, the temperature difference is from 9 degrees C to around 70 degrees C. In these situations bulk insulation will just not be good enough.

Aluminium foil insulation works on a completely different set of principles, compared to bulk. As

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mentioned earlier, aluminium foil is a radiant heat barrier and provided there is an adjoining airspace will reflect 97% of the heat subjected to the surface.



Concertina FOIL BATTS stapled between rafters protects air-conditioning ductwork from intense heat radiating from the roof

In order to improve the performance of air-conditioning ductwork, the heat load from the roof must firstly be reduced. As most heat entering the roof space is radiant (ie the sun hits the roof and the heat radiates into the roof space), the best solution to reduce roof space heat is a layer of reflective foil, foil sarking or Concertina FoilBatts, under the tiles (or roofing material) and maybe the installation of venting fans.

A second line of defence against radiation is to have loose-fitting Concertina Foil Batts stapled around cooling ductwork, and case stories verify the benefits. What is more than apparent is the

remarkable effect reflective foil, with airspaces, will have on the reduction of radiant heat flow and the overall improvement in the thermal performance of the duct and the subsequent lowering of air-conditioning running costs. The concertinaed foil is repelling radiation by 97% and 3% low emission.

The key insulation standard AS/NZS4859.1 (2002) Amdt-1 (2006), underpins the Building Energy Efficiency Provisions (House Star Ratings) in the National Construction Code (NCC). In 2006, ductwork insulation was incorporated into the Standard. Central to 4859.1 is that all insulation product R-values must account for all anticipated environmental effects and this includes **radiant energy effects**. The 2018 revision has removed these earlier warnings, and is deliberately misleading the public.

However AS/NZS4859.1 still permits R-value labelling for all bulk insulations to be assessed at Steady State, which is not an appropriate test for real roof space high temperature radiation effects. Energy efficiency regulations are meant to assist in reducing peak load electricity demand in summer, demand which is caused to a very large degree by the proliferation of domestic air-conditioning which consumes the most energy of any cooling option. Air-conditioners in hot weather frequently run continuously and struggle to maintain desired indoor temperature settings because of the penetration of **radiant heat into the duct**.

It is in the public and national interest that "**radiation effects**" are accounted for in all insulation materials including ductwork, and that Steady State (conduction) measurement alone is deemed an inappropriate testing criteria when selecting thermal insulation resistances for use in buildings experiencing radiant heat and wide temperature differences between indoor and outdoor as is commonplace in roof spaces for hot climates across Australia.

Concertina FOIL BATTS reduce radiation and lower cooling costs.

