



SUSTAINABLE LIVING

Public housing snares architectural award

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Public housing projects have come a long way from their bleak beginnings and a case in point is the social housing project on Fitzgerald Street in Perth, which has won an award from the Royal Institute of British Architects for its contribution to architectural excellence.

The Department of Housing purchased the site for \$2.85 million in 2007 for inner-city housing and the 49-apartment complex was designed by JCY architects and urban designers.

With a budget of \$19.5 million, the project delivered new homes for 18 seniors, 11 two-bedroom family apartments and 20 one-bedroom apartments.

"The site is less than a kilometre from the Perth CBD and ideally located for affordable social housing, close to public transport, local parks and leisure facilities as well as local shops and services," Housing Minister Bill Marmion said.

"The layout is based on the principle of a walking community, with all buildings located off a secure internal landscaped courtyard.

"The apartments have been designed to respond to the conditions of the local climate and are oriented to maximise sustainable living solutions, including passive solar heating, cooling, cross-ventilation and day lighting strategies."

Modern construction materials,

aluminium solar shades, perforated privacy screens on balconies and courtyards and public artwork have been used in the development to assemble a mix of social housing (70 per cent) and affordable housing (30 per cent).

The title for the complex has been transferred to affordable rental housing manager Community Housing Limited in line with the department's asset transfer project.

"The transfer of the complex to CHL will allow the community housing organisation to borrow against the asset and build more social and affordable housing," Mr Marmion said.

The building is now among the finalists being judged for the RIBA Lubetkin Prize, to be announced on September 26 in London.

RIBA president Angela Brady said the international awards set the standard for great architecture.

"Investing in good design for our towns and communities is vital; even in hard times we must continue to create vibrant and inspiring buildings and places for future generations to use and enjoy," Ms Brady said.

Government architect Steve Woodland said the project illustrated the power of good design in elevating the quality of the built environment.

