

26 August 2010

## Enviro homes open to the public

When Chris moved into his small miners' cottage it was dark and hot. Now it's a home that excels in tropical design and energy efficiency.

For surprisingly very little cost Chris renovated the low set 1908 Queenslander to encourage breezes through each room. He also eliminated some of the small rooms houses of this era typically have.

Chris also installed solar panels and built a low water use yard featuring vegetables and native plants. The plants are great for wildlife and the kitchen. They're also used for screening and shading and help to create a cool microclimate around the home.

Installing insulation and using light coloured surfaces enable rapid cooling of the home at night and has avoided the use of air-conditioning and minimised the use of fans.

You can see the differences Chris has made on Sunday September 12 when he and other home owners open their houses to the public for this year's Sustainable House Day.

The day is a once a year opportunity for the public to walk through private homes which have excelled in tropical design, energy efficiency and sustainable lifestyle practices. The homes will be open between 10am and 4pm and entry is free.

Visitors will be able to see and experience the features of the homes and speak to homeowners about how they became more sustainable. Industry experts in energy efficiency, tropical design, renewable energy, and sustainable garden practices will also be on hand.

NQ Dry Tropic's Judy Warner says in the case of Chris's home it didn't cost him a lot of money to make it more comfortable and reduce power costs.

She says, "We'd like to show other people what can be done on a limited budget. Owners with more modern homes will also demonstrate what they've done to improve energy efficiencies.

"There are so many small things we can do to make our houses and yards better for people and animals."

For more information on the houses being featured on Sustainable House Day visit [www.nqdrytropics.com.au/households](http://www.nqdrytropics.com.au/households) or [www.sustainablehouseday.com](http://www.sustainablehouseday.com). Sustainable House Day in north Queensland is brought to you by NQ Dry Tropics, ecoSAVVY, Townsville City Council and Solar Shop Australia.

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Our region includes the local government areas of Townsville, Charters Towers, Burdekin, Isaac, Barcaldine, Etheridge, Hinchinbrook, Palm Island and the Whitsundays.

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