

## Sustainable Homes in North Queensland

With the recent introduction of new Sustainability Regulations in March, builders in the North could be forgiven for having the perception that they've done enough for now in terms of improving the sustainability performance of their homes.

You should however be aware of a Queensland State Government initiative, supported by the HIA, that is promoting consumer awareness to encourage market driven demand for features of sustainable homes.

The Sustainable Homes Program is encouraging the design and construction of approximately 30 homes around the state. The purpose of each home is to enable local communities and your future customers to see and experience what a more sustainable home might look like.

Sustainable Homes in tropical regions are currently planned for Thuringowa, Kirwan and Cairns City. The first of the Sustainable Homes, "Innovation House 2", has just opened on the Gold Coast.

Information on the program including design details of the Sustainable Homes is available from [www.sustainable-homes.org.au](http://www.sustainable-homes.org.au)

## Ten Tips for a Sustainable Home (Source: Sustainable Homes website)

1. Energy and greenhouse efficient water heating: Install a solar, natural gas or electric heat pump hot water system to lower your water heating bill and reduce your household greenhouse emissions.
2. Step-free shower: Hobless (step-free) showers are safer because the risk of tripping is reduced and they are accessible for people of all abilities.
3. Space and movement: The living areas and at least one bedroom and toilet on one level should be accessible from the front boundary or carport, to accommodate your changing lifestyle needs.
4. Water conservation: Use water efficient appliances and fittings, such as AAA-rated showerheads and water pressure-limiting devices, and consider rain water tanks to collect water for use on gardens, flushing toilets and clothes washing.
5. Address the street: The home should have a house number out front which is easy to read, good external lighting and well-defined driveway and pedestrian entries.
6. Good passive design: Make use of the climate in your region to naturally heat the home in winter and cool it in summer by considering orientation, cross-ventilation, insulation and wide eaves for shading.
7. Safer floors: Design floors to be step-free and use floor surfaces that are slip-resistant and easily cleaned.
8. Outdoor living: Essential in the Queensland climate, consider permanently covered play and entertainment areas with a good relationship to indoor spaces.
9. Long-term maintenance: Reduce the repair and ongoing maintenance costs of your home by using low maintenance materials.
10. Casual surveillance: Design your home to have easy surveillance of play areas and surveillance of the street from the main living areas.