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Models of ownership and development for enhancing housing affordability and sustainability in Australian cities

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This paper assesses models for affordability and sustainability in housing developments as currently manifest by various community groups in Australian cities. The paper draws on ecological and permacultural theory as transcribed into urban spaces, often referred to ecocity theory and practice, in which cities and therefore housing, are seen as an integral part of ecosystems, with design and practice aiming to use cities as a means for ecological restoration. This paper documents recent housing developments in Australian cities which seek to manifest these design and philosophical concerns, and discusses the implications of these developments for the wider sustainability of Australian cities. Data is drawn from site visits and interviews with primary stakeholders — residents and developers of such projects, architects, governmental housing providers and community housing advocacy groups. This is followed by a review of current impediments identified by stakeholders and an assessment of the scope for affordable and sustainable housing in Australia. Finally, the implications of these developments and impediments for current and future policy options are discussed.

FRAMEWORKS FOR THE STUDY

This study draws largely on the contributions to urban design and philosophy made by theorists and practitioners working within the realms of permaculture and ecocity theory. Permaculture theory derives from ecosystem analysis and focuses on system resilience as determined by many factors, including the diversity and complexity of form and function. As extended to human settlements and economies, urban application of this translates into urban ecology, and the literature and design principles of ecocities¹. This theoretical and architectural domain sees cities as environmentally reparative spaces and as sites for human and ecological co-evolution. Again, there is a focus on complexity and miniaturisation of form. A recurrent theme within the design frameworks of the case studies, is the utilisation of cohousing principles, which also bear some elaboration here. Both permaculture and ecocity theory highlight the integration of ecological and social justice theory as crucial to sustainability.

1. Highlights of permaculture theory

While a complete review of permacultural theory is not the aim of this work, it is appropriate at this point to review concerns of permacultural design philosophy of primary relevance to this study. Permaculture places great emphasis on replication and diversity within a system, such that multiple units (species, individuals or institutions) perform any given function and each unit also performs multiple functions. The sustainability (or resilience or robustness) of a system is seen as a function of this diversity and replication; loss of any unit does not fatally compromise the integrity of the system, due to its functions being carried out by multiple other units. Further, the multiplicity of functions in which each unit is engaged, maximises the efficiency of and broadens the infrastructural support for, that unit.

Permacultural theory also refers to the maximisation of edge space — this arises from the ecological phenomenon whereby the interface between two (eco) systems is found to be more productive than either system. This concern translates into both physical and institutional design principles, whereby the conscious production of larger exchange areas generates and allows greater creative exchange and easier access to services, amenities and goods. These (amongst other theoretical concerns) are extrapolated in permaculture theory to society and economy, to establish the basis for the principles of ecocity design.

2. Urban ecology and ecocities

Unaware of what we have done or its order of magnitude, we seek to remedy the situation by altering our ways of acting on some minor scale, by recycling, by diminishing our use of automobiles, by fewer development projects. The difficulty is that we do these things, not primarily to cease our plundering of our Earth in its basic resources, but to make possible continuation of our plundering industrial life patterns by mitigating the consequences. We mistake the order of magnitude of what we are dealing with. Our problems are

primarily problems of macrophase biology, the integral functioning of the entire complex of biosystems of the planet.

Thomas Berry in Register (2002: 25).

An ecocity perspective understands that the health of communities, the environment and the economy are crucially interdependent; ecology theory teaches us that the total is always greater than the sum of the parts and that a single species can be vital to multiple systems via intricate networks of mutuality and symbiosis. Hence this shares much terrain with and is largely informed by, permaculture theory and bioregionalism which, more than discrete theoretical areas, are highlights of a similar, overarching, ecological understanding of the world and human endeavour within it.

Ecocity design focuses on the complexity and miniaturisation of urban form, allowing access by proximity and the maximisation of creative exchange by an increase in internal complexity and hence edge space. Analogous biological design is seen in the structure of lungs and capillaries. Hence, cities are seen as sites of enormous potential if we reconsider their form in light of their desired function as sites for social, cultural, personal and economic exchange and manifest the maximisation of access to this according to ecological and physiological principles. Such a conceptualisation of cities represents a systemic overhaul and reinterpretation of cities, such that cities can be broken up into dense clusters interspersed with regenerated green spaces (agricultural, recreational and/or 'wild'), although the delineation is never this clear.

