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Simon,

In Hazel's submission re SEPA-15 references  
made to Wilson & Weeks, 1995,  
and Glazer, 1982

but no reference details are given.

I would be obliged if you could obtain  
same for my use.

Thanks

Peter

P.S. she does not now have/or can find  
these references 17/10/57

The Manager  
Planning and Design Branch  
Department of Urban Affairs and Planning  
Box 3927 GPO  
SYDNEY NSW 2001

23/3/97

**Re: Reinstatement of SEPP 15 Policy**

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to urge the Minister to reinstate the State Planning Policy SEPP 15, because I believe that multiple occupancies have an invaluable role to play in our society, and a state wide policy will ensure that those people who so choose may create new communities according to the established and evolving model of multiple occupancy.

While it is sometimes argued that there are rating inequities attributable to multiple occupancies, I would argue that it is possible for these rating anomalies to be eliminated without the drastic measure of abolishing SEPP 15. Furthermore, whilst there is a place for Community Title, it should not and cannot supplant Multiple Occupancy. There are many benefits of living on a multiple occupancy, the vast majority of which are not conferred to living on a Community Title. Though some of these benefits may not be easily quantifiable in financial or demographical terms, they exist nonetheless.

As a single parent of two children, living on a well established multiple occupancy of over twenty years duration, the benefits to myself and my family (and by extension to society) from living here, greatly outweigh any perceived negatives. I am convinced that, for someone in my current situation, it offers the optimal living situation for me and my children.

According to contemporary literature, single parents are *the* most likely social group in Australia to be living below the poverty line, (Wilson & Weeks, 1995). I have in the past experienced first hand the poverty and stress associated with trying to maintain a decent standard of living whilst renting in the private housing market, and the situation is not likely to improve in the near future for others in my financial and social position.

I receive supporting parent's benefit, minimal maintenance from my children's fathers, and claim Austudy supplement whilst studying for a Bachelor of Social science degree at Southern Cross university. I am, however, rather than living in poverty and being a burden on the council, health and welfare systems of Lismore, able to maintain here on Dharmananda, a relatively high standard of living whilst on a low income.

I participate in community work and gardening days which provides me with much of my fresh vegetable needs, bulk buying of staples allows me to save on my food bill, and I am appreciative of the established infrastructure, buildings and tools etc. which I could not possibly afford to build or buy myself at this stage of my life. I am able to participate in shared childcare, be part of a supportive environment and share resources - physical, financial and social.

This community offers me support I would simply not have otherwise. One of the problems for single parents- loneliness and isolation, is eliminated here. I have emotional support, companionship and stimulation. There is the opportunity for *reciprocity*, defined by Glazer (1982), as, "the exchange of favors and commitments, the building of a sense of mutual identification and feeling of community".

My children live in a healthy, rich and safe environment as part of an extended family, the adults of whom provide healthy role models, the other children providing close and lasting relationships.

It is tremendously fulfilling to participate in the ongoing adventure of living on a community which is an internationally recognised model of an ecologically sustainable, stable and innovative way of life, offering solutions to many health, social, environmental and housing problems.

Should I choose to become a member here, it is possible for me to obtain a personal loan and build a low-cost, council approved house without the financial burden of a huge mortgage. I am also able to share land financially impossible for me to own individually.

While of course living on a multiple occupancy community is not a broadscale solution to a complex and growing problem of inequity, it is imperative in our democratic society, that this option be allowed to continue for those single parents, as well as others,

particularly young adults, who believe it offers them and their families the best option for a fulfilling life and a good living standard.

Yours faithfully,

Hazel Folland.

*Lismore*  
*For your info*  
*Peter*

Co-ordination Co-operative  
Tunttable Falls. N.S.W. 2480.  
Ph. 066 89 1424  
Fax 066 89 1005.  
March 9, 1997.

Minister for Urban Affairs and Planning  
Hon. Craig Knowles  
Department of Urban Affairs and Planning  
P.O. Box 3927  
Sydney. N.S.W. 2001.

Re: Re-instatement of SEPP 15  
(and Lismore City Council's opposition)

Dear Sir,

I write as someone who has lived on a Multiple Occupancy for over 20 years, in the hope that I may shed favourable light on the issue.

