

THE HOUSING INDUSTRY IS INNOVATIVE

Innovation is generally regarded as a catalyst for change. Master Builders director Michael McLean reports on some of the innovations that have occurred in the housing industry over the last three decades.

HAVING been involved in the building industry for over 30 years, the one thing that is constant is change. The housing industry in particular is renowned for innovative ideas to achieve such objectives as making new homes more affordable, more comfortable, safer, quicker to build and so on. Some of these ideas have become the new “norm” whereas others never became popular or entrenched. Some innovative ideas continue to differentiate builders and suppliers of building products and services. These differences are often utilized as a value proposition and competitive advantage, rather than simply a price differential.

Some examples of how the housing industry has been innovative in bringing about change over the years include:

- The popularity of Colorbond metal roofs rather than clay or concrete tiles
- The move away from timber picket dividing fences
- Modular and pre-fabricated housing and components within homes
- Much smaller lots of land to build on, including more sub-divided lots and battle axe blocks
- More steel and timber framed houses even though double brick homes still dominate the WA market
- The popularity of outdoor kitchens and alfresco entertaining areas
- A huge increase in granny flats
- The popularity of solar panels, battery storage units and other energy saving devices
- Remote controlled heating and cooling systems
- Additional security screens and systems, including remote monitoring, facial and voice recognition
- Synthetic grass and low maintenance landscaping
- Compact lifts in two and three-storey liveable homes

- The advent of home theatre rooms
- Car stacking garages to save space on narrow lots
- Floor heating below tiles or timber boards
- Tilt up apartment complexes
- Much greater choice of external finishes and colour selections
- Building Information Modelling (BIM) designs
- Tablet control does that you can run your entire home off, such as alarm, smart wiring and air-con
- Apps for almost anything including lighting and alarm control/monitoring
- Potable and non-potable storage water systems
- 3D walkthroughs at the design stage of your new home
- Pet-proof smart alarms

The list goes on. The point is that the housing industry has evolved a lot over the last three decades and will continue to do so based on many factors.

These include the cost of land, the popularity of apartment living, the cost of living generally, income growth and the development of new building products. The challenge for all of us is to embrace new technology and assess how it can help us and not be fearful of it.

Then there is the prospect of disruptive technology such as 3D printing and the robotic bricklayer. Whichever way you look at it, homebuyers will have more things to choose from and more choices to make. Whatever you do, please take the time to choose your builder wisely as not all builders are the same.

To help builders become more aware of innovating change, Master Builders has teamed with four other industry associations to host three forums on May 11, June 15 and July 20. Details can be accessed via www.mbawa.com/event/future-built-environment-opportunities-breakfast.

