

# Teaching the future of building at polytechnics and universities around New Zealand

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**Overview:** Low quality homes and disconnected lives are sapping personal and community energy around New Zealand.

Polytechnic and universities are rising to the challenge, with student/professional teams designing and creating innovative, more sustainable housing and buildings. Young people today are learning how to collaborate, build a better way, and upgrade homes and neighbourhoods to lead to better living.



In 2009 ten teams entered the Sustainable Habitat Challenge, resulting in 7 new and retrofitted homes that demonstrated practical implementations of more sustainable housing given regional needs, resources, and aspirations. Team designs show immediate practical improvements, encourage the practice of trying out ideas, and involve many young people in the synthesis of delightful, more sustainable approaches to living.

While challenging to bring together, many of the efforts combined existing programs to achieve high quality results with only a moderate increase in costs. For example, university students are already designing, and polytechnics already building homes each year as part of established training programmes.

This involvement of students in the refinement and improvement of methods sees tertiary teaching return to the apprentice model, where students and staff work side by side – finding problems, acting to solve them, and evaluating the result. This method effectively harnesses the energy of students given real challenges with the expertise of their tutors and mentors.

We will present some of the new designs developed and built, and discuss the new design and building tertiary teaching methods that we are developing.



