



URBAN ECOLOGY AUSTRALIA INC

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EDUCATION



*Students of Sustainability
on Christie Walk site tour*



Residents & volunteers

ECOCITIES SUSTAINABILITY COMMUNITY

RESEARCH

*Design concept for Stage 3
at Christie Walk*



SUMMARY OF ANNUAL ACTIVITIES 2002 - 2003

at a glance

Urban Ecology Australia (UEA) is a community-based non profit educational association that provides information on urban ecological issues.

Urban Ecology Australia was the founding organisation in the International EcoCity Conference series (Berkeley, Adelaide, Senegal, Curitiba, China) and participates in conferences such as Habitat II (the UN City Summit).

UEA is the community group that initiated the Christie Walk Ecocity project.

Through site tours, training programs and seminars it provides education to students and the general public about ecological issues using Christie Walk as the case study.

The Australian Greenhouse Office has extensively used Christie Walk as an example of sustainable housing in the *Your Home* material.

mission

Urban Ecology Australia Inc (UEA) is committed to the transformation of human settlements into ecocities – ecologically sustaining, vibrant, equitable and economically viable communities.

objectives

- to initiate and facilitate ecocity projects that meet the Ecopolis Development Principles below
- to foster and support the transformation of human settlements into ecocities
- to educate the community about the philosophy and practice of creating ecocities
- to ensure the effective management and administration of Urban Ecology Australia.

ecopolis development principles

- Restore degraded land
- Fit the bioregion
- Balance development
- Create compact cities
- Optimise energy performance
- Contribute to the community
- Provide health and security
- Encourage community
- Promote social justice and equity
- Enrich history and culture

An ecocity project is a process of physical change to the landscape, and to the patterns of human settlement; and one that aims to utilise and integrate all these principles.

A project that addresses only one or a few of these principles is not an ecocity; although such projects may be worthy of support, we see the difference as highly significant.

key events

updating of the Urban Ecology Australia website:
www.urbanecology.org.au

website developer Michael Robertson

convenor's report

Matt Fisher

Urban Ecology Australia has come a long way since its initial formation in the early 90's, and is now an organization of more than ten years standing. This in itself is an achievement for a voluntary non-profit association, and it stands as a testament to the continued importance of the UEA message, and the commitment of its members.

Indeed, the recognition of the intimate links between our increasingly urbanized environment and ecological sustainability has only grown. When UEA started, the identification of the urban form as a core environmental issue was still relatively rare. Now we see the language and ideas of environmental and 'triple bottom line' sustainability entering the discourse of governments and bureaucracies, international agencies, private developers, planners, farmers, educators and the media. Issues such as water scarcity, greenhouse and energy use are creating their own political momentum, and this is only going to increase. *This in itself is a strategic challenge for UEA, to decide where it fits in this new environment.*

Alongside this explosion of interest and activity, however, we may also observe that the processes of urban development go on much as they have done for the last decade or two: in short, we are still a long way from a genuinely sustainable urban, social and economic formation in practice. We should all understand that the Christie Walk development is still very much a leading edge and (unfortunately perhaps) a rare example of best-practice ecological development in an inner urban locality. The recognition and interest that Christie Walk creates, and the education it generously offers, remain our best reasons to feel very proud of what the UEA family has achieved.

What this suggests to me is that the key challenge and opportunity now lies in this space, between a growing recognition of urban ecology ideas and the often difficult business of putting those ideas into practice. I want to see UEA develop as a 'can do' organization; one that says, 'This business of creating genuinely sustainable cities and towns isn't *that* hard. There is a practical, achievable pathway through this work, and we've got the knowledge and experience to assist groups and organizations along that path.'

In recent months, we have begun to explore, with others, the possibility of an ecocity project within the City of Playford in Adelaide's northern suburbs. I am very hopeful that this process will bear fruit, and it is very much in keeping with this 'can-do' vision of UEA's work in the coming years.

The current climate also strongly suggests to me that UEA must look to assist and support the convergence of interest and understanding that is taking place around urban ecological issues. In practical terms, that's about building strong relationships with other organizations headed in the same direction.

The strategic plan recently developed by the Board commits the organization to the core goal of ecocity making, and plans the first steps in the key strategic directions I've mentioned. Through all of this, it remains the case that UEA is a membership-based organization, and needs the commitment, support and involvement of its members to move forward. I ask you to be an active participant in UEA's work in 2004 and beyond.

community

SA community:

- working with the Investigator Science & Technology Centre on setting up the *Green House Sustainability Living Exhibition*
- involvement with the Parklands Preservation group
- local Neighbourhood Watch group (includes writing the monthly newsletter)
- liaison with the Community Housing Council of SA
- liaison with Adelaide City Council and other councils

other states

Victoria:

The Victorian branch of UEA held several meetings during 2002-2003 with guest speakers.

