



Demand heating up

Sustainable housing lands big contract

KUNDA Park sustainable housing company Ecohousing has won a lucrative contract to build cyclone resistant ships' pilot accommodation in the Torres Strait.

Ecohousing CEO Tonny Bergqvist said his product was the most energy efficient building system in the world, using wall and floor panels of high density polyurethane packed inside fibre cement sheeting.

"It offers a big saving on building costs because there is no need for rafters or bearers," he said.

"There is no heat penetration because of the polyurethane and the only cooling system you need in most areas is a ceiling fan, there is

no need for air-conditioners.

"You also can't burn these buildings down and they can withstand high cyclonic winds of up to 83 kilometres per second."

Ecohousing residential and office buildings have been built in New South Wales, Horn Island, Thursday Island, Yorke Island and the Sunshine Coast while negotiations are underway to take the system to New Caledonia, China, Indonesia and the United States.

Mr Bergqvist aims to set up factories in all major cities of Australia as well as country areas, with eyes on providing comfortable miners accommodation in places like Emerald.

Mr Bergqvist has also designed an entire factory that can be transported overseas and operational within 24 hours of arriving.

Houses range from \$30,000 to \$200,000 and take about five weeks to erect.

"We are not out to corner the market but for people to save energy and cut back on air-conditioning

costs," he said.

"Eighty to 90 % of all heat enters a house through the roof, ours is the only structural product that locks heat out and contains no thermal breaks.

"But it is hard for builders to get their heads around anything other than stick frame housing."

Australian Reef Pilots general manager Alan Maffina said the Ecohousing system was chosen for its ability to stand up to the elements in the Torres Strait without the need for large outlays on air-conditioning.

"Both Thursday and Yorke Islands are vulnerable in the cyclone season and temperatures can be extreme," he said.

"These panels are great insulators and will mean our pilots' overnight stays are as comfortable as possible."

All ships passing through the Strait must be piloted, making fatigue management more of a priority, Mr Maffina said.



CYCLONE RESISTANT: Ecohousing CEO Tonny Bergqvist with his revolutionary building panels, which are set to form the basis of ship pilot accommodation in the Torres Strait.

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