



URBAN ECOLOGY AUSTRALIA INC

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SUSTAINABILITY



Stage 1 apartments with vegetation

ECOCITIES



Stage 2 apartments completed in January

COMMUNITY RESEARCH EDUCATION



Strawbale house in Stage 2 - from the roof garden

SUMMARY OF ANNUAL ACTIVITIES 2003 - 2004

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.

www.urbanecology.org.au

convenor's report

Matt Fisher

2003-04 has been a busy and challenging year for UEA, with a number of achievements to be noted, but also some concerns to be addressed. At a general level, UEA has been active and involved as an organisation, and we have undertaken a range of work this year in keeping with our strategic goals (see list of objectives on opposite page).

Of course, as with any voluntary NGO, this work is conducted within the limits of our available resources. Unfortunately, this year the scope of our financial resources had been significantly reduced by the withdrawal of (modest) Commonwealth Government funding under the GVEHO program. This I regard as a by-product of a cynical shift by our Federal Government, to effectively limit its definition of 'legitimate' community-environmental activism to land care-type activities and downgrading its recognition of groups with a more activist/lobbying orientation. This in turn is part of the Howard Government's now typical practice of linking any funding to outcomes that serve its own wider ideological agenda. All NGOs critical of Federal policy are at risk, or have already suffered funding losses.

Despite this loss, however, our financial position remains reasonably secure in the short to medium term.

There are a number of areas of work undertaken this year that warrant special mention. We continue to see the site tours of *Christie Walk* as 'core business' to UEA, and have provided tours to a wide range of visitors; from general public, to students, conference groups, politicians, interstate visitors and many others. Generally the feedback from these tours affirms the great strengths of *Christie Walk* as a community enterprise, and as a high-quality example of ESD in action. Particular thanks must go to Margaret Rohde and other Board members who have led many site tours this year.

The office has been open regularly throughout the year, to provide a point of public access, a home to the website, and an opportunity for volunteer involvement. Our heartfelt thanks must go the Office Coordinator, Barbara Sheppard, for her work in administration, support for the Board and general support for UEA's

activities. A number of volunteers have also been working within the office on other activities. Particular thanks to Michael Robertson for his skilful work on maintaining and updating the UEA website. Looking to the future, it now looks likely that, with Stage 3 of *Christie Walk* imminent, we shall be abandoning 'the hut' on site, and moving the office to another location. This is a significant change, but may also provide some new opportunities and directions for the organisation.

UEA has made submissions to a number of both State and Federal Government enquires this year, including a Productivity Commission enquiry into Reform of National Building Codes, and a Senate Committee enquiry into sustainable cities.

We have made an effort to promote the research function of UEA, with some significant results produced including a report by Monica Oliphant into comparative energy use performance between several *Christie Walk* dwellings and a number of dwellings at Mawson Lakes. This important piece of research clearly quantifies the savings in electricity and gas consumption at *Christie Walk*, by comparison with more conventional residential building. Ron Nicholls has also produced a detailed examination of the concept of 'bioregionalism' as it relates to urban ecology ideas and objectives.

Other activities in 2003-04 include:

- Provision of energy auditing services to commercial and residential clients
- Educational and public interest lectures and seminars
- Partnership with other organisations in promoting further ecological housing developments
- Representation at local, national and international conferences
- Educational services to university and secondary students

My thanks go to all Board members for 2003-04 for all their sterling efforts of behalf of UEA: Margaret Rohde (Deputy Convener), Julia Winefield (Secretary), Thanasis Avramis (Treasurer), Joan Carlin, Michael Robertson, Michael Pilling, Andrew Tidswell and Paul Downton. Thanks also to all members and volunteers for their continued support for the organisation.

community

- *The Green House, Sustainability Living Exhibition*, Investigator Science Centre, Wayville – UEA through Paul Downton was involved in setting up this 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
- links with the Community Gardens Network
- liaison with Solar House Day activities
- Liaison with BedZED, the Beddington Zero Energy Development, an environmentally-friendly, energy-efficient mix of housing and work space in Beddington, Sutton, UK.

ecocity building

sustainability issues

Stage 2 of the Christie Walk ecocity project neared completion in 2003-2004. Residents moved into the six apartments and one of the strawbale cottages. The Christie Walk Stage 3 plan passed through the Adelaide City Council Development Assessment process on Monday 7 July 2003.