ACT:

In June 2003, ACT Urban Ecology branch members changed their focus to incorporate as the Canberra Cohousing Association. They have obtained some funding from the ACT Government.

key events

presentation of PhD to Paul Downton –
'Ecopolis: towards an integrated theory for the design, development & maintenance of ecological cities'



During 2002-2003 Stage 1 of the Christie Walk ecocity project was completed and all residents have moved in. Two dwellings in Stage 2 were occupied with the other five apartments and two strawbale cottages under construction. Design and planning for Stage 3 was prepared for presentation to the Adelaide City Council.

Events held at Christie Walk:

- Channel 7 filmed and interviewed residents at Christie Walk for the *Today Tonight* Show.
- Solar House Day attracted around 400 visitors to Christie Walk
- Film crew and staff from the Australian Greenhouse Office spent a day filming and interviewing at Christie Walk. The focus was on energy efficient housing – footage was used in a 15 minute video launched at the Sustainable Living Fair in Melbourne, and for the *Your Home* CDROM.
- 25 people attended a talk “*Gardening in Small Places*” with Ian Lillington (Permaculture Designer)

Offsite Events:

- From 19-23 August 2002 Cherie Hoyle & Paul Downton participated in *Ecocity V* in Shenzhen, China
- David Eisenberg from UK spoke on the topic of “*Toward Green Building*”.
- UEA was represented at the peace rally in January 2003. Members carried “*Healthy Communities don't make war*” banners.
- UEA held an information and book stall at WOMAD in March.
- UEA co-sponsored a visit to Adelaide by Mathis Wackernagel, Director of the Sustainability Program at Redefining Progress in California. Some 600 people attended his talk at the Adelaide Convention Centre – “*Do We Fit On The Planet*”.
- Professor Peter Newman, Director Sustainability Policy Unit, Department of Premier & Cabinet WA Government, spoke to 55 people at a breakfast hosted by UEA. He outlined the sustainability program undertaken by the WA State Government.

“The use of location and ecological architecture and urban design components as seen in this project [Christie Walk] will help create a City of the future where people can live, learn, work and play within a single environment”

Michael Harbison, Lord Mayor, Adelaide

key events

Cherie Hoyle and Paul Downton attended Ecocity 5 in Shenzhen, China



Visitors to Christie Walk

included:

- Professor Jan Gehl from Denmark
- Stephanie Key; Minister for Housing
- Representatives from SA Parliament's Environment, Resource & Development Committee
- Peter Garrett (President of Australian Conservation Foundation)
- John Hill (SA Minister of Environment)
- Professor Peter Newman
- Herbert Girardet – inaugural Thinker in Residence in SA
- Mathis Wackernagel

Affiliations:

- Friends of Glenthorne Farm Support Group
- Area 420 Neighbourhood Watch - production of the monthly newsletter.
- University of Adelaide - monitoring temperatures inside the houses within Christie Walk compared to those outside.
- Adelaide City Council and Capital City Committee – updating the Greenmaps of Adelaide.

Meetings:

- Michael Harbison. Discussions regarding problems and opportunities relating to the environment within the City Of Adelaide.
- Lord Mayor Alfred Huang in regard to solving environmental problems in the city.
- Graeme Jennings on “*Creation of Ecocities*” for an article to appear in *Arcs Australia* Journal.
- Jane Lomax Smith (Minister of Tourism/ Small Business and Member for Adelaide) – Discussions on environmental issues.
- Premier Mike Rann to discuss environmental Issues.
- John Hill (SA Minister for Environment) – to discuss urban ecological principles relating to the Green Cities Development Project, as well as discussions on funding for Urban Ecology Australia.
- Stephanie Key (Minister for Housing) – to discuss ways of improving affordability of community housing .

education

training

Christie Walk Site tours:

Group Tours included:

Eynesbury College; Seymour College;
Underdale – 3 groups of 15-20 students;
Planning Institute of Australia Congress Tours
(organised by Adelaide City Council);
Adelaide University Architecture students;
UniSA Environmental Studies students (63)
Adelaide University engineering students;
Geography Teachers' Association tour;
Students of Sustainability students (40) attending the
Conference at Flinders University

Doorways 2 Construction students (years 11 & 12)
from 7 schools in the Noarlunga area were involved in
a course over four Mondays learning and doing
rendering on two strawbale buildings.

Tours to the public:

More than 300 people took part in regular site tours of
Christie Walk – tours were held once a fortnight on
Sunday morning, but cancelled if less than 6 people
were booked. On Solar House Day some 400 visitors
were shown over two of the Christie Walk houses.

