

Eco smart house on show

It may come as a surprise to some, but Australian homes can be both sustainable and affordable. An excellent case in point is the Eco Smart Sustainable House Project launched in Melbourne in April this year.

Using the latest in energy efficient design and sustainable building materials, the Eco Smart House, designed by BP Architects, one of Melbourne's leading sustainable architects and constructed by Brandjes Environmental Building Consultancy, is creating a blueprint for sustainable and affordable building.

The three key elements of the Eco Smart House are design, material choice and construction planning. With homeowners becoming increasingly aware of the importance of energy efficient design, in particular water and energy conservation, the Eco Smart House aims to entice builders and home owners to make 'eco smart' living the next step in building better homes for Australians and their environment.

The main objectives of the project are to utilise energy efficient design, use sustainable building materials, minimise waste, increase the level of indoor air quality, use the most cost effective products and create a substantial reduction in construction time.

The core of the Eco Smart House is a steel building frame supplied by Steel Frame Solutions in Ballarat, Victoria. The material offers protection from termites,

bushfires, rot and warping. An added environmental benefit is the elimination of construction waste, as the frame and trusses are completely manufactured at Steel Frame Solutions' plant.

The home features thermally efficient roofing made from Colorbond steel, combined with insulation and a ventilation system that keep the home naturally cool in summer and warm in winter. With homeowners looking to reduce their household energy consumption to save money on energy bills and reduce the impact on the environment, this roofing solution combined with energy-efficient lighting and appliances further contribute to ongoing energy savings.

The Eco Smart House is also 'water-smart' with BlueScope Steel rainwater tanks, a solar hot water system and water efficient taps and appliances.

The tightly sealed building envelope in combination with the mechanical ventilation system improves indoor air quality, a benefit of particular importance to allergy sufferers.



The most attractive aspect for first home buyers is the affordability of the Eco Smart House design, thanks to the reduced construction time and the dramatic energy savings.

Jan Brandjes, director of Brandjes Environmental Building Consultancy says that the Eco Smart House "will achieve reductions in energy costs not seen before in this country".

The model home will be open for inspection at VicUrban's Jacksons Hill Estate in Sunbury, Victoria, offering a state-of-the-art 'eco venue' for meetings and seminars for a two-year period, from October 2005.