Within this overarching conceptualisation, cohousing offers appropriate models for household and community design. Cohousing design manifests as a cluster of houses centred around a garden, courtyard or boulevard — which may be covered or open depending on climate and location — with a common house located within or adjacent to this centre. Parking, if provided, is located at the perimeter of the site; the interior of the site focuses on social interaction and the provision of secure, amenable space. Individual houses are usually below average size but make use of

design to provide high quality personal space, which is complemented by significant shared outdoor space and an array of shared facilities in the common house, such as a community kitchen and dining room, lounge/play rooms, laundry, guest facilities, offices, workshops, tool sheds, store rooms, refrigeration rooms and so on, depending on the aims of the community. Most cohousing projects have at least a kitchen, dining room, bathroom, office and laundry in the common house.

Community dinners, which may or may not involve the wider community, are a mainstay of cohousing, with at least weekly, and usually higher, occurrence ².

Common houses are also often utilised by the wider community and various groups for meetings and social gatherings, and can play pivotal roles in community renewal and development.

3. Integration of ecology and social justice theory

Finally, this work is concerned with the integration of ecological and social justice theory, which resonates with both permaculture and ecocity theory. Such desire for the integration of these two is not new, but recent work on community development by Jim Ife (2002) provides a coherent overview. His basic premise (and a concern widely documented in literature concerning sustainability) is that either ecology or social justice in itself has flaws and can have adverse consequences if not considered in balance; a common example is the potentially disproportionate impact of carbon taxes on already marginalised low income families.

Following Ife (2002), desirable characteristics of the integration of ecology and social justice can be summarised as follows: social justice theory highlights the kind of society we would like and what is socially desirable, while ecology highlights what is physically feasible. Social justice criteria include a basis of equity and empowerment, a redress of structural disadvantage, the freedom to define rights and the guarantee of these, and the freedom to define needs and have them met. These operate within an ecological framework based on holism, diversity, balance, replication and flexibility.

Together, these form the basis for sustainable urban design and translate into a range of physical design strategies and features. Register (2002) provides a passionate, evocative and comprehensive examination of these as applied at various scales, and it is not the aim of this work to do hastily what Register does with such flair and rigour. As the concern of this paper is an assessment of housing projects as informed by these principles, it is appropriate to highlight that design principles at this level can include solar active and passive design; water collection, storage, treatment and reuse; incorporation of vegetation into built structures; reduced individual lot size and greater shared space; use of sustainably sourced materials; community-focussed design; and onsite organic food production.

Various of the above design principles can be seen to overlap in many ways and each contribute to larger issues traditionally held as separate sectors or departments. For example, the strategic incorporation of vegetation into house design through rooftop gardens, vertical gardens, atria, terraria and trellising, can generate the following outcomes:

- insulation (thermal and acoustic) and shade;
- air conditioning — reducing energy consumption;
- food — reducing transportation (and hence reducing fossil fuel usage, road maintenance costs, road fatalities and air pollution), refrigeration, offsite land degradation due to unsustainable agricultural practices, and packaging;
- CO₂ sink;
- water run-off reduction, offsite water sourcing reduction;
- treatment of solid and liquid waste, water recycling;
- reduction of urban heat island effect;
- provision of wildlife habitat;
- basis for economic activity (cash, barter, subsistence or commercial);
- health benefits through organic food consumption, gentle exercise and recreation;
- amenable space: site for social interaction and a nice place to be.

Further to this, these functions would be replicated in green spaces such as footpaths, community gardens, transit corridors, corporate and institutional grounds

and so on. Design based on the conscious application of such multi-sectoral considerations, would greatly impact on the ecological footprint of our cities and on the wellbeing of their residents. This reconsideration of the urban form as needing to take direct responsibility for its social and ecological footprint *within its own design*, lies at the base of ecocity and permaculture theory. Specific examples of design are elaborated in the case studies below.

CASE STUDIES

The primary case studies for this work are Pinakarri Community in Fremantle, Urban Ecology Australia's (UEA) Christie Walk development in Adelaide, the Community Housing and Employment Co-operative (CHEC) in Sydney and Habitat for Humanity Australia (HFHA) in Sydney. The first three projects all seek to address sustainability and affordability in housing, and are informed largely by the theories and practices of cohousing and permaculture; UEA also draw heavily on ecocity theory, operating as an educational site and activist base in this field. Habitat for Humanity Australia currently focuses solely on affordable ownership via sweat equity and dual mortgages. Relevant design and structural features of these projects are discussed below.

