

# Small home signals a game-changer for the housing industry

Rachael Kelly · 12:06, Nov 06 2020



ANDREA BOSSHARD AND SHANE LOADER

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A small home built with pre-fabricated panels signals a building method that could be a game changer for the building industry, one Southland builder says.

In what is thought to be a first for Southland, an Invercargill building company has built a transportable, prefabricated home, made from structurally insulated panels, or SIPs.

Exceed Homes owners Jade McNamara and Sarah Bohm built a prefabricated home from the highly insulated panels, which are able to withstand extreme temperatures in the most remote parts of the country. It was designed by Energy Architecture NZ.

Already popular overseas, especially in Europe, SIP panels have been available in New Zealand for some time, but are gradually growing in popularity.

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McNamara likens the popularity to how double glazing has come to be the standard for windows.

“Twenty years ago, it was this expensive thing that only some people could afford, but as its benefits become proven and more providers popped up, it brought down the cost to where it’s more affordable,” he said.

“I see SIPs going that way; more people are asking for them and I’d say it’s going to be a basic economy of scale in the coming years bringing the cost down.”

SIPs are two sheets of ply or OS board with an extruded foam between them. They use framing, but significantly less than traditional framing for home builds. Because of the foam, SIPs have a much higher insulation rating because there are fewer thermal breaks leading to less heat escaping.

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The interior of the transportable, prefabricated homemade from structurally insulated panels by Exceed Homes of Invercargill.

The home belongs to Andrea Bosshard and Shane Loader, who wanted to build a sustainable, off-the-grid small home, and it's believed their transportable SIP home is the first one delivered from a Southland building company.

They live at Middlemarch, inland from Dunedin, and because of their slightly remote location, it became clear a transportable home would be needed in order to make the most of the building time.

"If we'd had builders on-site an eight-hour workday would have turned into six, to allow for that travel time and that option just didn't work for us," Bosshard said.

The home was delivered in mid June, and it was super sealed with no drafts, leakage or loss of energy.

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A home built with structurally insulated panels is moved to its new site at Middlemarch, inland from Dunedin.

“No matter what the temperature is outside, it’s always between 18°C and 22°C in the house,” Bosshard said.

McNamara hoped making the use SIPs the norm within New Zealand building practices wasn’t too far away and could be a game-changer for the housing industry.

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Not only could houses be built more quickly and efficiently, there would be a natural home for SIP panels to help alleviate the stresses of the housing crisis, he said.

“These are warm and dry homes, built with proper heat exchangers and air conditioners because they’re so well sealed.”