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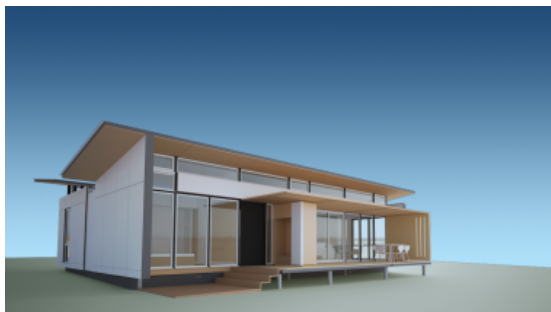
Housing should follow lead of inventive car industry_

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By Lyn Drummond

20 November 2011 – Architect Nicholas Perren whose company has designed a sustainable modular home believes there is a big opportunity for the housing industry to reinvent itself.

“Looking at the development of homes over the past 50 years there has not been much happening compared to the car industry which is innovative and progressive,” he told *The Fifth Estate*.



He says his company Tektum has translated the best aspects of a traditional Australian homestead into a modular sustainable home which can be customised to suit any needs.

The front verandahs, insulated walls and shading devices of colonial living are all there but with some differences.

“It was important to design a compact building form which spread over 300 or 400 square metres with a more dominant outside facade, with windows bigger than the traditional ones,” Mr Perren said.

“We are focused on the development of holistically sustainable homes that are visually appealing, functional, safe and affordable.”

The result known as House 2.0 uses renewable material which binds in carbon. Reconstructed bamboo covers the floors, non slip tiles are in the bathroom.

Built of steel with its high recycle content, the house’s insulation materials are made from a recycled glass mineral fibre.

The facade’s cladding material has embedded colour, so it does not need repainting and the house can grow older without deteriorating. The roof has a big overhang with the facade protected against the rain.

Mindful that 55 per cent of all accidents happen in or around homes, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, with 68 per cent due to falls from ladders LEDs are used instead of conventional light bulbs.

House 2.0 can be transported anywhere in Australia because of its “flat-pack” travel design.

“It looks and feels like a well made home,” Mr Perren said, preferring not to reveal a price. The building will be displayed within about six months.

With a housing shortage spreading across Australia – he places demand now at 180 000 homes with an increase over the next 10 years to more than 300 000 – House 2.0 is even more necessary, he said.

“There is a skilled labour shortage in mining areas in Queensland and WA because of the implied shortage of dwellings and these would be one of our markets.”

Other potential markets are aged care, retirement communities, community housing including Indigenous villages, emergency housing and homes for disabled people.

“Twenty per cent of people have a disability of some kind, and present homes are not catering for them,” he said.

Tektum is working with the non-government disability service provider, the Endeavour Foundation on a plan to install some of House 2.0 homes in Queensland in the next six months.



Nicholas Perren

Mr Perren brought a combined 18 years’ experience in the residential housing sector in Germany, Switzerland and the US to Tektum which he founded in April, 2010.

“Tektum’s approach to design is that construction should be minimally invasive towards the environment whilst still providing its occupants with comfort and style,” he said.

“Australia has quite a good understanding of modular housing, it is not something that is alienating people.

This has led to a perfect storm for modular housing to come on line”.

As the 850 modular housing companies in Australia were fragmented with many only selling about 300 km outside their factories, national players like his company were needed, he said.

20 November, 2011