Pinakarri is a non-profit cohousing cooperative in suburban Fremantle, encompassing both private ownership (4 houses) and public rental stock (8 houses) in collaboration with HomesWest. Houses line the perimeter of the site, with the common house located in the site's car-free centre. Individual properties are delineated by food and ornamental/native gardens, trellises and the occasional low, curving wall (without gates). The interior of the site is a large, open, shared space in which resident and neighbourhood children play under the combined, casual supervision of some 17 adults. Design principles and features include solar passive design, onsite permaculture gardens, composting and worm farming, pooling of appliances and transport, and widespread uptake of subscription to Western Power's renewable energy scheme. Future aims include the installation of rainwater tanks and solar active arrays. The group was formed in 1991 and the first residents moved in, in 1999.

Christie Walk is a medium density development in Adelaide, within easy walking distance of the CBD, drawing on cohousing and ecocity theory and practice. The project is a community title scheme of 14 dwellings covering a 0.5 acre brownfield site, and consists of a row of 4 three-storey townhouses, a complex of 6 apartments and two three-storey townhouses, two freestanding cottages and a common house. Car parking is minimal and provided in a small area at one edge of the site; the interior of the site is a themed garden. Design features include solar active and passive aspects such as the use of deciduous vegetation as air conditioning; rainwater harvesting and storage in two underground 20 000 litre tanks for filtration and use for irrigation and toilets; community rooftop and ground level permaculture food gardens; use of a high percentage of recycled and scavenged materials; sustainable and/or ethical sourcing of 90% of materials and labour; maintenance of solar access to neighbouring childcare centre; walking distance to Adelaide Central Markets, CBD and tram. Composting, and onsite grey -and black-water treatment, are all intended. The group formed in 1992 and the first resident moved in, in 2001.

The Community Housing and Employment Co-operative (CHEC) is a group based in Woodford aiming to establish an environmentally sensitive, affordable cohousing project in the Blue Mountains. The group is operating within Department of Housing and Centrelink requirements for assistance, such that members must be DoH eligible and able to work 16 hours per week on the project, although ARCH (the Association to Resource Co-operative Housing) allows a 65/35 mix of DoH eligible and non-eligible members within coops, which allows a certain level of cross-subsidisation. All members are required to make the ongoing 16 hr/wk commitment to the project, regardless of income. The group is currently planning the housing and gardens and will self build with training via TAFE's outreach programme.

Intended design features include solar active and passive; water collection, treatment and recycling (grey- and black-water); organic food production according to permaculture design (aiming for a high level of self-sufficiency); medium density; reduced individual lot size with sizeable shared space; walking distance to major public transport and urban centres; infrastructure for community enterprise such as offices and workshops. Tenancy will be ongoing public rental.

The group is addressing environmental design, community development and enterprise, and affordability, and is operating on an underlying ethic of removing property and land from their commodity status and engendering stewardship and sustainability. The group aims to dislocate housing security from income and more directly connect it to the engagement and responsibility of the individual within community. The group is currently meeting at least once a week, with many active committees operating within Centrelink timeframes, which require that the project moves from inception to completion within 18 months. This places completion mid 2004.

Habitat for Humanity Australia is an international, non-denominational, church affiliated non-profit organisation which provides housing for low-income families on a self-build basis, whereby members must be able to make a \$500 deposit and contribute labour to the construction of their own or other members' houses. The house is then provided at an affordable mortgage level of between \$150 000 and \$200 000, with HFHA holding the mortgage for the difference between that mortgage and the market value of the property. If the inhabitant chooses to sell the house, both mortgages become payable by the inhabitant.

REFLECTIONS: WHAT THE CASE STUDIES TELL US

Interviews with individuals involved in these projects, highlighted several factors impacting on the ease and rate of development. Pinakarri's collaboration with HomesWest financially constrained the architect to the extent that sustainability measures were compromised. This was due to HomesWest refusing funding for the common house, effectively demanding the design of 9 sustainable buildings on funds for 8 standard dwellings. This has also generated substantial size differences between the privately owned and publicly rented houses, which has implications for the social sustainability of the project.

In contrast, UEA's reliance on the private sector removed any substantial affordable housing component; the project subsequently relied heavily on volunteer labour, cash donations and interest free philanthropic loans to achieve excellent

sustainability measures whilst remaining within the range of average Adelaide market prices. Furthermore, the development of Christie Walk involved the establishment and maintenance by the group, of a national non-profit educational organisation, a non-profit developer, an urban planner and architect, and a building company. The requirement for the building company and developer was triggered by the group's inability to find examples of these in the market which would comply or sympathise with the group's insistence on sustainable and ethical sourcing and ethical onsite behaviour. The establishment and management of these companies translates into a vital reliance on 4 core individuals, two of whom have worked 7 days a week for the project's duration. The sustainability of such a model therefore comes into question.

