



• Christian Wetjen and son Leo enjoy perfect weather every day inside their snug Doubleview home, which they're opening for Sustainable House Day on September 16.

Put 'bill-free' on your Wision list

by STEVE GRANT

VISITING Stirling's first straw-bale house, I could easily forget the icy winds that chased me up the coast from Fremantle.

Inside Christian and Deepti Wetjen's striking home in Doubleview it's snug and warm, yet there's no heater humming away in the background. In fact, it's like this pretty much all year round.

"We don't have heating or cooling, just that one fan near the kitchen, and sometimes we even forget we have that," Mr Wetjen says.

"There's just those two weeks in summer, really, when there's no breeze."

The use of passive solar design, innovative materials and sustainability features mean the couple have virtually wiped out utility bills.

"We get payment from the
• Continued over the page

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Sustainable House Day

Sunday 16 Sept 2018

Solar Dwellings, a state sponsor of Sustainable House Day invites you to this free national event. Learn how to live sustainably through good home design & the latest technology.

Don't miss the popular bus tour, led by Griff Morris. We will be visiting sustainable homes across Perth, some exclusive to the tour. Hilton Harvest Community Garden will be hosting a lunch (optional) on the day.

To book: www.charitydos.com.au/do/25186
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BUS TOUR
Sun 16 Sept 2018
Time: 9am - 4:30pm
Bus Ticket Cost: \$20
Optional Lunch Cost: \$15

To discover homes open in your area and to register as a visitor, head to sustainablehouseday.com




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Sustainable House Day Expo 13 - 16th Sept, and Sustainability Showoff's Presentation Friday 14th Sept. 6pm




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Belinda & Peter (on facebook)



Sustainable House Day 2018

Staying bill-free part of the Wision

From front page solar rebate, which offsets the water charges, and there's just \$18 for a bottle of gas that lasts about two months.

The Wetjens will be opening up Wision House, as they call their home, for tours as part of Sustainable House Day on Sunday, September 16, from 10am to 4pm.

Sustainable House Day has been running for nearly 20 years, giving thousands of people the opportunity to hear directly from home builders and renovators about what makes their place tick.

In 2017 almost 30,000 people visited one of the 206 open homes across Australia, with gold coin donations topping \$12,000 which went to charity.

It's all run by Renew (formerly the Alternative Technology Association or ATA), a non-profit that inspires people to live sustainably in their homes and communities.

Established in 1980, Renew provides expert, independent advice on sustainable solutions for the home to households, government and industry.

Hands-on

But on Sustainable Housing Day you'll just need Mr Wetjen, as he was designer and hands-on as the three-storey home was built.

It's actually two homes in one, as they rent out the bottom floor; currently to a single mum, and previously they've had their parents, a best mate and an aunt as tenants.

Mr Wetjen says it's great to feel part of a mini-community, particularly when they can help out each other with tasks such as childminding, while having help keeping on top of the mortgage is the icing on the cake.

Some of the key sustainability features include the thick straw-bale walls which keep the temperature even and help keep noise out; an underground rainwater tank to fill the toilet until it runs dry in summer, a grey-water recycling system that irrigates the garden, and German-built windows that seal to keep out drafts but also open vertically or horizontally to make the most of cooling breezes in summer.

There's a whole bunch of houses open this year; to find the closest and most interesting near you, head to www.sustainablehouseday.com



Freo's bantam beauty

by MOLLY SCHMIDT

IF I ever needed somewhere to hide out in wild weather, Fremantle's "Little House" would be my pick.

Its quaint name is reflective of the home's olde-world charm but this house has such fortitude and solidity it wouldn't so much as shake if the sky fell.

Greg O'Byrne and Alice Turnbull bought "the worst house in the best street" in 2009, demolished it by hand and recycled much of the materials to make their magnificent sustainable home which is tucked in beside 1890s cottages on tiny one-way Little Howard Street.

Morning sun

Standing in the open-plan living space, the morning sun spills through the north-facing wall which is made entirely of double-glazed glass.

It feels as if the home is encompassed by the upturned hull of a beautiful wooden boat as boards of golden marri and deep brown jarrah meet at the roof's high peak.

"Each truss weighs a tonne," says Mr O'Byrne. "It's a massive, hugely heavy roof that took nine weeks to build and will hopefully stand for the next 100 years."

He says the most important parts of creating a sustainable house is air-proofing and insulating.

Little House has phenolic foam board between the limestone walls and the roof features refrigeration panels sitting above lining boards topped with tin.

"The roof has an air gap so we've actually got the ability to force air through there in summer to exhaust the hot air," he says.

Warm and snug in winter, the house's thoughtful design means in summer it's completely shaded.

"Living sustainably is about being smart and knowing your environment," says Mr O'Byrne.

"We are both keen on caring for the environment and touching the earth lightly, not living with a huge impact."

They're doing pretty well, supplying almost all their own water from a 22,500L underground water tank and making enough electricity from solar panels to send 60 per cent back to the grid.

Mr O'Byrne is one of the many homes opening up for Sustainable House Day.



• Greg O'Byrne in Fremantle's "Little House" – a big effort in sustainability.
Photo by Steve Grant

Packed expo

• Apartments such as the deliciously sustainable Liv are part of the Sustainability Expo for the first time.

by WADE ZAGLAS

THIS year's Sustainable Home Expo promises to be the biggest and best yet with apartment living featuring for the first time.

The event is part of Sustainable House Day.

"It's a great opportunity to come and learn how to make your own home more comfortable, liveable and cheaper to run," Renew chief executive Donna Luckman says.

This year's expo is a collaboration between the Fremantle Network and Renew, showcasing a range of plans and building practices that reflect smart, efficient and eco-friendly ideals.

Held over four days in Freo's High Street Mall and properties across the port city, the expo will kick off with Grand Designs Freo Exhibition, a showcase of 3D renders, drawings and photos of exceptionally built, local sustainable homes.

The Expo will conclude on Sunday September 16 with Sustainable House Day.

One of the major drawcards this year will be a tour of mayor Brad Pettitt's White Gum Valley residence, a 1900s fibro home purchased by him in 2004.

This smart and sustainable home has been heavily retrofitted and now has multiple rainwater tanks, solar PV and hot water, and sustainable native gardens.

Councillor Rachel Pemberton is heavily involved in the expo and is excited about the events on offer.

"The event is about providing diversity and choice," she said.

"This year we have 10 trades people signed up to attend across a range of professions."

"We also have the people from Living Smart attending, which is important as sustainability is a lot about behaviour change."

"By considering even the types of appliances we use and how we use them, we can be more sustainable."

The expo will be held just weeks after the Liv Apartment complex was completed in the heart of Fremantle's East End. Offering two and three-bed apartment living, the new complex is the largest development in WA to be recognised by Bioregional's One Planet Living for its environmental, financial and lifestyle sustainability.

Fremantle Sustainable Home Expo runs from September 12-16. To find out more or register your interest in an event, go to <https://sustainablehouseday.com/about-shd/>



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