RADIATION RESISTANCE CAPABILITIES OF DOUBLE-SIDED ALUMINIUM FOIL INSULATION MATERIALS

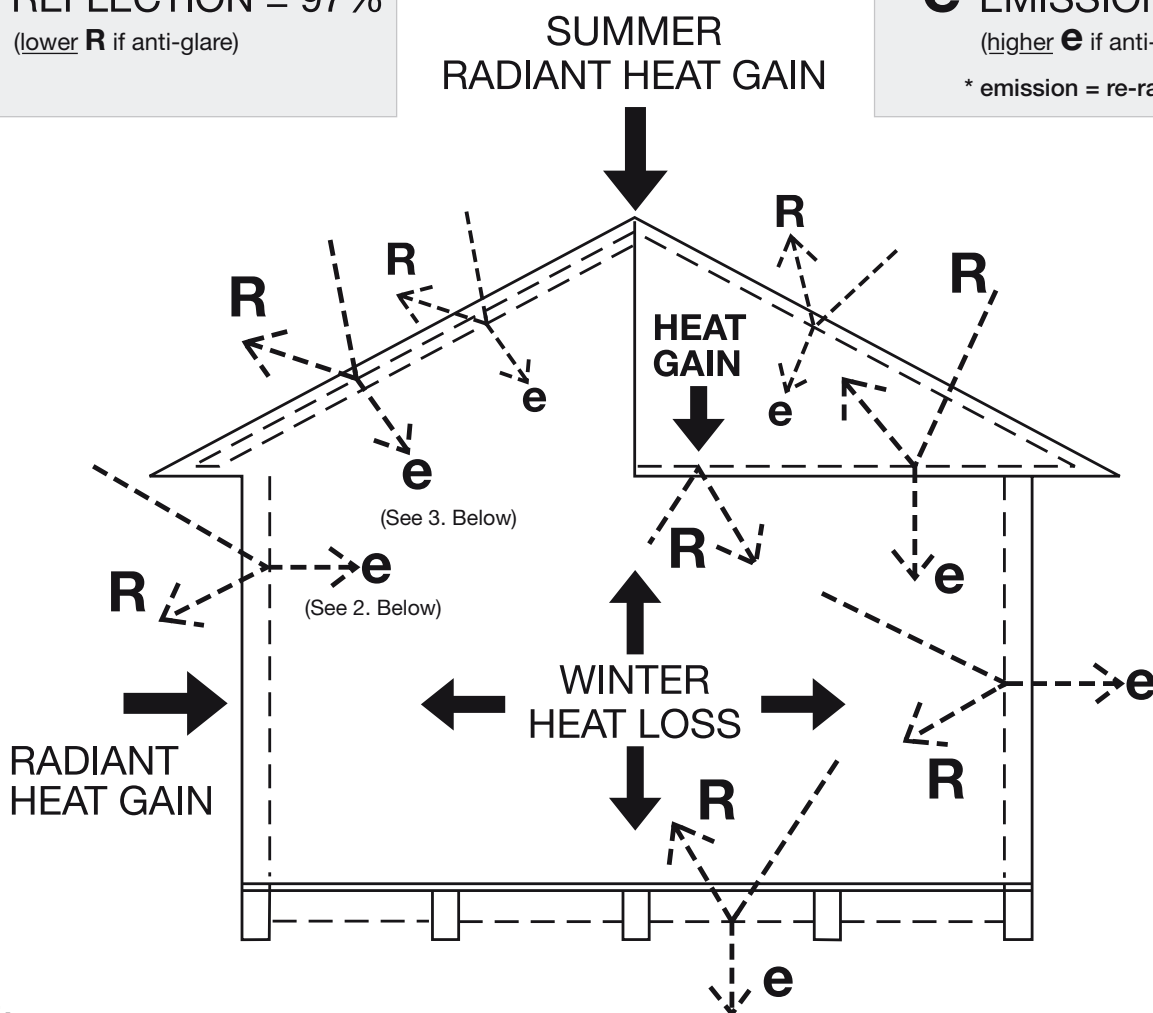
* CONDITIONAL ON EXISTENCE OF ADJOINING AIRSPACES

EXPRESSED AS "REFLECTION" AND "EMISSION"

R REFLECTION = 97%
(lower **R** if anti-glare)

e EMISSION = 3%
(higher **e** if anti-glare)

* emission = re-radiation



NOTES:

- 1). CONCERTINA FOIL BATTS, being double-sided foil: REFLECTION and EMISSION functioning in all positions.
- 2). Single-sided (anti-glare) roll foil: REFLECTION or EMISSION is functioning, but not both.
Walls: in summer, only low emission occurring, but will cease if R1.5-2.5 batts press against foil.
CONCERTINA FOIL BATTS replace fibre wall batts and allow house wrap foil to function.
- 3). Sloping ceilings: in hot climates, two foil radiant barriers needed eg. roll foil + CONCERTINA FOIL BATT

January 10, 2018

Tim Renouf
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Dear Tim,

I would like to write a testimony as to the benefits of the Concertina Foil Batts.

My home has a terra cotta tile roof with no foil, and polyester bulk insulation. The bulk insulation was installed early last year to replace pre-existing fibreglass insulation that was no longer serviceable.

This was partly due to the years of dirt that had come in from under the tiles causing it to become compacted and degraded.

The house was hot in summer and cold in winter. I was spending a lot of money on energy bills.

My initial inspection not only revealed the poor state of the fibreglass insulation. I also discovered that the ducting for the evaporative cooler had broken down due to heat radiation from the tiles into the roof cavity. This was why the cooling wasn't very effective in the summer as all the air was leaking out through the splits in the ductwork. And I imagine the same could happen with splits in heating ductwork.

So, I replaced the bulk insulation and the cooling ductwork. I met Tim the Managing Director of Wren Industries who directed me to his website.

From there I learned why the ductwork had broken down and what to do about it. The core problem is that insulation surrounding cooling ductwork can't withstand the penetration of intense radiation which then heats the cooled air in the duct.

