

# straw into gold

**At a time when global warming is the biggest threat to our survival, low carbon materials have a crucial part to play in creating a truly sustainable built environment.**

Set in the context of current housing needs and the fact that Aotearoa produces some of the world's highest yields of grain (and consequently of the by-product straw), this project explores the possibilities of using *homegrown* building materials to address the critical issue of climate change.

As part of an elective course at Unitec School of Architecture, students are investigating the use of prefabricated timber and straw wall panels for mainstream house construction. Straw, like timber, has the ability to sequester carbon and therefore to significantly reduce the carbon footprint of buildings. A one third scale model of a small habitable structure, *Straw into Gold* shows the possibilities of this construction method and opens up discussions about local circular economies, community empowerment, and the need for a holistic approach to architecture that acknowledges the idea that **resources matter**.

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*Straw into Gold* explores the idea of using creative strategies to address the critical issue of climate change as part of a series of elective courses run by Magdalena Garbarczyk and Min Hall at Unitec School of Architecture. It is also a component of Project Pātūtū, a larger research project led by Min Hall that investigates using prefabricated strawbale structurally insulated panels for house construction in Aotearoa.

