



Speech by

Hon. R. SCHWARTEN

MEMBER FOR ROCKHAMPTON

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Rockhampton Research House

Hon. R. E. SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing) (10.02 a.m.), by leave: Tomorrow marks a landmark in the state's housing industry with the opening in Rockhampton of the state government's new Research House. The four-bedroom family home has been designed and developed by the Department of Housing and the Department of Public Works as part of the government's Smart Housing initiative. Last year, I initiated the \$250,000 construction and two-year research project to provide a testbed for smarter, more energy efficient housing design and construction methods.

The Smart Housing concept promotes affordable, energy efficient and cost efficient housing. One of its key principles is to incorporate at the design and construction stage features which may be required as the needs of tenants change. Making hallways wide enough to accommodate a wheelchair or installing panelling behind bathroom walls allowing grab rails to be fitted later are just two such simple initiatives. These lead to savings in the long term and avoid the need for expensive renovations or retrofitting.

Safety and security are key components of Smart Housing by the adoption of crime prevention through environmental design. Simple design features—such as adequate sightlines and external lighting, as well as designing out hiding places for intruders—will make the house and its occupants safer.

The Rockhampton Research House reduces energy costs and improves living comfort through a design that pays attention to site orientation, ventilation, insulation, overhangs and shading. Some of the other environmental principles used in the development have included minimising construction waste, maximising renewable energy, maximising water conservation, and maximising natural ventilation.

The Rockhampton project has already attracted strong support from the state and national building industry and its web site has ensured international interest as well. The tenants will play an important part in the ongoing research and monitoring project. The project will measure greenhouse gas savings through the house's design, construction materials and day-to-day use by tenants. The Central Queensland University will conduct tests, data collection and analysis of temperatures, water and energy consumption as well as occupant comfort over a two-year period.

This data will be available to other researchers and the wider industry via the web sites of the Department of Housing, the Department of Public Works and Central Queensland University. This data is very new and I am told that the project team is not aware of any similar studies over a prolonged period in an occupied house. The adjacent Rockhampton State High School is also keen to have its students become involved in the project.

The Research House is an exciting Smart Housing project that will pay dividends for this Smart State. After tomorrow's opening, the house will be open for public display until late April before being tenanted by the Department of Housing. During that time I am sure it will spark greater interest in Smart Housing by builders and home buyers alike.
