

Straw bale builder wins award



Award winner: The straw bale home in Bathurst by Viva Living Homes.

A Lawson business has won two major building awards for a straw bale home in Bathurst.

Sam Vivers, director and builder of Viva Living Homes, and his team won the Excellence in Building Awards presented by the NSW Master Builder Association.

Despite a record number of entries this year, Viva Living Homes won the most coveted award — best home under \$500,000 — against all the conventional home entries. They also took away an award in environmental management.

“We’re so grateful that the industry is recognising our vision that not only are our homes natural, non-toxic and good for the environment, but that they are in fact out-performing conventionally built homes as well as so-called ‘sustainable’ homes built with man-made materials,” said Mr Vivers.

“Our goals are to build comfortable, non-toxic homes for our clients. It is such a bonus for us when we achieve feedback in the form of awards and high energy ratings because it means other people

respect and appreciate what we’re doing.”

The winning home was built in Bathurst by owners Deb and Ben Bardon whose dream was to live in a straw bale home.

Simone Vivers of Viva Living Homes said they were the driving force behind the performance of the home as they were enthusiastic to be as sustainable as possible.

“So they jumped in, so to speak, when we wanted to harvest clay, sand and water from site to use in the walls,” she said.

The house has straw bale external walls, cob as well as wattle and daub for internal walls, lime render on the outside and clay render on the inside which has been lime washed.

Sam Vivers has been a professional straw bale builder for more than 14 years. He started as a chippie over 18 years ago working on million dollar homes in the Eastern Suburbs of Sydney when he became sensitive to the chemicals on the building site. His goal since has been to use as many natural products as possible in the building process.