

Eco-home aims to lead the way in green living

By ALEX ARNOLD

BLACKBUTT may seem like an unusual place for an eco-home, but when complete Scott Rowe hopes his creation will inspire others to build a sustainable home of their own in the suburbs.

Mr Rowe admits that when he first conceived the idea in 2006 it did seem "alternative", but he believes it will be viewed as "the norm" in the future.

"The building industry is already heading that way with the introduction of BASIX (building sustainability index)," Mr Rowe said. "This home just goes well above and beyond that."

Three years of planning and nine months of hard work is taking shape for Mr Rowe and his wife Karen.

Although the Rowes are still a few months from moving into their three-bedroom (plus

study) home, it has already attracted industry attention and has been listed as a finalist in a national eco-home competition.

The home has several environmental initiatives, but Mr Rowe said the simplest part of making a home eco-friendly was design, with glass and angled louvres utilising winter sun and summer shade.

The owner-builder believes the roof of a suburban home holds the answer to future water and energy needs.

The home's Colorbond roof includes photovoltaic cells to generate power but also acts as a catchment to harvest water into the main 40,000 litre water tank located under the house.

The temperature will be controlled by a SolarVenti system, which uses solar power to draw cool air from the sunken garage and warm air from the ceiling.

The house is full of recycled products scrounged from nearby sites.

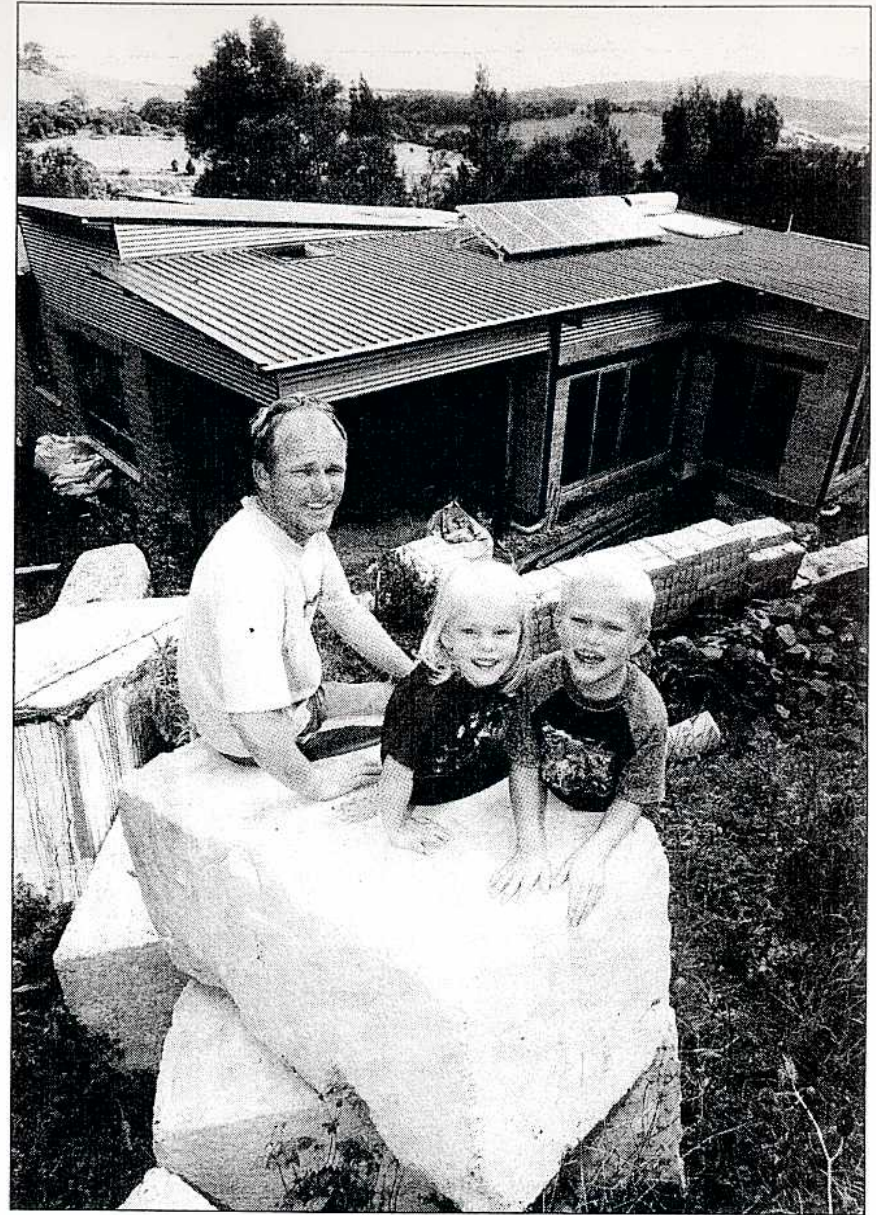
The floorboards come from three different heritage homes at Corrimal, Loftus and Nowra, while the beams are from old railway signal boxes.

Mr Rowe estimates the house will contain about \$120,000 worth of eco-technology and the final cost will be between \$200,000 and \$300,000.

When finished, the house will act as a "lived-in" demonstration eco-home.

"Many eco-homes are just built for show; we want this to be an example of a lived-in home," he said.

The Rowes intend to open their home for public viewing several times a year in the hope of encouraging others to follow suit.



Sustainable: Scott Rowe with his children, Alicia, 5, and Lachlan, 7, in the backyard of the family's eco-friendly house at Blackbutt. Picture: DAVE TEASE

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