Topics covered on the site tours include background
to the development of Christie Walk, design of
buildings, community, energy use, capture and
re-use of water, materials, recycling. From early in
2003 two houses were visited – one a townhouse
built from autoclaved aerated concrete, the other of
strawbale construction.

Presentations included:

- to Students of Sustainability at Flinders Uni
- Environment Studies students at Adelaide Uni
- Marion Council on Adaptable Housing for the
disabled

Energy audit training:

UEA Board member, Margaret Rohde, undertook
a train-the-trainer course in energy auditing at
Energy SA, and then trained other UEA
volunteers.

SENRAC Grant:

A grant of \$20,000 was obtained to monitor the
energy performance of homes at Christie Walk
compared with the SA average. The project is
ongoing.

research

publications

Interns:

The Intern program continued into early 2003, and has
now been suspended until there is sufficient office
space and supervision available.

Interns in 2002-2003 included:

- Sebastian Wilk from Germany, Pierre Chanut from
France, Ori Epstein from USA all working at various
times to look at calculating the ecological footprint
of Christie Walk
- David Buetefuer from Adelaide University
researching the politics of ecocity building
- Thi Kim Quy Hoang from Vietnam & studying at
Aalborg University, Denmark on transformation of
waste to construction materials
- Eva and Oliver from Germany working on embodied
energy of Christie Walk.

Publications:

- *making place in an urban sense* – article published
in Artlink
- writing factsheets and case study for *Your Home*
project. Dr Paul Downton was technical adviser on
the Steering Committee and wrote the case study
(on Christie Walk) and fact sheets on rammed
earth, adobe, aerated concrete, straw bale,
sustainable landscapes
- article for Eco Voice newspaper on ecological
footprinting

Articles:

Various articles about Christie Walk appeared in
Messenger Press, Advertiser, EcoVoice.

key events

development of the community garden
at Christie Walk



finances

summary statement of financial position as at 30 June 2003

Income

	2002-3	2001-2
Membership	\$2,794	\$5,478
Donations & events	\$7,655	\$13,850
Sales, talks net of costs	\$6,518	\$5,334
Grants*	\$57,350	
Interest	\$709	
Other	\$4,310	
INCOME	\$79,336	\$31,412

Expenditure

Wages costs	\$11,093	\$9,706
Education/admin	\$18,163	\$11,029
Maintenance	\$1,745	\$1,576
Projects	\$77,095	
Promotions	\$1,733	\$1,256
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$109,839	\$23,567

Assets

	June 2003	June 2002
Current Assets	\$11,566	\$11,225
Other Assets	\$39,350	\$1,000
Fixed Assets	\$8,530	\$8,530
Debtors/Inventory		\$3,438
TOTAL ASSETS	\$59,446	\$24,193

Liabilities

Current liabilities	\$38,684	\$1,527
Long-term liabilities	\$15,659	\$15,400
GST/PAYG	(\$1,063)	\$2,720
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$53,280	\$19,647

Equity

Total equity	\$6,166	\$4,546
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*Grants & liabilities in the 2001-2 year do not include the Coasts & Clean Seas grant.
The Coasts & Clean Seas and SENRAC grants are included in the 2002-3 figures

Audited financial statement available on request

management board

staff & volunteers

2002-2003 UEA Board

Convener:

Paul Downton (until last AGM in November 2002)
Chérie Hoyle until her resignation in April 2003
Matt Fisher from April 2003

Vice Convener:

Margaret Rohde

Secretary:

Julia Winefield

Treasurer:

Thanasis Avramis

Director of Research:

Dr Paul Downton

Other Board members:

Joan Carlin, Michael Pilling,
Monica Oliphant,
Sharon Ede (until April 2003),
David Buetefuer (from May 2003)
Michael Robertson (from May 2003)

Urban Ecology Australia
thanks all the volunteers
(listed & unlisted!) who
work so hard to keep the
Centre for Urban Ecology
open and participate in
events.
UEA could not function
without you!

Staff

Office Coordinator:

Barbara Sheppard

Volunteers

Web designer: Michael Robertson

Newsletter editor: Joan Carlin

Bookkeeping: Joe Cheva (until April 2003)

Volunteer coordinator: Jeremy Urquhart (part year)

Site tours:

Margaret Rohde
Michael Robertson
David Buetefuer
Stephen Hardy
Paul Downton
Joan Carlin
Matt Fisher
Julia Winefield

Office & other volunteers:

John Latassa
Ziad Junblat
Renée Christie
Mark Trejago
Lucy Burdon
Sarah Hennessy Mead
Helena Pepella
Chérie Hoyle
Claire Fulton
Darren McLennan
Sue Gilbey
Pennie Christensen
Rikki Wold

Many other
volunteers worked
on the Christie Walk
development

key events

development of UEA's strategic plan

