

## **New industry report encourages low-carbon homes**

**Tuesday 15 November, 2011:** New industry definitions will deliver a common language for low energy and zero carbon homes.

A new report released today by the Australian Sustainable Built Environment Council (ASBEC), *Defining Zero Emission Buildings – Review and Recommendations*, seeks to clarify some of the confusion that exists around the terminology relating to low energy and zero carbon homes.

The report was developed by ASBEC's Zero Emissions Residential Task Group, with the support of Sustainability Victoria and in conjunction with the Institute for Sustainable Futures (ISF) at the University of Technology Sydney.

With guidance and support from a broad range of stakeholders, this paper marks the first stage of a comprehensive strategy designed to promote a shift to low and zero emission housing in Australia by 2020.

The report recommends adopting common language and definitions for use in the discussion of low energy residential development and is aimed at equipping both industry and the consumer with a clearer understanding of the low emission housing landscape.

"Acknowledging the lack of clarity in this area, ASBEC's Zero Emissions Residential Task Group has been working closely with ISF to produce a strong set of recommendations relating to a common language for low-emissions housing," said Mark Allan, Task Group Chair, representing the Green Building Council of Australia.

"We are encouraged to see so much work being done in Australia around low carbon homes and this paper will serve to strengthen the discussion on how we bring these concepts into the mainstream market."

"The residential sector is estimated to be responsible for nearly 10 per cent of Australia's total emissions – making it an obvious target for sustainability initiatives," says ASBEC's Chair, Tom Roper.

"It is vital that we are all speaking the same language and using the same terminology to ensure that expectations are met, particularly if we are to be measuring and reporting accurately and consistently across government, industry and the consumer market," Mr Roper added.

A number of low emissions housing projects are underway in Australia, among them the CSIRO's Australian Zero Emissions House, Mirvac's Harmony 9 house with a 9.2 Star+ NatHERS Rating, Climate Positive's Cape Paterson Eco-Village, South Australia's Zero Carbon Challenge and Sustainability Victoria's Zero Emissions Neighbourhoods project.

The Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency also released *The Pathway to 2020 for Low-Energy, Low-Carbon Buildings in Australia: Indicative Stringency Study* in 2010, outlining the



legislative regime available to government to stimulate a transition to low emissions buildings, further highlighting the clear path emerging towards a low-carbon residential sector.

"ASBEC looks forward to engaging across the sector to encourage the use of this terminology and to promote the residential sector's transition to a low carbon future," Mr Roper concluded.

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*The Australian Sustainable Built Environment Council (ASBEC) is the peak body of key organisations that are committed to a sustainable built environment in Australia. ASBEC members consist of industry and professional organisations, non-government organisations and government observers who are involved in the planning, design, delivery and operation of our built environment and are concerned with the social and environmental impacts of this sector. Recent reports include the "Cities for the Future: Transport Baseline Emissions" report and the "Second Plank Update" that provides an economic analysis of the potential role the building sector can play in reducing greenhouse gas emissions through additional energy efficiency measures.*

For more information on ASBEC's Zero Emissions Residential Task Group, visit:

[http://www.asbec.asn.au/about\\_us/task\\_groups#zertg](http://www.asbec.asn.au/about_us/task_groups#zertg)