

Carbon clearout as builders go green

CUTTING carbon emissions begins at home for Townsville company Hutchinson Builders.

The company's new headquarters are lean, mean and green.

The Duckworth St building is possibly Townsville's most carbon-efficient commercial building — a carbon-crunching machine.

The award-winning Queensland company has converted an old warehouse in Garbutt into new eco-friendly headquarters.

The builders have gone solar, installing the city's first three-phase solar power station.

SEA O2 sustainability and green-building consultant Guy Lane said the builders were 'walking the talk' on sustainable development when they drew up the plans.

"This building is probably the most carbon-efficient commercial building in Townsville," Mr Lane said.

The ground floor consists of a hall, small offices, storage space and tenants' offices.

There is a drafting area and a boardroom on the mezzanine level.

Features to keep the building energy-efficient include a white roof to reflect heat, motion sensors



ECO-FRIENDLY . . . Hutchinson Builders team leader Pierre Kessler in the new 'green' building on Duckworth St

and timers on lights and air conditioners, task lighting at each desk, skylights and energy-efficient fluorescent tubes.

Rainwater is collected for flushing the toilets, washing cars and watering the gardens — and there is a waterless urinal in the men's loos.

The building even has its own solar power station to

provide up to 10 per cent of the building's electricity.

"Producing their own solar renewable energy complements the building's very low mains energy consumption," Mr Lane said.

The solar power station was designed by Bonlec solar power system designer Steve Winter, electrical engineer Graham Denham

from Ashburner Francis and Mr Lane from SEA O2.

Mr Winter said the project was the largest grid-connect solar system his firm had developed.

Hutchinson Builders project manager Ben Prest said the solar power station was a big plus for their new Townsville headquarters.

"It shows what can be achieved with off-the-shelf

technology and local expertise," Mr Prest said.

"It also helps develop capacity in sustainable design for the firm."

Mr Lane said the company was considering buying 100 per cent green-power mains electricity. This would result in the building having zero greenhouse emissions associated with electricity consumption.