

APARTMENT LIVING



Home to three residential buildings, 60 per cent of the sustainable Green Swing project in Lathlain is open space.

Green for go in sustainable pads

■ Tamara Hunter

A one-bedroom apartment is part of a cosy, community and environmentally minded development in Lathlain that is designed to spur a revolution in sustainable housing.

The ambitious Green Swing project was conceived by two couples — Mark and Alana Dowley and Helmut and Eugenie Stockmann — in 2009. They wanted to complete a small-scale, high-quality, sustainable inner-city development which promoted a community feel, encouraged creativity and inspired change. They engaged sustainable housing specialists Right Homes to bring their vision to reality.

As part of the development and in a bid to green the urban environment, The Green Swing negotiated with the local council to revegetate an ugly sump alongside the 888sqm lot. The greening plan was inspired by Josh Byrne, of the ABC show Gardening Australia, who also helped landscape the project's communal gardens.

Those communal gardens are now shared by Linda Blake, who bought into the development while looking to downsize from her three-bedroom home.

Ms Blake's apartment occupies the top half of one of the three passive-solar, carbon-negative buildings that form the development. The other two buildings are stand-alone townhouses, one of which is constructed with straw bales.

The buildings occupy only 40 per cent of the lot. The remaining 60 per cent is open space, including the communal garden, a shared bicycle shed and an outdoor kitchen. The homes face each other, adding to the community feel. Each dwelling also has a private alfresco area.

Ms Blake shares a small foyer with the owner of the downstairs apartment. Her own front door opens into a combined kitchen/meals and dining area well lit by windows designed to capitalise on sunshine in winter and keep the heat out during summer. There is no air-conditioning and the home is solar powered.

The apartment has a combined bathroom and laundry, and the lone bedroom has a built-in three-door robe. A big balcony extends the living space.

Back inside, a naturally lit walk-in pantry/study nook off the open living space reveals the ladder entrance to a magical loft area as big as the apartment itself. With finished floors and walls, the space is ideal for storage,

as an art studio, as a guest space or simply extra living space.

Other sustainable features include a greywater system, rainwater tanks, composting bins, ready access to rail transport (there is a station 400m away) and access to a major bicycle route into the Perth CBD 5km away. Each dwelling has a single parking bay in a shared garage. Green Swing is working on another project nearby.

■ The home was an entry in the 2013 Perth HIA Awards in the apartment projects category. For inquiries phone Right Homes on 9355 0374.

