



📷 Tiff Stodart (seated) with partner Sam Goodman, their children Lulu and Pixie in front of their Frewville house designed by Michael Buchtman and Anne Taylor (background). Picture: Matt Turner

— SA Lifestyle —

## Building a better future

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AN architecturally designed house can be a thing of beauty but also a clever way to reduce energy costs and increase sustainability. This year's South Australian Architecture Awards, announced on June 10, have attracted 79 entries across 11 categories. Here we meet the architects and owners of three homes that have made the coveted shortlist for sustainability.

### Lo-fi for the high life

The home Tiff Stodart and Sam Goodman share with their three children looms large on its corner block. At night translucent fibreglass panels on the second-storey balcony diffuse internal light from the children's upstairs bedrooms and living space, transforming the home's quasi-anvil shape into a giant lantern.

Its blend of timber, galvanised steel, fibre cement cladding and corrugated sheeting would not seem out of place in a rural setting but is a striking contrast to the bungalows and conventional brick homes that dominate suburban Frewville.

But at its core is a house that Stodart and Goodman and architects Anne Taylor and Michael Buchtman of Taylor Buchtman Architecture believe is an example of sustainable design on a sustainable budget.

The 200 sq m four-bedroom, two-bathroom home was built in 11 months for \$340,000. “We were under budget, unheard of,” Stodart, 43, says, standing behind a kitchen bench fashioned from a recycled bar and decorated with vintage band posters. “It was just really an attempt to see if you could do it, keeping things simple.”

The couple and their children Sebastian, 16, Lulu, 11, and Pixie, 6, were living in a poorly built 90 sqm post-WWII house they bought six years ago but which had fallen into a state of disrepair. They asked Taylor Buchtman to review standard home designs but chose to go ahead with an architectural solution after failing to find something that suited their personalities.

“I had no vision – I gave them a brief and the brief was very brief, that we wanted four bedrooms, two living areas, that was really it,” Stodart says. “They wanted to do something interesting and they always said we were interesting people so it kind of fit.”

## Showcasing our amazing architecture





The architects convinced the couple to forgo airconditioning and let the house regulate temperature through its north facing orientation, increased insulation and the help of gully breezes.

Heating is provided by a generous double-sided combustion wood heater wedged between the kitchen and lounge room and a 6kW solar PV system has slashed power bills.

Rainwater is collected in tanks at the back of the house and the family has decided against gas hot water and cooktop as they plan to install solar powered battery storage.

The architects have dubbed the property Lo-Fi in a nod to Stodart and Goodman's love of music and the house's low-cost solutions.

"As the budget was extremely tight, we went lo-fi to meet the objectives of a robust sustainable house that could act as a prototype for a low cost alternative to project home building, but we also experimented with the building," Buchtmann says.

The kitchen features recycled lights from the original house, while upstairs hang lights that Michael fashioned from plywood and offcuts of the translucent cladding. Guitar knobs, which have served a new purpose as handles to the kitchen cupboards, are another example of the new home's sustainable attitude.

"For us it is a massive change and yet it's still not a big house," Stodart says.

“The more space you have the more space you have to heat and cool, the more you have to clean. You don’t really need it.”

