

40 PRESTIGE PROPERTY

Silvapark proves that grey water can send the blues away

LET'S face it. When flogging a brand-new, top-drawer home, "grey-water recycling" doesn't sound like something to get a prospective buyer's heart beating faster.

It just doesn't roll off the tongue in the same way as does, say, "parent's retreat", "marble bathroom" or "heated lap pool".

But things might be changing. With water conservation firmly on the agenda in many parts of the country, using less H₂O mightn't be a pivotal point of difference in many new luxury homes, but it's now on the radar.

GUY ALLENBY



That's because of developments like the 22-house Silvapark at The Gap in Brisbane.

The development is the first subdivision-size development in Queensland to use grey-water recycling, and each house is expected to use 75 per

cent less water than the average household.

The development is part of a wider strategy by the Brisbane City Council to measure the benefits of a more sustainable approach to water and energy use in housing (the homes aren't airconditioned, but are instead designed to capture prevailing breezes).

So far six homes have been built, sales and marketing manager Mark Evans says, and one has recently fetched just under \$1 million.

Other homes are likely to be priced above \$1 million.

The homes are architect-designed, and grey-water recycling is part of their appeal, along with rainwater tanks and lightweight construction.

But what exactly is grey water?

Simply put, grey water is the water that flows out of our kitchens, bathrooms and laundries. It's the water that drains from the kitchen sink, the washing machine, the dishwasher and the shower.

It isn't the water from a flushed loo, though. This has an even less appealing name. You guessed it: brown water.

Each home at Silvapark is equipped

with a Biolytix Grey Water Recycler.

Invented at Maleny in Queensland, the recycler was a double winner on ABC TV's *The New Inventors* in 2004.

The system is relatively compact, sits hidden in the ground and takes the grey water from the home and turns it into water that can be used on the garden.

And that's the key.

Studies have shown that households use as much water on their gardens as they do inside the home and, as large parts of the country have discovered in recent times, water restrictions have

meant that watering the garden as much as we'd like simply isn't possible.

With a grey-water system installed you can have a green and lush garden all year round, regardless of water restrictions.

Sheer luxury.

Buyers at the new development "weren't familiar with what grey water recycling was at first", Evans says, but once they realised it meant that every time they had a shower or pulled out the plug, this water benefits the garden — instead of just draining away — they loved it.

Apart from getting a year-round greener garden, there are also long-term savings (which are likely to become more significant as water becomes more precious).

More than that, though, the water that came from that tap fell free from the sky, having been collected in the home's huge rainwater tanks.

In other words, the site's rainwater becomes grey water, which then, in turn, waters the garden.

Just as nature intended.

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