



A smart bit of housing

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THIS might be one of the smartest things on the minesite. *Supply Side* by Noel Dyson

Now, not to denigrate the fine people that work in mining but even their houses are starting to get some smarts.

Or at least they will be if Switzerland-born architect Nicolas Perren gets his way.



Perren's company Tektum has come out with House2.0. To be made from renewable or recyclable materials, the houses will be "flat-packed" to fit into a 40 foot shipping container. This would be sent to site along with a 20ft amenities pack.

But that is not the truly smart thing.

Perren has spent some time studying old Australian architecture. One area of interest was the old homesteads that dot the Australian landscape. In particular, how these homes were designed to stay cool through long Australian summers. Airflow through the dwelling was the key.

While the House2.0 does not come with big sweeping verandas, it is possible to see some of that old homestead thinking creeping into the design.

Of particular note is the range of high windows fitted to the building.

Those in themselves are pretty interesting, in the way they could be set up to allow a breeze to flow through a building.

However, Perren has taken this a step further. The buildings are smart wired so these windows can be set up to open by themselves to cool the dwelling down.

This smart wiring and motors also include the ability for the house to switch on and switch off its air conditioning as needed.

There is some other smart thinking in the way Perren wants to go about his business.

Not only will the houses arrive flat packed they also will come fully fitted out with all wiring and necessary motors in place.

Perren said the idea was to have the dwelling arrive onsite and be able to be put together by a team of three largely unskilled workers.

Sweat-inducing flashbacks to past Ikea nightmares aside, each panel is designed to link in with its neighbour easily. Some of the joins also serve to connect the wiring.

The only role a qualified electrician would have would be to put in the underground power lines each house would link to. However, no matter what type of dwelling, that service would be required anyway.

Even the panels have been designed to maximise their insulation properties.

At the moment there are no House2.0s housing miners.

However, Tektum has a development application before the Ipswich Council to install six House2.0s in Goodna, Queensland.

Those houses, if approved, will be replacing an older multiple bedroom dwelling belonging to disability service provider the Endeavour Foundation that was lost in the January floods.

Perren said the product was very much in the development stage but the company would be focusing on the mining sector among others.

"We have two products," he said. "One is a two to three bedroom module that would be ideally situated for executive homes."

The other is a 6 metre module that comes as two separate single bedroom dwellings.

"We've talked to suppliers of mining accommodation and they were keen to get their hands on it [House2.0]," Perren said.

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