

style

# Prepare now for a **CHANGED** climate

**Y**ou don't have to be Einstein to see our climate is changing. While the ultimate cause of this may be still up for some debate, and even more debate about how to fix the problem (if that's even possible), the reality is that we are likely facing more extremes in temperature fluctuations and weather.

Our homes are supposed to be sanctuaries and safe refuges from all the weather can hurl at us, and we need to be confident our home's basic structure is able to withstand gales, heat waves and cold snaps over its expected lifespan.

A Snow and Prasad survey in 2011 estimated the average life expectancy of a brick home to be 88 years, and a timber home 58 years. Most homes will cope adequately over those years with the moderate temperature swings we have been used to. But now, that is the problem.

We are certain to be facing the unknown when it comes to

what nature may well dish up in the foreseeable future. It's predicted that by 2030 (only nine years away) the average temperature will have climbed by 1 degree.

It's of deep concern to me then, the average home will not cope with the extremes of weather that rise is expected to bring. It was built for environmental conditions that our kids will read about in history books. Eight decades is a long time for your precious home to be failing.

That's potentially bad, but its not just that.

What about our national grid not being able to supply enough electricity to our power-hungry, internet-connected homes with their 'absolutely essential' reverse-cycle air conditioning to virtually every room?

When that extreme weather starts to make its presence felt and then over-demand causes the power to fail, and those poorly-designed homes become a closed-in oven or

a freezer — will home owners still be patting themselves on the back about the builder's 'cheap price' they got?

For me, it's a matter of urgency that we build more 'future catastrophe-proof' homes — homes that are purposely built to not just cope with bitumen-melting summer temperatures and freezing, wetter winters, but to actually use the natural elements themselves to keep our homes liveable regardless of what's going on outside.

That means building smart homes that remain flexible to work with their daily environment, not against it. That use air con as reinforcements, not as the first line of defence. It's about making sure the fundamental structure of your home will easily and naturally adapt to whatever crazy changes the weather concocts.

— Geoff Gibson

## Smart Design... Smarter Living.



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