Despite the initial rejection by the private sector, aspiring mortgagees are now being allocated loans on a preferential basis by Bendigo Bank if they intend to buy into Christie Walk, as the bank understands the implications of reduced ongoing food, water and energy bills for the ability to meet loan repayments. The South Australian Housing Trust has now expressed interest in collaboration on the next stage of Christie Walk; however, the implications of this for the adherence to ecocity principles in light of HomesWest's contribution, remains to be seen.

Both UEA and Pinakarri were years in the making — 9 and 8 respectively — which is consistent with research comparing international cohousing developments (Meltzer, 2000). The aim of, and at this stage, substantial progress towards, completion within 18 months by CHEC therefore stands in stark contrast to this history and currently offers a possible model for enabling development of such projects to operate at rates comparable to standard housing, and to possibly become a viable market option, rather than the sole preserve of the truly determined. The dual mortgage model of HFHA also represents a possible mechanism for broader market application of affordability measures, and of devolving such developments away from both public sector and market constraints. Currently HFHA operates at a minimal level within the Australian housing market, although well above the previous groups, building 45 houses since 1991; it is therefore worthwhile considering options for increasing the scope for affordability models.

IMPLICATIONS FOR AFFORDABILITY AND SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

It is where municipal government — or, in some cases, state government — has weighed in on the side of third sector housing that it has gone beyond being an interesting social experiment and has become a credible alternative to the housing provided by either the market or the state.

(Davis 2000: 235)

These case studies highlight the extent to which Australia's housing market is limited in terms of diversity of both tenure and form. Current housing affordability measures in Australia focus on the initial production of affordable ownership, which can potentially be absorbed into the wider market and hence lose its affordability, or on housing which is only secure to the extent that residents remain below threshold income levels, which has implications for possible employment opportunities and social sustainability. Research from the US examining 'third sector housing', analogous to community housing in Australia, documents and suggests numerous models for generating affordability, while cohousing and ecocity theory offer a variety of design options currently missing from and largely inconceivable to, the Australian housing market. This is not to say these models are not sought after or viable, more that they are largely unknown and unsupported in this country.

Third sector housing in the US has been comprehensively documented by Davis (2000), who cites the need for this to provide not only perpetually affordable housing, but a range of this, which generates flexibility and mobility across the entire housing market. It is worth quoting Davis at length here to illustrate the models available, and which Australia would do well to embrace. Referring to a housing tenure "ladder", Davis (2000: 242) states:

At the "bottom" of the ladder, people can move from the streets to shelters; from shelters to transitional housing; and from

transitional housing into permanent, nonprofit rental housing. At the "middle" of the ladder, people can move from nonprofit rentals with no resident control into rental housing or mutual housing in which many (or most) of the operational decisions are made by the residents themselves. They may choose, alternatively, to take the first step toward homeownership by buying into a zero equity or limited equity cooperative. At the "top" of the ladder, residents of rental housing or members of cooperatives can acquire an ownership stake in a limited equity condominium, a resale-restricted house on land that is owned by a community land trust, or a resale-restricted house that is kept affordable through a covenant or option embedded in the deed. Some may choose, in time, to move out of the third sector altogether, purchasing a home on the open market.

Within the US, a primary mechanism through which housing affordability is provided in perpetuity is the community land trust (CLT). These trusts own title to land, with a housing coop holding title to the property built on that land via a ground lease. CLTs are comprised of various individuals from both within the coop and without, aiming to balance representation between tenants and the broader community. Properties can be transferred between residents without losing affordability, as the lease contains limitations on both the resale price and the use of the house (Abromowitz 2000). This framework can be utilised such that ecocity or sustainable design criteria determine such use restrictions, as is the case with Dudley Neighbours, Inc. This CLT underlies the Dudley Street Neighbourhood Initiative (DSNI), which covers 24 hectares of land in inner Boston, Massachusetts, that had been officially abandoned by the state, and combines sustainable and affordable urban redevelopment with community based organic agriculture and employment initiatives, all under resident control.

