

Buyers pay for greener homes

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ALMOST 60 per cent of home hunters would pay more to buy an environmentally friendly property.

A poll by PRD nationwide found 30 per cent of the 800 people surveyed said they would fork out up to \$10,000 more to buy a house that was environmentally friendly, while 9 per cent said they would spend \$30,000 or more.

PRDnationwide managing director Jim Midgley said: "Most people have a small voice inside of them which wants to protect and ensure the environment stays green.

"It really is a question at the moment of at what cost are they willing to pay to have their own environment-friendly home.

"The research shows that installing enviro-friendly features could make the difference to potential buyers, possibly as much as a nicely finished kitchen or bathroom would."

Mr Midgley said water conservation would feature as one of the most highly desirable green features due to recent battles with periods of long drought.

"Second to this, solar energy is quickly becoming the it feature to install in not only new dwellings but existing older homes as well," he said.

Rob Honeycombe from Bees Nees Realty said buyers of new houses expected rainwater tanks and water-saving taps that had to be put in under legislation but expectations of established homes were lower.

"In houses rainwater tanks are an ad-worthy feature but solar energy is still not widely understood," Mr Honeycombe said.



Boonah the better in green award

ENVIRONMENTALLY conscious homes, like this Boonah residence, will not just lower running costs today but are likely to bring in more cash when it comes time to sell.

Project manager at construction and design firm Sustainable, Tobias Volbert, said it was increasingly important a house was economical.

"Houses will be valued on their consumption," Mr Volbert said. "It will be much harder to sell those (older-style homes) in the future

because the running costs will be so high." He said there was a perception that environmentally friendly had to be expensive.

"You can have a sustainable home that looks sexy, is functional and affordable," he said.

He said this Boonah home came in around the \$450,000 mark, with another \$100,000 for infrastructure.

He said planning was one of the best investments you could make when building or renovating, saving

time and money. "Smarter homes and sustainable planning are the way of the future," he said.

Having this home take out the 2009 Housing Industry Association GreenSmart award for the region was exciting because it was the first of their "recipe" homes to win, Mr Volbert said. Materials used included bamboo floors, polycarbonate sheeting and Colorbond cladding, to cut timber maintenance costs.

Peta Fuller

PRDnationwide research director Aaron Maskrey said 41 per cent of home hunters said they would not pay extra for green features.

"Having an energy efficient home that results in savings long term would appeal to most buyers," he

said. "However, there is a point where potential buyers will be put off by the initial cost to installing these features, as they may be out of reach."

Mr Maskrey suggested that investors who didn't want to over-capitalise on

being green when it came to sale time should look to install low-cost enviro-friendly additions.

If they were looking to keep the property for a long period of time, enviro-friendly additions could slowly be introduced with-

out putting strain on the budget, he said.

But in the short-term, as interest rates slowly increased, and facilitating home loans became the main priority, enviro-friendly additions to the home could take a back seat