

THE NIGHTINGALE HOUSING MODEL

There are many diverse styles of housing that have emerged in Australia over the years. Master Builders director Michael McLean reports on the innovative Nightingale model.

THE beauty of most things in life, including our preferred style of housing, lies in the eyes of the beholder or occupant. We are blessed in Australia to have abundant land and a multitude of housing styles to choose from. Most of our homes in Western Australia are generally detached dwellings on their own block, mainly built from brick and with either tiled or metal roofs. As our population has grown, townhouses, group dwellings and apartments have become more popular.

A rather novel style of housing is based on what is known as the Nightingale model. Nightingale homes are designer-led multi-residential dwellings for owner-occupiers only, and consider at their core social health, economic resilience and environmental sustainability.

Don Fini from Fini Sustainability recently explained to me that Nightingale housing is really a social enterprise that creates environmental and social sustainability. These are architect-designed housing estates governed by humanity and functionality. Proponents of this style of housing want to redefine the meaning and quality of city life by establishing a development model that is easily replicated and benefits the communities in which it is located.

According to Mr Fini, Nightingale projects use multi-residential housing, with a focus

more on maximising the quality of living of the occupants rather than the financial return from the property.

Twenty per cent of the housing in Nightingale projects is allocated to priority groups such as key service workers (teachers, nurses, police officers), disabled persons and indigenous Australians.

With the trend towards infill developments and increasing residential density, Nightingale projects will appeal to some, but not all homebuyers and investors.

Only electric power and no gas is used in these projects.

The architects and builders of Nightingale projects should be commended for making a meaningful contribution to building a more diverse housing industry in Western Australia; one that places equal value on environment, social and economic outcomes.

The first Nightingale project in WA, designed by EHDO Architecture, is about to be built on the corner of Wood and Blinko streets in Fremantle. The project will comprise three commercial units on the ground floor, 12-15 apartments over three storeys and a roof deck. There will be one parking bay per unit and some street parking.

For more information about the Nightingale model, go to the website www.nightingalehousing.org.

