



sustainable
HOMES

media release

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BACK TO THE FUTURE WITH SUSTAINABLE HOME DESIGN

Construction will soon begin on the first of a series of demonstration sustainable homes throughout Queensland as part of the **Sustainable Homes** program, a legacy of the national Year of the Built Environment (YBE) 2004.

Following from last July's official Heads of Agreement signing ceremony at Roma Street Parklands, the Queensland Government, local councils and industry are working together in an Australian first to build a series of houses that demonstrate sustainable housing design.

Program partners are the Queensland Government (through its Department of Housing, Department of Public Works and Environmental Protection Agency), Australian Green Development Forum (AGDF), Bendigo Bank, Planning Institute of Australia (PIA), Royal Australian Institute of Architects (RAIA), Queensland Master Builders Association (QMBA), Housing Industry Association (HIA) and the Urban Development Institute of Australia (UDIA).

The homes will be built to incorporate the State Government's Smart Housing design criteria to be socially, environmentally and economically sustainable. Many local projects across Queensland are now progressing well and moving into their design phase.

But in a case of "back to the future", Sustainable Homes Program Director, Wayne Petrie, revealed the concept and features of a sustainable home are not new.

"Only last year we discovered Queensland legislation dating back to 1916 offering suggestions to workers on how to build sustainable homes," Wayne said.

The Queensland Workers' Dwellings *State Advances Act of 1916* states

"...To assist applicants by providing a maximum of comfort and convenience in their homes consistent with their financial circumstances, the following suggestions are offered:

- *When about to set out the plan of your home, carefully consider the site in its relation to the dwelling proposed to be erected;*
- *If possible place the sleeping verandah on the eastern side of the building and thus gain the benefit of the morning sun;*
- *Avoid a common practice of wrongly planning the position of the bathroom and thus blocking the cool evening breeze from your sleeping verandah;*
- *Plan the kitchen away from the western side of the building if at all possible; and*
- *Arrange the position of the front and back steps (back steps particularly) so as to ensure the least possible number of steps. ..."*

In the days before air conditioners, this 1916 Act encapsulates environmental and social aspects of sustainable design by identifying ways to incorporate the practical application of passive design principles into the home to increase its comfort and liveability, more appropriate to Queensland's climate.

The old Queenslander or Workers cottages were homes that used orientation, ventilation and shading to make homes that were generally cooler in summer and warmer in winter.

Wayne Petrie explained the Sustainable Homes program aims to demystify the term 'sustainable housing' by providing demonstration homes across the state, which people could go and view for themselves.

"Sustainable housing is simply about good design. 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," Wayne said.

For more information on the Sustainable Homes program, visit: www.sustainable-homes.org.au

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