I recently attended a Lismore City Council meeting regarding adoption or rejection of SEPP 15 and was appalled to see, so apparently, the bigotry, intolerance and developer-\$\$\$-driven slant that the majority of Councillors expressed.

It would appear, from answers given in response to queries made of Council staff, that they also are tending to this attitude.

Ironically, about three years ago, LCC conducted an extensive inspection of MO's in the area for compliance with Council requirements, and the report formulated by their own staff member was extremely positive!

Twenty-odd years ago, this Council area was a dwindling group of towns. The Aquarius Festival, followed by Multiple Occupancies, breathed life back into the economy of this area in the form of \$\$\$ and many struggling businesses revived (as well as many new ones coming into existence). Low cost housing was a key factor in rejuvenating this area's economy.

Ironically, whilst LCC is happy to capitalize on Nimbin and environs' "alternativeness" on the one hand they want to take it away with the other.

Lismore Council, it seems, is not particularly concerned about its less fortunate constituents, the pensioners, unemployed, low-income earners etc. I would question Council's ethics in this matter as no real research has been carried out into the benefits of this type of development because they have gone into it looking for what is wrong rather than seeking out the benefits.

Many MO's I know of, including the one I'm on, have a generation of children now becoming adults, who have lived the benefits of this lifestyle and who want to continue in our footsteps. The re-instatement of SEPP 15 in this area and elsewhere is at least a

window of opportunity for low-income people to house themselves. I personally know of many people, including myself, who are far less reliant on the full spectrum of social services because instead of up to 3/4 of their income going in rent they have been able to direct their income towards developing small business, cottage industries and skills. Indeed it can be the difference between owning a car and not owning one, facilitating being able to get to and from employment and training.

I would ask the Minister to implement SEPP 15 over Lismore Council ASAP, excluding any reference to "Community Title". Community title is vastly different to Multiple Occupancy. It is exploitable by developers, thus the notion of low-cost housing becomes unrealistic. On my community and other MOs, (whilst real estate values are skyrocketing in this area) we have diligently regulated against any form of speculation. We can only sell the building for replacement cost - not the land beneath it, developed or not. This ensures that regardless of current land prices, people with low incomes can still buy into our communities.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A.D. Belton', written in a cursive style.

A.D. Belton.

March 18th 1997 - Draft Only.

Department of Urban Affairs and Planning  
Planning and Design Section  
Farrer Place Sydney NSW 2000; GPO Box 3927 GPO Sydney 2001.

SUBMISSION IN RESPONSE TO DRAFT STATE ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING POLICY No 15 -  
MULTIPLE OCCUPANCY OF RURAL LAND.

#### Foreword

I have had a long involvement with the rural communities and conservation movements. In the late 1970s and early 1980s I was actively working with groups and networks whose efforts led to more relaxed zoning and building regulations for conservation-oriented rural communities and communes, to modifications for particular situations such as the Special Occupancy Permit in Lismore Shire, to the acceptance of the manual "Low Cost Country Home Building" as a supplement to the building ordinance, and finally to the introduction of Multiple Occupancy Zoning. I was one of the founders of the Australian Association for Sustainable Communities (AASC) and of the Rural Resettlement Task Force; I was involved with home builders associations and with a number of rural communities, including Bundagen Community, which is a Multiple Occupancy. I was editor of the AASC Newsletter, and of Green Alliance Newsletter, which dealt with rural community as well as conservation concerns. I have not kept in such close touch with rural community matters in recent years.

#### General Comment.

I applaud the re-introduction of a planning policy intended to promote and encourage conservationist rural community settlements based on communal ownership or trusteeship/stewardship principles, whilst at the same time incorporating precautionary provisions to prevent the Policy being exploited by commercial interests to the detriment of both the environment and the rural communities movement.

I have some concern that as an enabling instrument, it is not clear that it will be mandatory on Councils to introduce the zoning, although I assume that will be the case. There is certainly ample scope, for example in clause 9, for a prejudiced Council to refuse applications without adequate grounds and in doing so to subvert the Policy's clear aim of encouraging community based and environmentally sensitive rural settlement. I believe it is essential that the Department take an active role in ensuring that bona fide applications are not unreasonably refused or hindered, and to ensure that matters do not come before the Land and Environment Court which should be resolved simply by the Department overruling Council. This is of particular concern in view of the attitude of the current Lismore Council, and possibly others.

