



# Attractive design, low cost living

Bill Hoffman | 3rd July 2011



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Tags design, house, lifestyle

AFFORDABLE housing needs design and orientation to make it attractive to live in.

Here's a house that covers both the bases.

Not only is the price at \$159,000 for 159sq m affordable for first-home buyers and down-sizers, the cost of living in it has been reduced substantially.

Designer Tim Christopher of Golden Beach Design estimates the building will cut power bills by up to 50%. That's \$250 on a standard \$500 quarterly account.

Energy rating assessor Michael Blokland said a more sustainable, lower-cost-of-living future could be most easily obtained if homes had strong northern orientation.

He said the best route to ensuring that outcome would be at the subdivision stage.

With the most-efficient orientation often compromised by the demands of lot yield, the role of design is critical.

This award-winning Thompson Sustainable Home, The Bloom, designed by Mr Christopher last weekend won the BDAQ 2011 Sunshine Coast Environmentally Sustainable award and also the best home less than \$1100 a square metre.

There was good reason.

Heating and cooling accounts for 39% of the average home's energy use.

Mr Blokland estimated the 9.5-star energy-rated home would save its owners \$139 for those elements alone, more if they were prepared to slip on a jumper inside during the winter months.

Combined with energy-efficient appliances and a nifty, hotel-style card that shuts down electricity to all but the essentials when the home is empty, total savings of \$250 a quarter could be achieved compared with a similar five-star rated home.

Northern orientation is worth two stars under the 10-star BERS rating system.

The trick is to take advantage of it. On site in Nambour this home has a large northern exposure, and limited east and west exposure.

Bedrooms and living areas have optimal northern orientation. Bathrooms and hallways are predominantly on the southern side. The garage is located on the western side.

Windows are maximised on the northern aspect for winter warmth.

"Energy is a massive ongoing cost to householders," Mr Blokland said.

"More people are noticing their power costs increasing and starting to think about it.

"Builders are also paying attention."



Inside Golden Beach Design's award-winning, energy-efficient home.

CONTRIBUTED

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