



⬆️ This house, built using Arkit's panelised system, is located on a steep slope, allowing space for the water tanks underneath. This project uses fibre cement cladding but FSC-certified timber and other cladding options are available.

**BUILDING TYPE:**

Modular and panelised construction systems

**PROJECT NAME:**

Arkit's Wye River House

**PROJECT LOCATION:**

Wye River, Victoria

**SIZE:**

130 m<sup>2</sup>

**MATERIALS:**

Timber framing, Equitone fibre cement cladding, low-formaldehyde oriented strand board (OSB) bracing and structural flooring, ProClima external waterproof membrane, well-sealed double glazing, high-density recycled polyester insulation

**COST PER SQUARE METRE:**

\$3000 to \$3500, including full architectural design services, site works, fit-out, delivery, warranties and insurance

**BUILDING ENERGY STAR RATING:**

6.2 Star

**TIME TO LOCKUP:**

6 to 8 weeks in factory; 2 weeks onsite

**PHOTOGRAPHY:**

Alessandro Cerutti





On Christmas Day 2015, 98 houses in the coastal hamlet of Wye River were destroyed in a bushfire, including the original Arkit-built house on this site: “It was built just a year earlier and it was quite devastating,” says Craig Chatman. “After some contemplation, the clients decided to rebuild exactly the same house on the same footprint and using the same design (and BAL rating). So while sad, it was also very affirming.”

## Arkit

Arkit designs and uses modular and panelised construction. The approach used is determined by which will achieve the best outcome, based on the site. For instance, the Wye River project (pictured) used prefabricated panels so it could be delivered flat-packed; for this site, modules would have been a challenge to transport along the winding, single-lane Great Ocean Road. The site topography also made the use of cranes a challenge. “We have found approximately 70 per cent of our projects are still modular,” says architect and Arkit founder Craig Chatman. “But with the panelised approach we are not constrained with what can be transported. Sometimes height and volume is important and if a client needs 4m or 5m ceilings, with panels, we can do that.”

The company uses similar materials regardless of the approach taken; timber frames, well-sealed double-glazed

windows, Passivhaus certified ProClima building wrap, formaldehyde-free OSB and high-density insulation are features of each system. As much of the build as possible is prefabricated within the factory environment, with internal wall linings, footings and services connected on site.

Chatman established Arkit in 2010 as an architecture-driven prefabrication business. Based in Sunshine, Victoria, the studio has grown steadily to complete up to 20 projects each year and employs 30 staff, including seven architects and 15 carpenters. While the majority of projects are in Melbourne and greater Victoria, Arkit is beginning to work outside the state. “We are attracting clients highly educated about prefab,” says Chatman, who is currently involved in a project to the Passivhaus standard in Richmond, and several in New South Wales.