In relation to this, I believe the draft Policy is unduly rigid, and also too restrictive. I deal with the latter below with comments on particular clauses. As to the former, I consider it is essential that guidelines issued by the Department to Councils emphasise the need for flexibility in interpreting the provisions of the Policy in applying them to particular situations, to ensure the Policy's intentions are achieved. Otherwise, stupidity or prejudice results in precisely the most genuinely communal and

environmentally sensitive applicant being rejected.

### Specific Recommendations.

It is nonsensical to exclude absolutely from the provisions of the Policy wildlife refuges and land subject of conservation agreements under the NPWS Act. Many rural communities including multiple occupancies are gazetted wildlife refuges, reflecting the high priority accorded the protection and enhancement of wildlife habitat in the movement generally. The wildlife values of such lands would be lost or diminished if settled more conventionally, for example by single families exploiting the natural resources for their livelihoods. Of course, due regard must be paid to possible impacts of the specific proposed development on those environmental values, including especially the extent to which settlement and access is dispersed or clustered. This exclusion should be deleted from the Policy.

I believe this matter of clustered settlement to be of immense importance because of the environmental impacts of dispersed settlement in many if not most rural settlements, and I have strongly urged the former upon many communities over the years, sometimes unsuccessfully. I do not consider it possible to be hard-and-fast about it, and certainly good design along Permaculture lines, limiting internal vehicular access, integrating access arrangements with water retention and dispersal (which can for example transform a serious erosion problem into an environmental and community benefit), and maximising site aspect and microclimate potential, can result in environmentally sensitive though somewhat dispersed settlements; and of course, topography and previous land use impacts are important considerations. I note with approval in the Policy's aim the preference for clustered settlement.

I consider the combined effect of clauses 7(1) (d), (e) and (g) to be hugely and unjustifiably restrictive, leading to the situation described above, of precisely the settlements intended to being encouraged being rejected. Impeccable and sensitive design considerations may mean that a closely clustered and perhaps small settlement would optimally be sited within the area of intensive gardens and orchards on the best soils, especially if access, water availability and fire hazard considerations are also thereby advantaged, with the remaining and possibly steeper parts of the land set aside entirely for the protection of wildlife habitat, catchment and scenic values. This is an extremely common pattern of settlement amongst alternative rural groups which would be precluded by these sub clauses.

On the other hand, many settlements could be, and are, situated on land predominantly over 18 degrees with great benefit to the protection of such lands as compared to more conventional settlement and use.

The combined effect of sub clauses (d) and (g) is almost to prohibit the zoning on either good land (fertile soil on moderate slopes) or poor land (poorer land on steeper slopes). These restrictions should be removed. Clause 9 includes provision for consideration of the effects of slope, erosion, fire, agricultural use of land, visual impact etc; the rigid restrictions in clause 7 are therefore unnecessary as well as unjustifiably discriminatory.

Clause 7 (1) (f) should be explicit that whereas "development which is carried out of (sic - presumably "for" is meant) the purposes of... weekend residential accommodation" is precluded, development which has as its purpose community-based environmentally sensitive settlement, may include provision of weekend residential accommodation. Many communities hold workshops, gatherings, courses and the like, often with an alternative or conservation focus, which may be available to the public at large or

particular interest groups, and may include a charge for accommodation, use of the land, provision of services, on a cost recovery or additional contribution to the community basis. The Policy does not of course intend to restrict such activities by bona fide community settlements, and I think the Policy itself and guidelines to Councils should say so explicitly.

With respect to Clause 9, once again it is essential to impress upon Councils the need to interpret and apply provisions with a flexible regard for the overall aim of the Policy. It is not appropriate to apply similar rigid criteria to, say, very small clustered settlements in isolated locations as to very large dispersed settlements, with respect to adequacy of access, services and facilities.

