

**Belinda Ritchie's Interview with Darren Finlay:
Rainwater Tanks at Innovation House
20 August 2014**

We're here today with Darren Finlay at Innovation House which is located at Sanctum Estate in Mount Low in Townsville.

Now, we're just going to ask a couple of questions.

Firstly, can you tell us a little bit about why Innovation House was created?

Innovation House is a little bit of an experiment with obviously... world's best practice for the tropics. So, from an energy efficiency point of view, from an energy consumption point of view, from a water point of view and from a products point of view, we just wanted to sort of give people some examples, give them a few different ideas that hopefully they can come and find one inspired to learn about. And then the other phase of it is now within a couple of weeks, myself and my family are going to move into this house and we're actually going to study how we live in the house. How much water is consumed, how much power's consumed, and how we actually live inside a 10 star home, so that was the idea.

How does water conservation contribute to the sustainability of the house?

We've tried to touch on all the facets of sustainability, so we've tried to look at energy, water, technology, power, all of these different elements, a healthy house, all of these components, and water's definitely very important and sometimes forgotten a little bit in the tropics because we figure we got so much of it falling around us, we don't need to be concerned about it. But certainly we do, so we're trying to study that as well and give people the best practice and let them decide what's affordable for them.

Specifically, how is our Gough Tank being used?

Well obviously 5000L, we're trying to use for two purposes. One is to keep the water being used in the garden down, specifically. And also we're lucky enough to have an outdoor shower and certainly because it's full quite a lot ... so we can have a nice outdoor shower when we need to.

Like after you've mowed the lawn!

Yes, well, after my kids mow the lawn!

Yeah, aha, true!

I've read that your electricity usage is going to be monitored by Ergon and by JCU. Are they also monitoring the overall usage of water in the house?

It's actually going through a couple of different trials from a water point of view. So, we're lucky enough that the council have actually got their new wireless water metre. So they're actually able to study lots of stuff like how much water people are using, and already we've found a few things that we haven't done well, so we'll be able to provide all that data back and say, look, in every household that's using this amount of water; you know, we've got to be aware of that.

And lastly, given the amount of rainfall in the Townsville region, do you think collection of rainwater should be encouraged for everyone?

Yes, it's a little bit of a controversial topic, actually. There's lots of different opinions on it. I mean, I suppose I have my builder's hat on, I have my client's hat on, and I have my environment hat on, and I suppose it's about finding what's best for you. But there is no doubt that, although we're in the tropics, water conservation is still important because we still rely on a dam or a pipeline to provide our water supply, so if everyone can help to minimize that load by using other sources like storing some onsite, it's certainly got to help. And at some point in time, I think it can be very important - around the world it's going to be massively important.

So, in wrapping up, Gough Plastics is very proud to be a part of such an Innovative House. And, thank you very much for letting us spend time with you and asking you questions.

Absolutely, and thank you very much. And I also would like to say it's great that we have the support of local companies as well. In actual fact, it's good to see that local people understand what North Queenslanders need and it's good to be able to have your support. I appreciate it.