

# NORTHERN DISTRICT Times

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Richness in local legal

## Great War

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Look out, they're awake

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# Eco-wonderhouse

Solar hot water, solar pool water heating and photo-voltaic electricity panels

Double-glazing on all windows cuts heating bills

Two rainwater tanks in cellar hold 18,000L for all water used in laundry, toilets, garden and pool

Polished concrete floors hold the sun's heat in winter



## EVAN MISTILIS

A RYDE family has built a new house with a clever design that slashes its power, heating and water bills.

The eco-friendly home maintains a comfortable temperature in summer without any airconditioning.

In Australia, the greenhouse gases that cause global warming are produced mostly by coal-fired power stations. But the large

four-bedroom Ryde home has a tiny environmental footprint. It uses as much electricity as a two-bedroom apartment: about \$220 per quarter.

There is a roof-top solar hot water system, a solar pool-water heater and photo-voltaic panels to make electricity.

But the biggest savings come from "passive" design features that cut the need for an airconditioner.

The architect Caroline Pidcock, who is

also president of the Australian Sustainable Built Environment Council, designed the house to be warmed by the sun in winter and shaded by eaves in summer.

There is floor-to-ceiling glass on most of the north-facing side of the house, it is well-insulated and all the fixed windows are double glazed.

To keep the temperature stable, a polished concrete floor in the rumpus room and an internal brick wall at one end of the

living room provide thermal mass. Homeowner Jan Gifford said it cost little more to build than a McMansion that would be a nightmare to keep cool.

"It was something we felt passionate about," she said.

Since moving in 18 months ago, the massive rainwater tanks have never run dry, supplying all the water used by the family of five in the laundry, toilets, garden and pool.

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