

# New name for modular home industry leader



Grand design: The innovative range is becoming popular.

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A merger of building companies Alternative Living and Aussie Portables allows the once separate housing and resource industry accommodation divisions to be centralised under a new company — Aussie Modular Solutions or AMS.

From its 300,000sqm of manufacturing space in Perth, including the new Welshpool factory which has 15,000sqm under cover, AMS produces more than 3000 modules per annum for the residential housing and mining accommodation markets.

Along with the rest of the modular home industry, AMS is servicing the resource industry's need for on-site accommodation while also promoting its housing range to home buyers in remote parts of WA and in Perth.

"The firm's current market is 20 per cent in housing and 80 per cent in the resource industry but we think that ratio will reverse in three years with housing taking on the biggest share of contracts," AMS business development manager Louise Daniels said.

Alternative Living earned a reputation for its unique range of innovative modular homes that strike the much sought-after balance between affordability and elegant living.

The company has two display homes at LandCorp's new Baynton West display village in Karratha but also

believes its homes have wide appeal throughout WA, especially for buyers wanting to avoid the long building delays associated with more traditional site built homes. "A lot of work goes into the design and we can also ensure quality control because the homes are built in our Perth factories where they are managed around-the-clock," Ms Daniels said.

Another growth area for AMS and other pre-fabricated builders will be the independent living units already in place in the Town of Vincent and under consideration by the City of Fremantle and Belmont. These small homes are built at the rear of existing homes and can be rented out to people other than family members.

One of the barriers to further expansion plans is the reluctance of banks to make loans available because pre-fabricated homes are not fixed to the site until just before completion.

"We've been making a lot of noise about this because it's one of the barriers holding us back from getting more of our homes out to the market," Ms Daniels said.

A few financial institutions had made brief forays into the pre-fabricated market but were limited by their own lending criteria.

"The industry has found itself between a rock and hard place and it's not an ideal situation for consumers or the builder," she said.

