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Green light for a smart design
By Gillian Cumming

The first smart house in Queensland's **Sustainable Homes** program is under construction on the Capricorn Coast. Gillian Cumming reports

THE timing couldn't be better. In a climate where spiralling petrol prices and acute water shortages are impacting on both our lifestyle and hip pocket, the ethos of a "sustainable" world has been brought sharply into focus.

Governments are talking up the need to get serious about curbing our seemingly unabated consumption of the planet's natural resources.

A sustainable world would not use renewable resources faster than they are replenished, and it would not use non-renewable resources faster than renewable substitutes could be found.

It's a mantra more familiar to environmentalists, yet it is starting to be embraced by business and consumers.

At Zilzie on the Capricorn Coast east of Rockhampton in central Queensland, the state's first **sustainable home** is under construction at the Seaspray development.

Hard on its heels, at Seventeen Mile Rocks in southwest Brisbane, the Australian Green Development Forum, a non-profit coalition of members from the development industry, government and community groups, has **Sustainable Home** Brisbane underway at the Verandah residential development.

Both projects are expected to be completed by the New Year.

Another 13 **sustainable homes** are slated for construction across Queensland.

A flow-on from last year's national Year of the Built Environment, the **Sustainable Homes** program brings together the State Government, local council and industry to build demonstration homes.

Developers of the \$150 million Seaspray residential community south of Yeppoon signalled their dedication to environmentally responsible development last year when they handed back more than half the Cocoanut Point headland site to the State Government for preservation as a national park.

The Seaspray demonstration home now under construction on Lot 21 adopts State Government Smart Housing principles that are socially, environmentally and economically sustainable.

Designed by Malcolm Middleton Architects in association with the Architectural Practice Academy's Josephine McLeod, **Sustainable Home** Zilzie (marketed as a \$495,000 house and land package) will feature:

- * High ceilings and thermal insulation to maximise cross-ventilation.
- * Cladding made from recycled material.
- * Materials that are durable and cost-efficient.
- * Living spaces on the house's northern side to take advantage of the site's northern orientation.
- * Shading, screening and overhangs to help keep the home cool in summer.
- * Solar hot water.
- * Rainwater tanks.
- * Safety, security and accessibility principles.

Project manager Peter Macgregor said Seaspray's message was that houses built there can be "special, sensitive and sustainable".

Mr Macgregor said he hoped the demonstration home, which would be open for public inspection for at least six months, would encourage Seaspray buyers to use sustainable design features in their homes.

"Our aim was to produce a residential community that respected the environment at every step of the way," he said.

Sustainable Homes director Wayne Petrie described the Capricorn Coast's warm tropical climate as ideal for showcasing sustainable building design.

"**Sustainable Home** Zilzie will demonstrate the considerable lifestyle and economic benefits that can be achieved through smart, climate-sensitive housing design.

"**Sustainable homes** incorporate simple, commonsense design features that are attainable for everyone."

The demonstration homes will be viewed by homeowners, renovators, builders and developers, and encourage housing where occupants can move around easily, feel safer and save money on operating costs while reducing environmental impacts.

Mr Petrie said sustainable design was also a sound long-term investment: "There's a 20 per cent premium added to the value of a home built in a sustainable way."

Turning the first sod to launch the construction of **Sustainable Home** Zilzie, State Housing Minister

Robert Schwarten said the philosophy of the energy-saving five-star rating on electrical goods such as fridges and dishwashers should be embraced in housing as an aid to home buyers.

In the meantime, the construction of the first 15 demonstration **Sustainable Homes** across Queensland is a step forward in addressing a worldwide dilemma: how to meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to do the same.

To find out more about Seaspray, go to www.seasprayliving.com.au. And for information on the **Sustainable Homes** program, visit www.sustainable-homes.org.au

Caption: Digital artwork of Sustainable Home Zilzie under construction near Emu Park on central, Queensland's Capricorn Coast, The sod-turning for Sustainable Home Zilzie carried out by (from left) architect Josephine McLeod, Livingstone Shire Mayor Bill Ludwig, State Housing Minister Robert Schwarten, Seaspray project manager Peter Macgregor, architect Malcolm Middleton and MP Paul Hoolihan

Illus: Photo

Artwork

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