

Too slow on sustainability

Sustainability

THE implementation of sustainable housing developments in south-east Queensland is proceeding too slowly to arrest environmental degradation, according to QUT research.

PhD student Ned Wales conducted interviews with councils and developers in south-east Queensland.

"There is a growing need for land developers, government agencies and the construction industry to encourage an holistic approach towards newly constructed communities rather than creating bedroom dormitories where there is a greater reliance on resources and emissions of greenhouse gases," he said.

"The conditions have been perfect for this to have occurred - there has been rapid technological advancement in the building industry and booming economic conditions regionally - but it hasn't happened across the board."

Dr Wales said a lack of understanding within the building industry of what

sustainability meant in practice became an obstacle to implementing sustainable practices.

"The most obvious and currently popular measure is installing water tanks, but other practices include innovative design and materials to maximise energy efficiency, and minimise waste and soil pollution," he said.

Dr Wales said incorporating sustainable principles were also perceived to be too expensive and many developers felt there was little market demand.

"While sales at eco-communities such as Coomera Waters and Jacob's Ridge were high, notions of sustainability and energy efficiency are not priorities for most homebuyers," he said.

"Water and energy are still relatively cheap resources, so consumers need to be educated about the urgency of altering our current patterns of consumption and waste production."

- Toni Chambers



Ned Wales