I purchased the Concertina Foil Batts and embarked upon installing them myself, between the roof rafters. It is not a particularly difficult task and if you take your time you can do it quite safely. I used the manual staple gun supplied by Tim in conjunction with an Ozito rechargeable battery stapler.

Whilst doing the work I noticed how hot the underside of the tiles became even on a relatively mild day in contrast to how cool the underside of the Foil Batts were where I had installed them. I also noticed how hot the evaporative cooling ductwork was where there was no protection from the Foil Batts, and the same applied to the cold water pipe that fed the evaporative cooler. In reality it was pumping heated moist air into the house. Also I noted that the ductwork was hotter to touch where it was closer to the tiles, and to a greater degree on north-western aspects of the roof.

The other thing I observed as I was lying across the bulk insulation stapling the batts, was how the bulk insulation was retaining the radiated heat from the roof space. Rather like a heat pack. The result being that the house takes longer to cool down.

After installing the Foil Batts the evaporative cooling system is working far more effectively, the house is 5 degrees cooler inside on a really hot day, the ductwork in the ceiling is protected from degrading and a lot of the dirt that caused the original bulk insulation to degrade does not enter the roof space, and the bulk insulation does not get that build up of heat.

All of this adds up to saving me a considerable amount of money in the long term and making my home more comfortable to live in. I highly recommend the product and if you are reasonably fit, install it yourself. Alternatively, hire a handyman to do the job for you.

Phillip McKenna
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25 February, 2016.

Tim Renouf

Wren "Concertina Foil Batts"

139 Herald Street, Cheltenham VIC 3192

**Failing air-conditioning solved by
foil radiant heat barriers**

Thank you to both you and Andrew for your advice and understanding of the problems we have been encountering with the thermal efficiency of our Mirvac home, in Heatherton a south west suburb of Melbourne.



In brief, my home was built in 2001, and we purchased it in 2015. Since we moved in we have experienced problems maintaining a reasonable cooling temperature in the upper storey of the house, despite the fact that the house contains a ducted refrigerated air-conditioning system and two additional wall mounted split systems – one upstairs and one downstairs, ceiling fans in all rooms, and block out blinds. At warm to hot days the upstairs ducted air con vents blow out air at only slightly below the ambient temperature, no matter how long they are run for and no matter what the thermostat settings. There is nothing wrong with the unit.

It is certainly very disappointing to me that a quality home could have been constructed not having foil sarking under the roof tiles, and with 30% of the standard insulation batts missing in the ceiling, and with inadequate ducting insulation. No wonder we were unable to effectively cool the house when there was no control of radiation heating the roof space and that that heat was directly transferring into the air-conditioning ducting heating up the expensively cooled air. I know also of several other residents of the estate having reported similar problems, and the estate is apparently "known" for having this issue amongst past and current residents.

You were the only party able to provide us with a cost effective solution for the radiation effects in the roof space, which was Concertina Foil Batts stapled to sides of roofing rafters and also around the ductwork. Everyone else we contacted tried to sell us more standard insulation (which would not have fixed the radiation issue) or told us that we needed to spend large amounts of money to take the roof tiles off and retrofit foil sarking.

Anyway you will be pleased to hear that the work (18-19 January) has been successful, with the installation undertaken by Enviroflex. We have not had to turn our air conditioner on once, **even during the really hot days**, since the Concertina Foil Batts and additional missing insulation were installed.

On 30 January with the sun shining, the upstairs is a constant and comfortable 18.5degC, identical to the downstairs temperature (we have the blinds down), whereas before we were experiencing up to a 8 degC difference between upstairs and downstairs (even with the blinds). Night time even on hot days maintains a comfortable temperature upstairs. On 23 February when the temperature outside was 39.4 degC, the upstairs remained below 25 degC **without air con**. Fans and blinds were enough.

Being so soon after the insulation work was done, we have not experienced a full summer period to see how well the thermal efficiency has improved, nor have we yet had the fuel bill to see how the post insulation fuel economy compares...but I feel confident that both will show a marked improvement.

Our great result was also successful with an identical house using your foil systems, in this Estate in 2006. So, please use this letter as an endorsement of your product, in marketing or however you see fit.

