

# magazine release

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## **REMOTE ACCOMMODATION BEATS CITY CENTRE ROI**

In 1997 developer Karl Plunkett finally gained access to his dream site on the beach near Broome in the Kimberley region of Western Australia. He couldn't have imagined where his adventure into tourism accommodation would take him.

Eight years and a devastating visit from Cyclone Rosita later, he could have been forgiven for turning his back on remote tourist accommodation.

But Karl's a mad, persistent bloke, gifted with boundless energy and an infectious optimism.

So he turned Cyclone Rosita from a disaster into a global business opportunity. With Sean Connolly of Model-It, he developed a new design in accommodation – smart, fast, strong, stylish and above all, economical.

Karl designed accommodation that a cyclone couldn't conquer, and in the process created a fast build, ecologically sustainable range of eco tents, cabins and villas which offer an ideal solution to accommodation problems in a range of industries.

Since the designs matured in 2007, Karl's company Eco Structures Australia (ESA) has supplied permanent and semi-permanent eco tents, cabins and villas to the tourism, mining, indigenous and agricultural industries with increasing success.

"The only hurdle to growth has been manufacturing in quantity" says Karl, who took on a venture capital partner in The Hawaiian Group. With the additional network of business resources and contacts, Eco Structures Australia is now able to offer their products globally.

A quick visit to their website [www.ecostructures.net.au](http://www.ecostructures.net.au) is very enlightening, and demonstrates just how flexible their products are.

The basic structures are strong, simple and modular in nature, creating a myriad of options for tailoring the eco tents, cabins or villas to a diverse range of sites, conditions and purposes. All structures are engineered to Australian Government standards of wind region "C" and can be engineered to meet "D"



Because the eco structures are free standing and open plan, construction is simple, minimising the need for skilled labour in erection and installation of the base unit.

Installation is also very fast. An eco-cabin can be constructed in approximately 4 days, and an eco tent in 2 days, depending on available labour resource.

Transport of the components is economical, as the structures pack down very compactly. A single 40ft shipping container will hold the construction components for up to 20 eco tents comfortably.

A world class example of a project incorporating Eco Tents is the recently completed Karijini Eco Retreat in Karijini National Park in the Pilbara region. Owned by local Gumala Aboriginal Corporation, the retreat comprises 50 eco tents, 40 of which feature luxury ensuite as well as camping sites and an A Class restaurant facility specialising in local game dishes.



*(AERIAL PHOTO OF KARAJINI SHOWING SHAPES OF TENTS AND ENSUITES OFF ONE SIDE – see Karijini folder)*



Visitors can choose either the up market luxury Eco Tents, or the more modest standard Eco Tent accommodation with shared facilities. This is a visionary project in a stunning location, which looks set to add to the raft of awards already won by Karl and Eco Structures Australia.



Aaron Bell, Operations Manager of ESA is unstoppable on the subject of ecologically sustainable building systems. “Karijini Eco Retreat uses the Eco Structures product in the best possible way, presented in total harmony with the environment, creating a minimal footprint on the ground and constructed to utilise renewable energy, generated onsite. The eco tents met perfectly the many diverse challenges of supplying resort style accommodation within the highly sensitive environmental, cultural and aesthetic parameters of Karijini National Park.”



With their spacious interiors, king size beds, crisp hotel linen and stylish ensuite bathrooms, the Karijini Eco Retreat luxury accommodation option attracts an exceptional nightly tariff.



It's a great example of a handsome return on investment for any tourism developer utilising ESA products.

Karl is currently using the modular accommodation for rebirthing Eco Beach, the tourism project which was originally destroyed by Cyclone Rosita. "How often does a developer have the opportunity to go back and build a second time?" says Karl. "We are scheduled to have the new and improved Eco Beach ready for visitors during the 2009 tourist season."



More visuals of the new Eco Beach project are shown on the Eco Structures website.

A recent and very exciting development is strong interest in the Eco Structures products from the Middle East. "It's very exciting, we are selling tents to the Arabs, and that means we've come of age as a supplier of remote accommodation" says Aaron, who's understandably very proud of this achievement. The first eco-tent was airfreighted to Abu Dhabi in the U.A.E. several weeks ago.

Eco Structures' website is at [www.ecostructures.net.au](http://www.ecostructures.net.au). Enquiries can also be directed to Aaron Bell at the Eco Structures office in Broome on (08) 9192 3152 or email [aaronb@ecostructures.net.au](mailto:aaronb@ecostructures.net.au).

Acknowledgement for eco tent photography to Christian Fletcher.