

The energy to make a difference

Words by
CAROLYN BOYD

**Exhibition/Project Homes,
\$350,001 and over**

UR Sustainable

UR Sustainable chooses its designs to work with the natural elements, harnessing the sun, shade and breezes.

The design-and-build firm, an arm of the Urban Revolutions group, says its Earth Series home achieves a 7-star energy rating – above the six stars required across the nation.

UR Sustainable does so by orienting each house to suit the block, catching the winter sun while remaining shaded from the summer heat.

The Earth Series' single-storey design has four bedrooms, a media room, a study and two bathrooms. Along with north-facing living areas, it is highly insulated, has LED lights throughout, a solar hot water system



Green feature: UR Sustainable's energy-saving focus gives them an edge.

with a gas booster, and waste-sorting bins in the kitchen to make it easier to separate food scraps, recyclables and rubbish.

The design incorporates an energy-management system, run from an iPad, and there are motion sensors

for lighting in areas that are normally used for only short periods, such as the laundry and toilet.

The property has internal brick walls that help provide thermal mass and keep the temperature more even year-round.

At home or away, green is good

**Joint winners:
Environmental
Management**

Living Green Designer Homes

With a focus on reducing construction waste, Living Green Designer Homes pre-builds many parts of its designs before transporting them to the site. This means much of the waste can be recycled in the process, and it also cuts down on construction delays due to bad weather.

The Tuggerah firm has been recognised for its work on a Lisarow house built for a family comprising two parents and an adult son. The house was split into two north-facing wings to allow independent living and is joined by a large entrance.

Substantial eaves protect the house from the summer sun but enable the winter sun to

penetrate the windows of the living areas.

Natural Designer Homes

Faced with a long and narrow block in a seaside location, it was important for Natural Designer Homes to get the layout of this Casuarina home, on the NSW north coast, just right.

The property also needed to blend into its coastal landscape, be highly energy efficient, and able to withstand the harsh environment. One answer was to clad the house in low-carbon steel – designed to rust then stabilise – and rough-sawn cedar.

There are polished concrete floors inside and out, louvred windows and ceiling fans. Energy initiatives include solar power, solar hot water and LED lighting. Natural finishes have been used where possible, creating a healthy home with good indoor air quality.

Winner displays environmental bent

Energy Efficiency

Scott James Builder

It has an eye-catching design that looks perfectly at home in the sparse rural surroundings near Albury on the NSW-Victoria border.

The exterior is almost shed-like, clad in steel, but with a twist – a corner of the house dips from the roof line to the earth as if folded. This quirk is indicative of what's inside – materials that look raw but are the result of careful planning to make the property comfortable,



with little need for artificial heating or cooling.

The three-bedroom, two-bathroom house has a study and

Steel appeal: The Albury house dips its lid to sustainability.

cellar but is deliberately compact to reduce the materials required.

All of the windows are double glazed, and the design avoids plaster and paint internally, resulting in less maintenance than standard houses.

It relies on rainwater collected in a 105,000-litre tank, and has a combined solar hot water and hydronic heating system.

The decking is made from hard-wearing, low-maintenance ModWood, and the steel panels used to clad the walls and ceiling have an insulated core.

The judges said a determined effort had been made to strive towards world's-best standards of passive living. "It's a worthy winner," they said.

The Master Builders Association of NSW

Excellence in Housing Awards

would not be possible without the generous support of its industry partners. Thank you for your continued support and congratulations to the winning contractors.



Master Builders Association
New South Wales



CRAFTMETALS



For further information on the award winners please go to the MBA Website: www.mbansw.asn.au