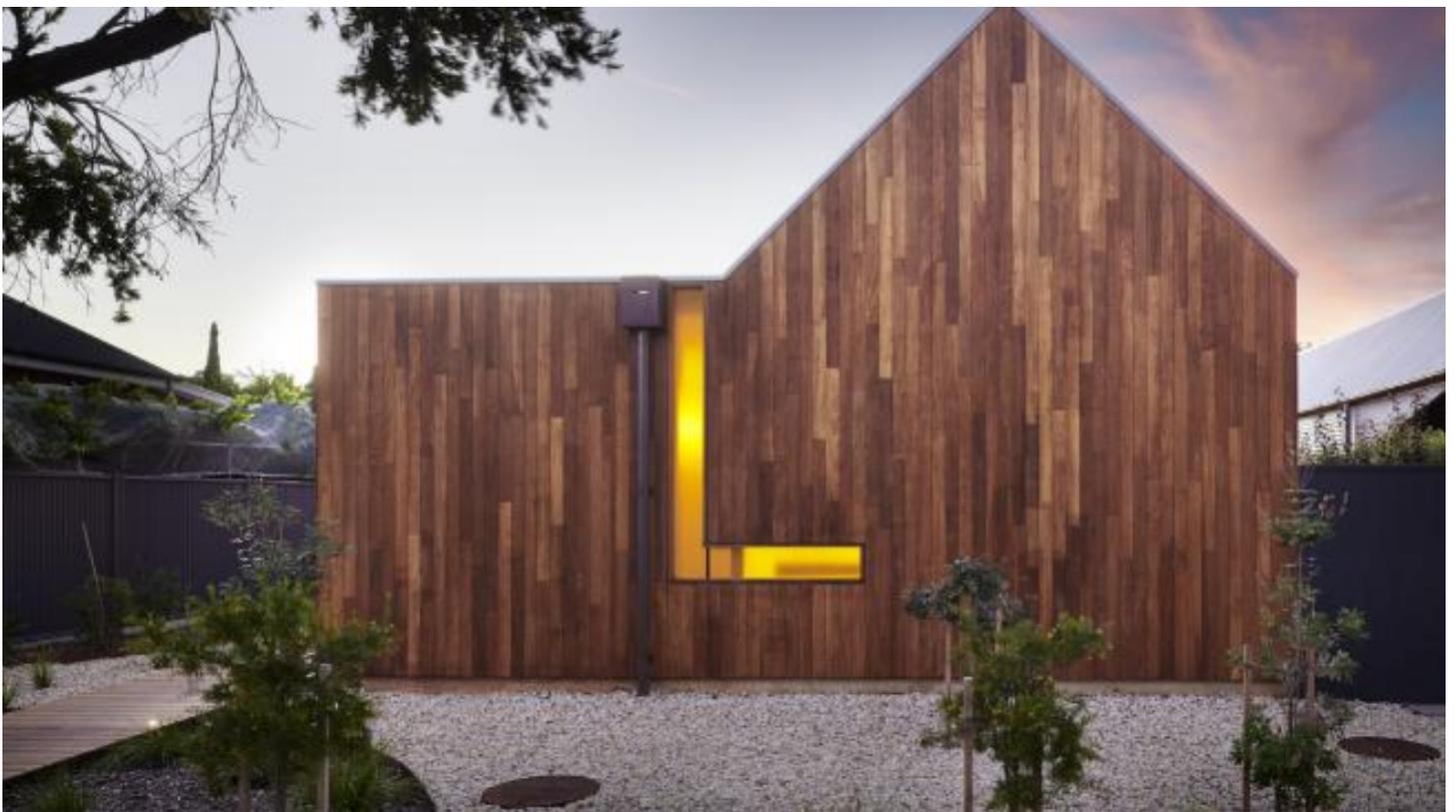
### **The little house of possibility**

In a quiet cul-de-sac in Goodwood sits a modern house that embodies a child’s imagination.

When viewed from the street the two-bedroom property, with its pitched roof and square form, resembles the enduring kindergarten interpretation of a family home.

The childhood playfulness of the building, designed by Grieve Gillett Andersen is further evoked in bold splashes of red, blue, green, orange, yellow that punctuate the living areas earning the building its nickname, Crayon House.

“It has quite a lot of colour in it, but they’re all warm tone colours, it’s a very kind of uplifting house to be in,” project director Dimitty Andersen says.



📷 The Grieve Gillett Andersen-designed Crayon House at Goodwood. Picture: Sam Noonan Photography

“So Crayon in the sense that there’s a simple cardboard box that contains all these colours of fun – so it’s like a box of possibility.

“The clients say that Crayon House has an energy-conscious soul (and) a ‘life is meant to be fun’ attitude.”

Crayon House replaced a bluestone cottage which had been clad over and was deemed beyond repair due to salt damp.

The clients – who work within the education sector and wished to remain anonymous – had a brief of a modern home with “simple clean lines and compelling forms” but with a sustainable focus.