Best regards

Neil Myhre

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23 March, 2006

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Concertina FOIL BATTs between roofing rafters

Dear Tim,



In 2003, I bought a house in a Mirvac estate "The Heath", Heatherton, in the south-west of Melbourne. The two level house itself is a very modern contemporary design. Mirvac installed some foil insulation under the black tiles but only in a couple first rows of tile work, which is not enough. They also installed fibreglass insulation on the ceiling.

We moved into the house in August 2003. As August is not a very hot month we did not know what would happen when hotter days arrived. In October we started to be aware of the large amount of heat upstairs and it was difficult to live or sleep at night. I knew that the builder has installed some insulation and I did not want to complain much about the heat problem.

In November 2003, I decided to install a central airconditioning system to be prepared for the increasing summer heat. After installation I did not get much improvement in the second level and I started to complain about the airconditioning. People from Dandy Air came and tested the unit and said everything was fine. As I was not satisfied with the testing I called Lennox, the manufacturer of the airconditioning system, to investigate my problem with the heat. I remember that one of the technicians measured a starting temperature of cooled air generated at 9 degC, and on one of the outlet points discharging cool air into an upstairs room, the temperature was 19 degC. From start to finish, that was a 10 degC increase in temperature of the cooled air passing through the airconditioning ductwork which is laid across the roof space.

I was complaining for two years and finally gave up in December 2005. Then I started to think about insulation and to take some action in that way. After I visited the Home Ideas Centre in Clayton, I contacted Tim Renouf at Wren Industries who explained to me that the reason for my problem with airconditioning not working properly is that the fibre insulation around the ductwork is not able to cope with the intense heat radiating down from the roof tiles. He said this heat can be around 70-80 degC which makes it extremely difficult for the airconditioning system to operate efficiently.

Firstly, I installed two roof fans and achieved a two degree C drop in temperature upstairs. Following this I have stapled Tim's product Concertina FOIL BATTs between all the roofing rafters as well as also wrapping FOIL BATTs around the ductwork. The room outlet temperature now recorded 12 degC – this is 7 degC lower compared to the original 19 degC. Now my airconditioner is starting to work properly and it can much more easily maintain thermostat temperature settings of 24-26 degC and will have much lower running costs.

Better advice is needed about how different insulation products work. It seems clear to me that fibre insulations do not work properly in stopping high temperature radiation. Thankyou to Wren for their advice and great product.

Regards,

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2 October 2000

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LETTER OF COMMENDATION

Dear Tim,

I take this opportunity to acknowledge how **Concertina Foil Batts** overcame the inability of my mother's ducted airconditioning system to keep her home cool. During construction of the house in 1996, R2.5 Rockwool insulation batts were installed above the ceiling and "Azurelight" double glazing fitted in the north facing windows, preventing about 70% of the sun's heat entering through these windows. Despite these features, the airconditioning system was unable to keep the house below 30 degrees celsius during heat waves. On occasions, it was 35 degrees inside, despite running the airconditioner 24 hours per day.

After identifying the black roofing tiles as the cause of the massive heat entering the house, a heat extraction fan was professionally selected and installed in an attempt to remove the build up of heat in the ceiling cavity. This thermostatically controlled fan ran virtually non stop for the entire summer, only making a negligible difference to the inside temperature of the house.

In desperation I carefully stapled **Concertina Foil Batts** under the roofing tiles which had been laid without foil sarking under them. **Foil Batts** were also placed on top of the insulation batts already in place above the ceiling. The airconditioning ducting was then wrapped with R2.5 insulation batts. **Foil Batts** were then placed around the airconditioning ducting, maintaining your product's concertina pattern. Finally, a 3 metre length of large diameter (40cm) airconditioning ducting was installed from a vent in the garage ceiling. This ducting enables cool air from inside the garage to enter the ceiling cavity above all rooms in the house.

The result is incredible. My mother who is largely confined to her home due to ill health, now enjoys an indoor temperature during the summer of around 26 degrees, even on days when the outside temperature exceeds 40 degrees. Equally remarkable is the performance in winter. Before installing **Concertina Foil Batts**, it was necessary to keep the ducted heating running at night for the entire winter. The heater now only runs at night for a maximum of 4 weeks each winter.

As mentioned, your remarkable product and expert advice continue to make a lasting impression. Of longer term importance are the environmental benefits of using less energy which I acknowledge here as a member of an environmental discussion group, sponsored by CPA (Certified Practising Accountant) Australia.

Sincerely,

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