Paving around Christie Walk from the Russell Street entrance was done by Shiri & Keren (from Israel) and Hong who lives in Adelaide.

Ecopolis Architects, together with project managers Frank Chin and Dennis Chung, moved into an office at 123 Sturt Street.

The Community Garden which was first planted on May 11 2003 grew well and residents were soon harvesting broad beans, snap peas, spinach, tomatoes, bokchoi, broccoli, rhubarb and a wide variety of herbs.

Christie Walk was cited in a number of publications, in particular 'The Sustainable Urban Development Reader'



Strawbale Cottage #6 under construction – John & Susan from Huff'n'Puff Constructions with helpers

visitors, events & activities

Visitors

- Kendal Marsland Murray from the UK and her mother Mary Marsland (a planner with the SA Government). Kendal lives in the BedZED ecological development in South London.
- Koshiro Kawaguchi, Head of Overseas Marketing and PV Businesses Development Division of Kaneka Corporation and his Australian Division rep – Con Zeritis. Kaneka produces leading edge thin film amorphous photovoltaic panels, including 'see through' ones, which have the ability to change the uses of PVs both on a domestic scale and a commercial scale.
- Jack McKean, Rob Thomas and colleagues from SA Water.
- Dr Barbara Hardy
- Jaime Lerner, former Mayor of Curitiba, Governor of Parana province, President of the International Union of Architects
- 13 environmental scientists from the Peoples Republic of China, all working with the various national and provincial Environmental Protection Agencies
- 60 participants from the National Housing Conference Steering Committee.
- 20 participants from around Australia attending the National Association of Development Education Centres (funded in part by the Australian Government through AusAID).
- Alexandra de Blas from the ABC's science unit to undertake research for a 'Science Show' series entitled '2024 Dreaming' to be aired on Radio National in August/September 2004.

Events & activities

- Paul Downton and Chérie Hoyle were guests at Government House for the welcome by the Governor to conference participants at the Pacific Economic Consultative Council's 'Sustainability Conference'.
- *The Green House, Sustainability Living Exhibition*, Investigator Science Centre, Wayville – UEA through Paul Downton was involved in setting up this exhibition.
- Paul Downton gave a keynote speech at the national conference of the Australian Property Institute
- Paul Downton launched the 'EcoSpecifier' at the Town Hall in Adelaide to an audience of design, building and construction professionals
- ACF/CCSA conference: '**A Just and Sustainable SA**'. Matt Fisher made a presentation on Christie Walk and the shadow plans.
- Dr Paul Downton was appointed to the Adelaide City Council's Development Assessment Panel as one of three independent members.
- Susan Close from the Office of Sustainability in the State Government's Department for Environment and Heritage was guest speaker at the AGM on 20 September 2003. She spoke on the topic of '*Government and Community Strategies for a Sustainable South Australia*'.
- Joan Carlin represented UEA on the Conference Organising Committee for the AAEE conference '*Creating ethical communities now: Footprints, pathways and possibilities*' in September/October 2004

education

Christie Walk Site tours:

More than 900 people attended site tours of Christie Walk including about 250 on Solar House Day in September 2003. Site tours were conducted fortnightly but in 2004 they were scheduled for once a month.

