

# Simple Changes Matter



## Our Maggie



*Kylie Backler in front of the central stone wall in her sustainable house.*

Kylie and Simon Backler took almost three years to build their dream house in Horseshoe Bay, however it has all been worth it for the environmentally conscious couple and their family.

The McElligott Court home, one of four open for Sustainable House Day on Magnetic Island this year, is largely constructed from local stone, providing a cooling core for the house and a framework for effective cross ventilation.

Kylie and Simon, both former National Parks Rangers, say although they consider themselves well informed on environmental matters and energy efficiency, they were still able to save around 30 per cent on their electricity bill following their Solar City energy assessment.

"Brian recommended we change our down-lights to compact fluorescents,

gave us some tips to reduce overall power usage and recommended we change some appliances over to Tariff 33. We took our receipt to the Solar City team for a voucher which reduced the overall cost of hardwiring to T33 by \$300. I'd encourage everyone to have an energy assessment and start saving at your place as well.

"We also host two 1.5kW solar electric systems on our roof for the project, as we've always been interested in going solar, however the cost has previously put it out of our reach. We hope to get one of the new Federal Government no-interest Green Loans to install water tanks on our property and were really interested to hear the Solar City project will shortly have accredited Green Loan assessors, which will really speed up the application process.

"We are really happy to be involved with the Solar City project, and I'd encourage others to do their bit as we are, to save themselves some money and most importantly reduce their environmental footprint," said Kylie.

### PROJECT UPDATE

Hello everyone and welcome to the eighth edition of the Magnetic Island Solar Suburb update. These are distributed every three months on the island and can be received either electronically or as a hard copy via the post. If you'd like to receive it electronically, just follow the directions in the box at the right hand side of this update.

We enjoy great support from the community, and we wouldn't have the success and good results we do have without this community support. This is why we were determined to overcome the poor start we made with the Solar Park and why we continued with the community consultation to gather your input into the process. We have spent the past few weeks evaluating some great suggestions from the community and should have some news on the new design in the next newsletter in March.

In other news, more than 50 per cent of Magnetic Island homes and businesses have had an energy assessment. This means that around 900 homes and businesses are saving

money and reducing their environmental footprint at the same time. If you would like one of our free energy assessments that would help you to use energy wisely and reduce your impact on the environment then please contact us at the Smart Lifestyle Centre.

As well, community minded people all over Magnetic Island have hosted over 100 varyingly sized solar electric systems on their roof, for a total of 250 kilowatts of renewable generation that goes back into the grid to reduce greenhouse emissions for the whole island. Not a bad effort!

This community spirit, along with the wholehearted dedication of the project team is the reason we were able to accept a State and a National Award for community engagement in the first year of the project – something that wouldn't have been achieved without you.

Thanks for your support of our project this year. I hope you have a safe and happy festive season and look forward to working with you in 2010 to keep Maggie beautiful.

*Julie Heath*

Solar City Community Engagement Manager



#### e-Update now available

The Magnetic Island Solar Suburb Update can be delivered to your inbox, rather than your mailbox. If you'd like to receive an electronic version of the Update instead of a paper copy, email us at [solarcity@ergon.com.au](mailto:solarcity@ergon.com.au) with the "subject" line: Electronic Update.



Visit us at the Smart Lifestyle Centre located on Horseshoe Bay Road, at Horseshoe Bay



Phone the Solar City Project Team on **4758 1674**



#### Check out this website:

To be informed and take action on Energy, Water, Waste and Transport, check out [www.livinggreener.gov.au](http://www.livinggreener.gov.au).

Also, remember to visit

[www.townsvillesolarcity.com.au](http://www.townsvillesolarcity.com.au)



## Free communications workshop

### Sam Ham is helping to Keep Maggie Beautiful.

In fact, Professor Ham is on the money with many a memorable campaign.

The American guru of Communication Psychology at the University of Idaho has been working with the Townsville Queensland Solar City project to develop innovative and effective ways to engage audiences for a couple of years now and, it's working.

Now, the Solar City project team, together with Townsville City Council, wants to share the secrets of thematic communications

with the community by bringing Professor Ham to Townsville to run a two-day intensive workshop on how to get your message across and inspire change in your audience. And the best part is it's FREE!

Participant numbers for the April 2010 workshop are limited, so bookings are essential.

For more information, contact Integrated Sustainability Services at Townsville City Council by telephoning 4727 9310 or by email to [sustainable@townsville.qld.gov.au](mailto:sustainable@townsville.qld.gov.au)

## Consortium Update – Honeycombes Property Group

Townsville Queensland Solar City Consortium Partner Honeycombes Property Group has begun construction on its inner city Holborn development.

Holborn is the second stage of a \$350 million mixed-use residential redevelopment on the site of the old rail yards. The first stage of the project, Islington Apartments, is now selling.

Holborn will showcase energy efficient apartment design, as well as energy efficient hot water, cooling and lighting throughout, as the consortium partner's commitment to the Solar City project.

Townsville Mayor Cr Les Tyrell cut the ribbon, launching Holborn at a cocktail and canapés function at the end of August.

## ANZSES update

The Energetique car – 100 % electric – was special guest at the ANZSES conference on Magnetic Island.



## 200 people visit our sustainable homes

Community interest in sustainable housing has trebled over the past year, given the growth rate in visitor numbers to open homes on Sustainable House Day 2009.

Four premises on Magnetic Island and five in Townsville were among 170 homes and buildings nationwide that opened their doors to the public wanting to see real examples of sustainable housing on Sunday 13 September.

The houses showcased tropical design; retrofitting for energy efficiency; wildlife

benefits of urban biodiversity, especially on the urban fringe; and, promoting involvement in the Magnetic Island Solar Suburb Program.

Homeowners, architects, builders, energy auditors and natural resource management staff were on hand at the open homes to share their expertise on tropical design and sustainable living.

Over the six hours, it is estimated that some 1700 people visited the Townsville premises, while some 200 visited the open homes on Magnetic Island.

The event, presented nationally by Solar Shop Australia, was sponsored locally by Queensland Country Credit Union, the Townsville Queensland Solar City project, Townsville City Council and Ingenta – Dune, Bushland Beach.

The local householders who shared their experiences in sustainable housing were: Nicole and Just Berkhout, Stuart and Jenny Tyler, Brian Schellback, Janet Dearden, Kylie and Simon Backler, Norm and Val Brice and John and Val Klug. Townsville City Council and the Townsville Queensland Solar City project also showcased some of their buildings.



**Australian Government**  
**Solar Cities**



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