It is necessary to impress upon Councils that this is a form of rural development to be encouraged, promoted and facilitated for its environmental benefits and the considerable benefits to the wider community, to the economic and cultural life of small rural villages and towns, to the opportunities it offers for low-cost housing and socially and environmentally useful activities for the young and unemployed, for greater use of alternative renewable forms of energy, recycled materials, simpler, more responsible lifestyles and consumption patterns, and so on. The Department must counter the tendency of Councils in many areas to approach this Policy, and clauses 7 and 9, and perhaps 10, in particular, from a perspective seeking grounds to reject a proposal in a prejudicial and discriminatory manner.

Clause 9(m) has unfortunate connotations. It suggests for example that cropping and grazing for out-of-area sale may be considered more desirable use of land than combining production of vegetables, fruit, honey and other products for local use with careful protection of wildlife habitat and other environmental values. Such a judgement cannot be sustained. It also suggests that conventional farmers' and graziers' prejudices could be the basis for Councils rejecting applications with respect to land in the vicinity of cropping and pastoral land. This is unacceptable. It is very commonly the case that conservation-minded settlements (and the community, and future generations) suffer greatly from the adverse impacts of conventional farmers and graziers, in relation to erosion and water quality from upstream sources, or fire frequency and severity from downslope, for example. Better to control the land abuser than exclude the conservationist.

Despite strategies and policies and much talk of "sustainability", action has been limited and chiefly band-aid remedial, rather than point-of-source regulation. This applies especially to controls on environmental impacts of activities on private rural land. I hope the Department would agree that provisions in this policy to control the environmental impacts of developments and requirements for site analyses and management plans, should be applied 'on the ground' and assessed by responsible authorities no less rigorously to conventional developments as to "alternative" settlements.

I live on a wildlife refuge gazetted in about 1975 and approved for group settlement at about the same time, before multiple occupancy zoning. I do not know details of the current situation in different Shires regarding rating of multiple occupancies. However, I know that wildlife refuges and other land managed for conservation is penalised by a higher rate than that which applies to land similarly zoned but producing products for sale on a commercial basis; that multiple occupancies pay much higher rates than their neighbours, that the rate differential may not be justifiable in terms of local government services etc, and that some communities may be burdened by excessive rates. The Policy does not address this issue; however, since important benefits of community settlements derive from the opportunities offered those of little means or income to contribute to the community by adopting socially and

environmentally useful lifestyles, I believe the Department should ensure that rates are fair and appropriate.

Yours sincerely  
Barrie Griffiths.

Dear Russell & Simon

Since exhibition period has been extended, & fine not kept up to date, & desirable submissions actually supportive, sending draft for your interest. If PANCOM has leaflet-type response or info sheet re the SEPP be grateful if you could send

Best wishes

Bonnie Griffiths

Donation enclosed.

COMMENTS TO  
DEPARTMENT OF URBAN  
AFFAIRS AND PLANNING  
ON  
DRAFT SEPP 15 (MULTIPLE  
OCCUPANCY OF RURAL LAND)  
FROM  
DHARMANANDA COMMUNITY

CONTACT:-  
SIMON CLOUGH  
Dharmananda Community  
Ross Road  
THE CHANNON  
NSW 2480  
Phone 066 886 217  
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**The Manager**  
Planning and Design Branch  
Dept of Urban Affairs and Planning  
Box 3927 GPO  
`SYDNEY NSW 2001

## **INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this submission is to show how the members of Dharmananda community have benefited from SEPP 15 and to make a strong argument for this policy's reinstatement so that others may benefit from this policy. Our community is convinced that society as a whole gains from this policy and we have outlined the many ways in which contributions to the wider society are made. We have also made suggestions as to how the policy can be improved.

## **SUMMARY**

Dharmananda is a long term stable community. The members of this community strongly support SEPP 15 because it meets our needs for community/co-operation, environmental protection and for low cost housing. It is our experience that only a state wide policy such as a SEPP can assure people's right to live in a communal way in the country.

The MO policy has enabled our community to be highly self sufficient in food production. Through sharing, land, animals infrastructure, facilities, energy and money our members enjoy many benefits they either couldn't have achieved individually or couldn't afford. Undivided ownership of the land has meant that we have been able to do a great deal of restoration of this degraded land.

We also reap many social benefits from living communally. We see ourselves as an extended family which means that there is a great deal of love and support for each other. Children, single parents and older people make a special contribution to our community and also receive many benefits, mainly in that they are never isolated or alienated here.

