



## The small indoors

The Kiwi approach to house and home can be a bit two-faced. On one hand, the availability of land has meant sprawling homes where you can get fit jogging from room to room and urban areas bulging with the relentless march of the quarter-acre section. On the other, this settler nation maintains a deep desire to return to the seclusion, intimacy and compactness of the campsite and the bach.

In recent years these mixed feelings have given rise to various self-contained home kits that attempt to squeeze comfortable living into a tiny footprint with a wild, natural, eco-friendly flavour.

The latest is the Hatch ([www.hatchhouse.co.nz](http://www.hatchhouse.co.nz)), a rugged, all-steel, kit-set three-bedroom house, designed and engineered to meet Housing New Zealand standards in all but the most extreme

conditions. For about \$1,000 per square meter, it bolts together onsite and is self-sufficient: solar power battery inverter for lighting, cylinder gas for hot water and cooking and Bio-loo composting toilet and grey water system. And water collected from the roof is pumped from a rubber bladder suspended under the floor.

The Arkit ([www.arkit.com.au](http://www.arkit.com.au), pictured above) is really an acorn out of which it is hoped a mighty oak will grow. The company, which has its HQ in Melbourne and a presence in Auckland, wowed punters at Victoria's state of design exhibition last year with its indoor installation of a demonstration building. The plan is to set up there again in July, but the goal is to perfect a building system that can be used to create homes of all kinds and sizes.

Port-a-Bach ([www.port-a-bach.com](http://www.port-a-bach.com)) is aligned to the

architectural cargo cult that finds new and interesting ways to recycle shipping containers. When folded up, its steel shell protects it against unwanted interest. Inside, the stylish interior is split into flexible room spaces with a fabric screen system, and a fresh indoor/outdoor flow includes a striking flip-down sun bench.

Habode ([www.habode.co.nz](http://www.habode.co.nz)) has taken this one step further, with a shipping container-sized steel sub-frame that unfolds, complete with pre-installed utilities, to become your home, wherever you want it.

All these designs offer you the chance to move your home when you want to, and to site it with minimum disturbance to the landscape. They are unlikely to replace many people's main home any time soon, but they sure beat trying to de-stress in a clapboard shack full of granny's chintz.

## New centre to reduce greenhouse gas

A new Centre for Agricultural Greenhouse Gas Research has opened in Palmerston North to try to tackle one of the nation's most pressing environmental issues.

The agriculture sector is the largest single source of greenhouse gas emissions in this country, making up just under half our total emissions. Most of this is methane emitted by livestock.

While opening the centre, to which government is funding \$5 million a year over ten years, Prime Minister John Key, said: "Feeding the world's growing population, while keeping a lid on emissions to fight climate change, is one of the defining challenges of the early 21st century."