For Andersen’s team that started with the position of the house on the generous 700 sq m block.

“If you asked me what is the one thing you could do to make your house more sustainable, orientation is the key – just consider where the sun is to all your spaces,” she says.

The family of three demanded communal and private spaces that would grow with them while outdoor spaces had to accommodate a low maintenance garden with herbs and vegetables.

“They were interested in a home that would suit them for the long term, a house that would suit them now but also be flexible enough and not too large so that it can suit them into the future as they age in place,” Andersen says.

“If you can custom design a home and have the opportunity to address solar access and natural ventilation some of the basic principles (of design) it’s not going to cost you a lot of money.”

The house, adorned with solar panels, was sited to optimise winter sun and retractable sails and shades were installed along the northern side to guard against fierce summer sun.

To help reduce heat loss the southern windows were reduced in size and limited to wet areas.

Much of the house is clad in sustainably sourced pacific teak providing insulation to the building and a 42,000 litre rainwater tank buried in the front yard irrigates the garden and is plumbed into the house.

Andersen says the house, measuring a restrained 200 sq m, is evidence that “good quality” space needn’t be big.

“That’s a classic example – in that house it’s exemplar in the sense it’s not a big footprint but it feels big,” she says.

“Primarily I learned (from the project) that big is not necessarily good, so that small can be just as generous in footprint and generous in terms of what it gives back than bigger houses.”

### **Hills harmony a glass act**

The passage to Michael and Karen Heath’s Crafers West home requires driving through an arbour of stringybark gum trees whose twisted forms appear to bow at your arrival.

It's an idyllic part of the Adelaide Hills, former logging country where homes are perched on the summit of long driveways, or nestled in valleys that provide shelter and fertile foraging ground for kangaroos.

Except Michael Heath says he never saw kangaroos visiting his property until his dark and cramped 1980s home he bought 20 years ago underwent a two-year transformation under the eye of architect John Adam.



📷 Michael Heath and his cat Pepper at his Crafers West home. Picture: CALUM ROBERTSON

“He (John) knew we liked nature, we wanted to see more of it,” Heath, 53, says looking out through the expansive conservatory-style addition to the house, completed in December 2015.

“We now realise there are kangaroos coming up to the property, and there are bandicoots as well.”

The Heaths spent about \$1 million renovating the “dark-walled” home and adding a 200 sq m vaulted living and dining area to the heart of it, where the couple and their sons Callum, 7, and Connor, 10, can be found cooking, entertaining or just enjoying the view.

Their desire for a sustainable life is evidenced in the homemade kombucha sitting on the granite kitchen bench, cupboards crammed with chutneys, jams and preserves and a productive garden still yielding tomatoes and raspberries late into autumn during a visit by *SAWeekend*. The new addition features north facing double-glazed windows and a raked roof which allows the winter sun to wash in, curtailing the need for heating.

“Sometimes it’s so warm we just wear T-shirts,” says pathologist Karen Heath, adding the large solar panel system on the roof has her happily comparing energy bills with friends and colleagues.

A giant underground cellar and fire bunker houses pumps for three 22,000L rainwater tanks – one preserved for fire fighting – which are buried under the lawn.

The bunker, and what Michael admits was a penchant for high-end selections in materials, pushed the budget higher than anticipated but they did not skimp on energy-saving design.

Integrated bushfire roller shutters to the expansive windows provide additional insulation and external summer shading. The couple also chose to paint the house in low toxicity paint and have used largely natural materials – granite benchtops, bluestone flooring and spotted gum floorboards and joinery throughout.

Adam described his design concept for a garden not to be just something to “look at” but to “be in”.

“Our aim was to bring the clients out from their existing dark, sullen, introverted walled warren house and up into a light filled garden conservatory,” he says.

“This results in an engagement in and with landscape.”

The annual South Australian Architecture Awards is run by the SA Chapter of the Australian Institute of Architects and winners will be announced on June 10. To view all entries go to [architecture.com.au](http://architecture.com.au)