Apart from Solar House Day and ours for the general public, tours were conducted for:

- participants in the Students of Sustainability conference (July 2003)
- * National Housing Week conference (November 2003)
- Australian Property Institute
- Institute of Australian Geographers
- KESAB
- National Association of Development Education Centres
- Playford Council & Sustainable Regions
- Transport SA
- Victorian Parliament (Suburban Development Committee)
- EPA delegation from China

Student tours:

- Eynesbury College
- Golden Grove High School
- Paralowie R-12 School
- Seymour College
- St Mary's College
- University of Adelaide (Environmental Engineering, Water Resources Engineering and Environmental Studies)
- Rakuno University, Japan

Energy Audits:

Energy Auditor, Margaret Rohde, conducted a number of energy audits on behalf of Urban Ecology Australia.

Keeping in touch

- Four issues of the UEA Newsletter were printed during the 2003-2004 year. Themes included Transport; Energy; Urban Green Space; Water.
- The website was kept up-to-date by Michael Robertson. Michael also wrote a number of original articles for the newsletter.
- A monthly email newsletter was published for those on the email list.

research & submissions

Ron Nicholls joined the UEA volunteer team in early 2004 and worked on several research projects. In particular he researched 'bioregionalism' and wrote two articles for the UEA newsletter on the topic. He also wrote a very interesting article about the Las Gaviotas community in Colombia in Central America.

Submissions were written for:

- **SA draft Transport Plan**
- **Sustainable Cities 2025: A blueprint for the future**

2004 was billed as '**the Year of the Built Environment**' and Urban Ecology Australia was endorsed to use the logo for its workshop planned for the Australian Association for Environmental Education (AAEE) conference in September 2004. The workshop title was '*Changing the climate of opinion*'.

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 was finalised in June 2004, and the results are published in full on the Urban Ecology Australia website.

The findings confirmed that the homes at Christie Walk are very energy efficient, using roughly 50% less energy than the average SA home. And more importantly they have a low summer peak demand, relying on ceiling fans rather than air-conditioning to keep a comfortable temperature.

finances

summary statement of financial position
as at 30 June 2004

Income

	2003-4	2002-3
Membership	\$3,051	\$2,794
Donations & events	\$3,320	\$7,655
Sales, tours net of costs	\$6,004	\$6,518
Grants	\$8,000	\$57,350
Interest	\$338	\$709
Other	\$305	\$4,310
INCOME	\$21,018	\$79,336

Expenditure

Wages costs	\$2,694	\$11,093
Education/admin	\$9,489	\$18,163
Maintenance	0	\$1,745
Projects	\$37,181	\$77,095
Promotions	0	\$1,733
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$49,364	\$109,839

Assets

	June 2004	June 2003
Current Assets	\$9,600	\$11,566
Other Assets	\$7,835	\$34,424
Fixed Assets	\$7,000	\$8,530
Debtors/Inventory		
TOTAL ASSETS	\$24,434	\$54,520

Liabilities

Current liabilities	\$3,500	\$39,605
Long-term liabilities	\$15,659	\$15,400
GST/PAYG	\$880	
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$20,039	\$55,005

Equity

Total equity	\$4,395	(\$485)
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*The Coasts & Clean Seas and SENRAC grants are included in the 2002-3 and 2003-4 figures

Audited financial statement available on request

management board

staff & volunteers

2003-2004 UEA Board

Matt Fisher (convener)
Margaret Rohde (vice-convener)
Julia Winefield (secretary)
Thanasis Avramis (treasurer)
Paul Downton (director of research)
Joan Carlin
David Buetefer
Michael Pilling
Michael Robertson
Andrew Tidswell
Sarah Hennessy Mead (until July 2004)

Site Tour Leaders & Assistants

Margaret Rohde
David Buetefer
Matt Fisher
Paul Downton
Michael Robertson
Joan Carlin
Lucy Burdon
Stephen Hardy
Julia Winefield
Sarah Hennessy Mead
Norm Rohde
Barbara Sheppard

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!

Office Volunteers & Staff

Barbara Sheppard (Office Coordinator)
Joan Carlin (newsletter editor)
Michael Robertson (web designer)
Fleur Bowden
Ron Nicholls
Miju Lodge
Mark Trejago
Sarah Hennessy Mead
Lucy Burdon



Christie Walk community garden