Thus in a comparable vein, CHEC's model of focussing 2 days a week on community enterprise has interesting implications for its broader application, representing a mechanism by which community based enterprises similar to those developed by DSNI may develop. This may also represent an avenue for generating spaces in

which individuals can embody the lifestyle 'downsizing' documented as increasingly sought after in both Australia and the US (Hamilton, 2003). Hamilton documents this as a desire to reduce work hours and material consumption and to shift focus towards quality of life as defined by family and community interaction. This resonates with the reduction in consumption and a shift towards community wellbeing long discussed as crucial for sustainability and not needing clarification here, and provides a mechanism for affordable housing provision, community self determination and sustainability to co-evolve.

Further in line with such community sustainability, this model can establish a broad skills base for the group, utilising ARCH's 35% allowance for higher income earners. As individuals working part-time in skilled positions are eligible residents, a diversity of abilities and skills within the community is accommodated, contributing to the economic and social sustainability of the project. Currently, however, funding constraints on ARCH via the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement (CSHA) mean coops have to display increasingly high levels of hardship in order to secure funding eligibility; hence, CHEC's reliance on ARCH may actually translate into a reliance on low income or high-need occupants, which may potentially constrain the skill base to an unsustainable level.

On a broader scale, each of the models tabled by Davis can be seen to be systemically underfunded in the Australian context, which will impact similarly on each of these. Both Pinakarri and UEA have struggled to get projects operational and suffered personal and/or financial stress in order for projects to occur; CHEC and HFHA have not been questioned in this regard, but CHEC's reliance on ARCH may produce constraints as documented above, while HFHA relies heavily on its partners and is not currently addressing environmental sustainability. This has implications for the wider sustainability of such projects and highlights the need for widespread and structural support for these endeavours across the housing system.

Australia's current housing market reflects years of policy promoting a single tenure option — private ownership — to the extent that economic, political and ideological support increases with the amount and value of housing held in that tenure by the

individual (Darcy, 2003). This adversely impacts upon mechanisms for sustainability and affordability such as those discussed in this paper, as large, freestanding, privately owned houses are those most supported under this regime. The Australian housing market is similarly manifesting limited and somewhat entrenched responses to population lifestyle changes. Current Australian housing market responses to diminishing household size largely manifest as the mass production of apartments which, apart from cross ventilation, efficient water fixtures and basic passive solar considerations, offer little to environmental sustainability and rarely seek to address affordability or social sustainability. Occasional efforts by councils and Landcom, attempt to provide options such as granny flats or home office sites at affordable rates, and are to be commended. In this area, cohousing developments can provide flexible and appropriate housing for a range of lifestyles, as well as reducing individual lot size and providing community and security. An appropriate and promising option is the provision of smaller home units with reduced kitchen facilities for young or elderly singles. These individuals often have no need or desire to utilise a full kitchen on a regular basis and draw extensively on community dinners and neighbours for social interaction and meals, or have these 'out and about'. Flexible cohousing options, such as two-way bedrooms between adjacent dwellings, have also been developed, and allow houses to expand and contract over time, or provide shared guest facilities that can be utilised by adjoining neighbours. Similar developments by Landcom include a basic two bedroom house which can be added to as the family expands, providing a relatively more affordable model for a young family; however, this still represents a fairly large freestanding house within standard land release developments, with no long term affordability measures or ability for that household expansion to be reversed or shared.

AND SO?

At a time when third sector tenures and organisations have begun to prove their potential for meeting local housing needs, those needs are slated to soar. At a time when third sector housing has begun to prove its effectiveness in preserving public subsidies, those subsidies seem destined to decline.

(Davis 2000: 248).

This has an unnerving resonance with the current state of community housing in Australia. Current issues highlighted by affordable housing advocates, include the need for greater investment via the CSHA and the overhaul of SEPP70 to mandate broader and greater affordability requirements (Blunden, 2003). Issues raised by stakeholders as specific to community housing, include continued funding cuts and concurrent increases in administrative loads, under the rhetoric of mutual obligation which actually translates into a state devolution of administrative responsibility and workload, but not of control or transferable long-term tenure. Individual projects also tabled particular LEPs as directly impeding sustainability measures, such as requirements for individual laundry facilities (including tumble drying) and requirements for minimum levels of car parking provision. These concerns highlight a need for particular local policy revisions, which largely cannot be foreseen but may need redress on a case by case basis, but also to the need for a greater framework within which such projects can be comprehended and supported. While certain minimal requirements such as rainwater tanks can become mandatory, the greater challenge is for these projects to be treated not as suspicious aberrations, but as promising, intelligent and innovative developments.

