

Be

Nowhere man

The life of a refugee

A change of habit

The way we watch

Cycling controversy

Should bikes be registered?



Angus's GRAND DESIGN

PALLET HOUSE

perfect student pad

Although many university students look for shared accommodation or even a room at a residential college while they hit the books, Angus Hughes thought he'd build his own perfect student pad – made from timber pallets. Words: Marc Barnbaum and Priscilla Crighton photos and video: Peter Lawrence



PHOTO: PETER LAWRENCE

When Angus Hughes did his budget for the perfect little student pad, his biggest expense was for screws (and a few cartons of beer to reward mates who de-nailed some preloved timber). That's right, Angus' unique multi-level abode is made almost entirely from cast-off timber which normally would have made its way to the rubbish tip.



Local businesses were happy to provide Angus with their surplus wooden pallets and packing case timber, while discarded roofing iron and iron pipe stumps completed the project. "The size of the pallets dictated the size of the house which is three pallets high, three pallets wide and five pallets long," Angus said.

"The exterior and interior walls are made from pallets, while the floor has been created from packing timber which was donated by a local glazing business."

The second-year CQUniversity Civil Engineering student recently moved in a few mod-cons – fridge, TV and barbecue – along with beds and other furniture made by his father, making it the perfect student pad.

The house is located on his family property on the outskirts of Rockhampton and is 'just about' water proof. Cyclone rating? "We'll have to wait and see when one heads our way," he jokes.

The home boasts good air circulation and cross ventilation and Angus says it has good potential for student parties too, since it is in an industrial area of town where noise won't be an issue. There's no running water but electricity is available courtesy of a durable power cord running from the family shed.

There's sleeping quarters in a loft which is accessible by a homemade ladder and provides space on the lower level for storage. There's a lounge area complete with day bed, and a spacious verandah. The front door, or



should we say doors, provide the house with plenty of breeze, light and views of the surrounds.

Fine-tuning is still underway with plans afoot for mozzie screens and other comforts of home.

"I saw a documentary about the use of pallets for housing refugees in Haiti and that gave me the idea. I got advice from engineers and used the CAD design software at Uni ... my family and student friends have helped out, especially with de-nailing timber.

"We started in June 2013 and have worked on the house off and on since then. We left the pallets on display on the exterior on purpose rather than doing



Watch video



exterior cladding.

“I’ve documented our progress in a few reports I’ve done for Engineering classes.”

Angus has plans to expand into a bigger pallet house project, possibly involving a wider range of students and seeking formal planning approval. He says an expanded project may even become the basis of a future student research venture and has considered applying for grants to get it off the ground.

Angus now has the bug for designing houses, but plans to complete his Engineering degree before exploring architecture as a career. “I reckon an architect with engineering qualifications would be in demand.”



WORLD'S TOP 5 BIZARRE BUILDING PRODUCTS

ICE

In a village in Sweden, a hotel is constructed entirely out of ice each year. Every room is carved in ice, including the beds.

BEER

A Buddhist temple in Thailand has been constructed from a million glass beer bottles. The monks who built it wished to highlight the wasteful nature of consumption.

NEWSPAPER

In 1922 Elis Stenman began building a house out of newspaper. Apart from the timber frame, the house was made from rolled and varnished newspaper.

TYRES

As millions of tyres are thrown away each year, they make the ideal, recycled building material. They are tough, can be stacked creatively and provide great insulation.

PLASTIC BOTTLES

In Thailand, an exhibition hall has been made entirely from recycled plastic bottles. Plastic bottles are becoming a popular resource for many innovative designers as they cost very little and once sealed provide good insulation.

