

# Diamond Valley Leader

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NILLUMBIK EDITION

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Earth builder Michael Young and mudbrick homeowner Bev Brock will be among those joining forces to help save Nillumbik's mudbrick heritage. Picture: LAWRENCE PINDER. N10DV112

## Building for the future

By Dave Crossthwaite

MORE than 130 mudbrick manufacturers, architects, tradesmen and mudbrick homeowners and supporters have joined forces to fight State Government laws that threaten the future of Nillumbik's most iconic industry.

The Nillumbik Mudbrick Association will be launched at the Eltham Library tomorrow, Thursday, September 2, at a meeting from 6pm.

Earth builder Michael Young, the association president, said the industry had been dealt a near-fatal blow by new energy requirements that unfairly targeted mudbricks.

Mr Young said flaws in the Sustainable Energy

### Mudbrick industry unites for fight

Authority's computer modelling system could lead to a ban on mudbrick houses.

"It's never been an organised industry as such but the time has come to band together and fight the injustices being dealt to us," Mr Young said. "Hopefully we'll be able to confront this and other issues to ensure a future for the industry."

Since July this year all new buildings have been required to show a five-star energy efficiency rating under the authority's FirstRate program.

Mudbricks score poorly under this program that rates materials and building designs on their ability to store and resist the flow of heat.

Eltham State Labor MP Steve Herbert has written to Planning Minister Mary Delahunty seeking a review of the research into the efficiency of heavy building materials such as mudbrick.

"It is an important industry and I applaud the effort to form a local group that can lobby government rather than rely on national bodies," Mr Herbert said.

Bev Brock, whose Nutfield home was the last building designed by renowned architect and earth builder Alistair Knox before his death, said

suggestions that mudbrick was inefficient were wrong.

Ms Brock urged the Government to "do its homework before banning one of the oldest and most aesthetically pleasing building materials on the face of the earth".

"Decisions are being made that simply lack reason. I've lived in a mudbrick house for 21 years and given the choice I'd never live in anything else," Ms Brock said. "We have a small airconditioner that we hardly use. We have masses of windows with no curtains, but we have no problem with temperature control."

Ms Brock will be a keynote speaker at the association launch. For details call 0417 599 677.

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