Davis (2003) refers to the need for the cultural, institutional, economic and political momentum currently reinforcing particular possibilities, to be redirected toward broadening the spectrum of housing tenure and form. Similar interventions and developments within the Australian housing market would be timely and appropriate and may reduce or remove the various constraints placed on these developments by both public and private funding. This needs to translate into economic, cultural and political understanding of and support for, these models, reversing funding cuts, administrative overloading and private market ignorance and reticence; in short, models for sustainability and affordability must become normalised within housing form and tenure, and the ways we think about and create these. This speaks to the history of institutional pathways and also the cultural construction and ongoing re-creation of housing policy and markets through language, policy, marketing, cultural expectations, media representation, economic structures and market reactions.

Implicit in this, is the need for various aspects of the housing industry and market to recognise and promote sustainability and affordability measures. Various moves toward sustainability indices and market mechanisms are being made, such as DIPNR's BASIX code and SEDA's proposed household energy star rating system, the latter of which provides a useful model for the application of sustainability ratings to existing housing stock. Continued input into and refinement of these indices can help ensure that best practice innovative ecological architecture becomes industry standard.

Comparable moves toward the broad spectrum integration of affordability are yet to be seen; as documented above, the recently renewed CSHA and SEPP70 are broadly held by affordable housing proponents as drastically insufficient. Community housing has been the focus of a recent inquiry by the NSW Parliament Standing Committee on Social Issues; much of the evidence presented highlighted the need for greater Federal input and responsibility via the CSHA. Meanwhile, the Commonwealth Productivity Commission is holding an Inquiry into First Home Ownership, seeking microeconomic reform which will reinforce support for this model of tenure, rather than that which may diversify and stabilise a range of tenure options. This reflects a focus on a type of tenure (ownership), rather than a quality of provision (affordability, flexibility, mobility) and an interpretation of the price of housing which sees this simply as the cost associated with purchase, rather than as also involving ongoing costs of household maintenance. Such costs are directly shaped by housing type and location, and include energy considerations, transport options and water consumption, and can dramatically alter the affordability of stock. Concurrently, the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Environment and Heritage is holding an inquiry into the sustainability of Australian cities, which tables equity briefly in its terms of reference; this concept is then largely absent from its discussion paper and vision statement. As highlighted by the integration of social equity and ecology discussed above, it is vital that these considerations of sustainability and affordability go hand in hand; as failure of either renders the whole unsound. It is imperative that sustainability does not simply become the design preserve of the wealthy and reinforce the impacts of low income on wellbeing, undermining any efforts for social sustainability. Conversely, long term affordability is

vital to sustainability, in that chronic transience due to the vagaries of speculative real estate markets and resultant rent and mortgage increases can only work against the long term stability required for both community cohesion and environmental stewardship.

LAST THOUGHTS

Within and beneath all of this, run broad reinterpretations and reconceptualisations of urban and household form and of the operational parameters of housing provision. This study has intentionally drawn heavily on the theory underlying the practice of ecocity, permaculture and cohousing design and appropriate models of provision. Consequently this paper does not place itself against the vast history of housing analysis to date, as the aim here is to illustrate the other models, the ones we're largely not doing, and which have been slated as more robust, thorough and exciting mechanisms for addressing sustainability and affordability. These stand in stark contrast to Australia's current housing systems, almost speaking a different language. However, the difference is not as great as it may seem, with existing groups highlighting how this can happen within an Australian urban context, and what may need to change to help facilitate such developments.

To acknowledge the immense lore of housing research, it is pertinent to say here that models of provision and housing market structures are simply that, models and structures; socially, economically, culturally and politically created, maintained and reinforced³. Hence we can realise the role of each of these fields in generating and maintaining the currently limited spectrum of housing form and tenure. Thus the extent to which these housing developments are not occurring is largely a factor of their unfamiliarity and relative youth, rather than a reflection of any inherently preferable or natural form of housing structure and provision. We know that the market is failing to provide affordable and sustainable housing, but that doesn't mean it has to continue to do so.

¹ See Engwicht (1992), Register (2002), Scheurer (2001) Todd and Todd (1994) for thorough elaborations of this theory and practice.

² For a thorough review of cohousing developments, see McCamant and Durrett (1994) and Meltzer (2000)

³ I thank Viv Milligan (2003) for her overview of housing research, which helped place this study within that realm.

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