Australian Home Design: Multi-generation living by Ian Comnys

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An innovative new display is designed for multi-generational living, allowing the one house to be used as four separate homes.

Located in the NSW central coast suburb of Blackwall, this new display by designer builder Richard Altavilla, aims to show how several generations of a family can live together without feeling crowded.

Designed and built to suit the needs of a modern Australian family, Altavila thought carefully about the ways in which family requirements are changing.

â€œFamily members are in need of their own private space and the facilities to accommodate these requirements. Younger family members are seeing the cost of living rising dramatically so remaining at home for as long as possible helps towards getting a better start in life,â€• says Richard Altavila. â€œLooking after in-laws is on the agenda of many Australian families also.â€•.

The house was built on a relatively small 487 square metre site, and focused on utilising the space to provide a quality, comfortable home for the whole family to live in. The design is based on a three to four bedroom pavilion style residence, with each area featuring separate access, as well as bathroom and living areas. The home also incorporates separate courtyards, and the possibility of having up to seven car spaces if required.

â€œHaving private bathrooms, living rooms, courtyards and car spaces are whatâ€™s needed to facilitate [comfortable living for a multi-generational home],â€• says Altavila. â€œWe have designed and built a prototype residence that responds to the needs of family living today.â€•

In addition to catering to the needs of a modern family, the design also focuses on sustainability, utilising several features to keep environmental impact at a minimum.

Thought was put into orientation to minimise light usage, passive heating and cooling through fully insulated sarking, walls and ceiling, a 5000 litre water tank, and LED ground lighting. The home features a low maintenance garden, and the building itself has also been designed so that it can be dismantled and the materials re-used.

â€œMany people loved the idea, some having said that it was 5 years ahead of its time. Also, people love the look of the building with the way the roof of the front pavilion points north east and seems to float. This allows natural light to come through the green low-e glass throughout the day reducing energy costs.â€•

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