



NEWS

School's in for sustainable design

07 December 2004

Minister for Education Anna Bligh with the Minister for Public Works, Housing and Racing, Robert Schwarten today launched a new interactive education tool for students to learn the principles of sustainable housing design on-line.

The new prototype developed and funded by the Department of Public Works and the Department of Housing with assistance from Education Queensland's Distance Learning Unit will be delivered to schools across Queensland as a legacy of the Year of the Built Environment 2004.

Ms Bligh said 'Designing for Sustainable Living' was an excellent resource to teach young Queenslanders about sustainability and the built environment around them.

"This smart state tool uses the latest technology and will be targeted at students in Years 4 to 12," she said.

"It will allow students to design their own sustainable home on-line and examine the impact of their choices on the environment as well as comfort, accessibility, resource management, accessibility and flexibility.

"At each stage, students will be awarded a sustainability score to show how well their design would work in Queensland's unique environment."

Mr Schwarten said the sustainability of the student's designs would be measured using data gathered and analysed by the Department of Public Works Built Environment Research Unit and Central Queensland University from Research House in Rockhampton.

"This project leverages the work done by the award winning Research House Project Team and the Smart Housing initiative to deliver a real benefit for our young people," he said.

"While the tool has been designed to teach students, it will also be a useful resource for renovators, mums and dads and the building industry.

"Users of all ages will learn more about how sustainable design can save money while improving accessibility, safety and security and delivering environmental benefits such as a reduction in green house gas emissions."

Mr Schwarten said throughout the Year of the Built Environment 2004 more than 30 projects had been funded by the state government to increase community awareness and understanding of the importance of the built environment and sustainability.

He said this project was jointly funded through the Beattie Government's YBE 2004 initiative (\$20,000), Smart Housing (\$5,000) and the Built Environment Research Unit (\$5,000).

"This tool shows what can be achieved when government and industry pool their resources and work in partnership," he said.

The prototype will now be developed further by Education Queensland with the Queensland Studies Authority preparing teacher notes and other aids to help integrate the new learning object into the curriculum.