



DESIGN MATTERS

With TONY TROBE

Bushfires bring lessons on better ways to build

Fire has touched and tormented Canberra this summer. We've lived it with the rest of Australia. As we plan for the future, all of us will want to build better. This week Tony talks to local architect Sarah Lebner, a speaker at The Showroom Canberra home show running at EPIC this weekend.

TT How will the fires force us to rethink approaches to our environment, both built and natural?

SL I believe the fires, along with other extreme weather events this summer, will be a catalyst for us facing the reality of a changing climate. We've had the privilege of forgetting that our homes are, at their core, about shelter – but this summer has been a reset of priorities for many of us.

How must the new normal of a drier, hotter Australia influence the science of our homes?

An increase in extreme heatwaves (and an inability to cool a home passively if you cannot ventilate in the evenings

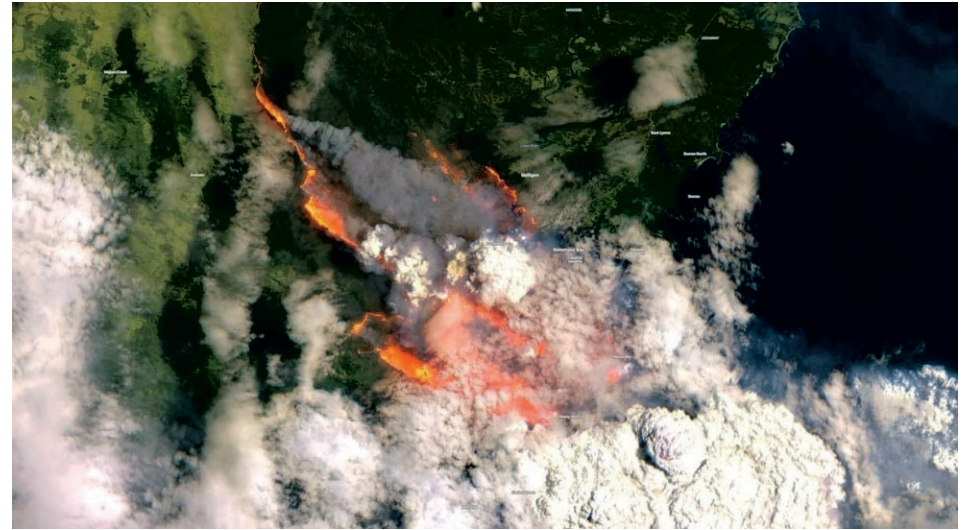
due to smoke) means airconditioning is going to become an important back-up, even for well-designed homes. At the same time, we must be combating climate change as urgently as we can. Science holds the key for us in finding the right balance.

How can the ACT's leaders, planners, architects and builders apply new thinking to Canberra's developments?

We need to invest in quality solutions. We face housing affordability issues but a race to the bottom is only setting us up for a future of costly defects, damage from extreme weather, and homes that become "disposable" after just a couple of decades. Designers have so much to offer the community in solving these problems.

How up-to-date are Canberra and Australia compared to the rest of the world in sustainable housing?

Australia has always been lacking. Because most of our country enjoys a relatively mild climate, we've been fairly



Architect Sarah Lebner believes this summer's fires should inspire big changes in home design.

lazy in our approaches. Unfortunately, this means that when we live in one of the more extreme pockets, such as Canberra, we suffer from this heritage. The good news is we don't have to reinvent the wheel – all the work has been done for us and we have the tools readily available to optimise our designs, specify the right products and materials, and work with builders who understand energy-efficient construction.

What should be on our wish list if we want to build or renovate in an area that could be vulnerable to bushfire?

Working with the right specialists. Find an experienced architect who will work collaboratively with a bushfire design consultant. A home is usually the biggest investment of your life, so have experts on board to make sure you're spending that money for the best outcome possible. **H**

Tony Trobe is director of TT Architecture, specialising in the design of sustainable residential architecture. If there is a design issue you would like to discuss, email tonytrobe@ttarchitecture.com.au



The five-bedroom, 10-car property broke Crace's suburb record by \$5000.

Crace home breaks suburb record for a second time

With JESSICA TAULAGA

It's not every day that a home surpasses the suburb record twice over. Most homes would be lucky to ever reach a suburb record, but earlier this month a certain five-bedroom property in Crace surpassed the record for a second time.

The property at 7 Langtree Crescent was bought for \$1.63 million via private

negotiations in February. In 2015, the house was purchased for \$1.47 million, the highest sale in the suburb at the time before the house at 48 Durong Street surpassed it with a \$1.625 million sale in 2018.

The double-storey home at Langtree Crescent sits on a block size of 659 square metres with generously sized bedrooms and four bathrooms. The property also features a separate

rumpus/gym room, theatre room, a hot spring spa and a wine cellar.

Listing agent Josh Morrissey of Hive Property attributed the record-breaking sales to the property's size and locality.

"There is no other home built to that scale and with 10 car spaces – the sheer size alone got the interest there," he said. "The location of Crace was also a big drawcard for buyers. Crace is ... 10 minutes to the city." **H**

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