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Excitement starts to build for fully sustainable homes
By Elizabeth Tilley

Real estate

FULLY **sustainable homes** will be potential gold mines for investors prepared to pay an extra \$20,000 for their lucrative long-term benefits, according to a Brisbane property developer.

Property Marketing Corporation managing director Patrick Brodie says home buyers, builders and developers will reap the rewards of significant capital gains by taking advantage of the push to make sustainable housing mainstream.

Construction is under way on the first of a series of socially, environmentally and economically sustainable display homes throughout the state as part of the **Sustainable Homes** program -- a legacy of the national Year of the Built Environment 2004.

The State Government, councils and industry have partnered to build the houses for the public to see for itself the advantages of the old-fashioned concept of sustainable living.

Work has already started on a Queenslander at Seventeen Mile Rocks in Brisbane west, while construction is due to start soon on other houses throughout the state, including Emu Park, Toowoomba, Emerald and Moranbah.

The initiative ties in with mandatory measures announced by the State Government in August, which will make the installation of five water and energy efficient features compulsory in all new homes built after March 1, 2006.

These features are AAA-rated shower roses, a greenhouse-efficient hot water system, energy-efficient lighting, dual-flush toilets and water pressure limiting devices, which will contribute significantly to creating a fully **sustainable home**.

Mr Brodie, who specialises in developing sustainable housing estates, predicted the majority of Queenslanders to be living in fully **sustainable homes** in five years' time.

He said the features of sustainable design, such as high ceilings to allow for good ventilation, water-pressure limiting devices and solar hot water systems, would cut power bills in half and save thousands in the long run.

However, he admitted it would cost builders more to construct a **sustainable home** and buyers could expect to pay about \$20,000 more for a house of sustainable design than an average one.

"But it is worth every cent because it will certainly help in the re-sale," he said.

"You'll certainly get a capital gain with these features."

Mr Brodie said six of his clients, who had bought homes for just under \$300,000 in his North Ridge estate at Deception Bay 18 months ago, had made more than \$80,000 selling them.

"I've got a guy who . . . paid \$267,000 for a (sustainable) house-and-land package and is now being told by agents that he can get between \$410,000 and \$415,000," he said.

Sustainable Homes director Wayne Petrie said a key objective of the initiative was to promote the importance of investing in sustainable design, and increase demand from home owners, builders and developers.

"The (display) homes will aim to deliver significant community education and understanding of how people can easily include sustainable housing features in their own home," Mr Petrie said.

"A **sustainable home** looks like a normal house, but it is more responsive to the local climate, making it more comfortable to live in, more responsive to people's needs now and into the future, as well as improving security and lowering ongoing maintenance costs."

Caption: NEW concept . . . sustainable homes developer Patrick Brodie at the North Ridge Estate in Deception Bay. Picture: Annette Dew. CONSTRUCTION to start soon . . . draft design of a sustainable home at Moranbah.

Illus: Diagram

Photo

IllusBy: Annette Dew

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