We see our community making a substantial contribution to the wider society which we are passionately involved in. Dharmananda has pioneered on site waste disposal, low cost housing, conflict resolution on communities and innovative systems of agriculture. We maintain our own infrastructure, reduce energy costs and support and initiate numerous community organisations.

such as ours to prosper in every sense. We would like to see the policy strengthened in some respects. We very much want the policy reintroduced so that our children and others who seek to live in this way can have the same benefits we have enjoyed.

## 1. BRIEF HISTORY OF DHARMANANDA

- 1.1 260 acres of degraded banana country, purchased 25 years ago.
- 1.2 One of the first M.O's to be approved by Lismore Council and the State Government.
- 1.3 All buildings have been approved by Council
- 1.4 Dharmananda is a very stable community - the average length of membership is approximately twelve years. There are fourteen members, only two of whom are non-resident. There are also nine children.
- 1.5 200 acres of the community is being reforested with the balance used for agricultural activity, mainly dairying.

## 2. MULTIPLE OCCUPANCY VERSUS COMMUNITY TITLE

Lismore Council is keen for Multiple Occupancy communities to convert to Community Title. Our community believes that there is a place for Community Title, but that it should not supplant Multiple Occupancy.

The argument is often advanced that Community Title is superior to Multiple Occupancy because it gives the individual freehold title. This certainly has advantages if you wish to get a mortgage. Our approach has been not to have individual ownership of the land in any form and to build in a way that does not require large loans. It should be remembered that it is possible to get a personal loan for home building.

Multiple Occupancy allows members to live collectively, fostering a sense of community and enabling members to choose who will join

the community. Conversely, Community Title allows little or no choice over ownership. Therefore, it does not foster the community spirit of cooperation. The infrastructure costs of community title, with the quantity and quality of roads, legal and surveying costs and the cost of facilities necessary for what amounts to a rural subdivision, make the price of blocks out of reach of low income earners.

### 3. NEED FOR SEPP 15

Historically, because of prejudice, parochialism and misinformation, local councils have consistently refused to approve M.O's, when they have had sole responsibility to do so. It is for these reasons that we believe it to be essential that there be a state wide policy, ensuring MO communities continue to be approved for those people who want to live in a way that "protects the environment and does create a demand for the unreasonable .... provision of public resources" (SEPP 15).

The alternative is to see continuing conflict between existing and potential M.O. people and Local Government, particularly as some of the younger generation want to live communally and there is no space for them. It should be remembered that if SEPP 15 is reinstated, the rights of local government, other ratepayers and M.O. residents (both potential and existing) are protected by access to the Land and Environment Court.

## 4. THE BENEFITS OF MULTIPLE OCCUPANCY FOR DHARMANANDA MEMBERS

### 4.1 SELF-SUFFICIENCY

The members of Dharmananda grow 90% of our fresh vegetables, fruit and nuts and produce all our own dairy needs (cheese, including fetta, yoghurt, butter, ice cream, buttermilk, whey etc.). Our farm is also self-sufficient in eggs and everything is grown without the use of harmful chemicals and fertilisers.

Members of the community find great personal satisfaction in working co-operatively to achieve this high degree of food production.

## 4.2 ENVIRONMENTAL

- On site waste management including communal composting, grey water systems and composting toilets.
- Alternative energy systems such as hydro and solar
- Forest regeneration of 200 acres
- Restoration of the remaining 60 acres in terms of soil fertility with the use of organic and biodynamic farming practices

## 4.3 PHYSICAL BENEFITS

Benefits for members include:

- working together on individual and farm projects
- production of the evening meals six nights a week in a communal kitchen
- fifteen cow dairy herd
- sharing infrastructure such as roads, causeway, water and power systems, tools, vehicles, buildings such as the community house, library, laundry, workshops, garage, visitors quarters and a meditation hall

## 4.4 FINANCIAL

- Land becomes more affordable for those on a low income
- The bulk purchasing of staple foods, building materials, white goods etc., and the production of so much of our food, means members can meet their basic survival needs on a contribution to the collective kitty of \$36 a week.

## 4.5 SOCIAL

The benefits of co-operative living are:

- An extended family for social interaction and all forms of support.

## 4.6 BENEFITS FOR PARTICULAR TYPES OF MEMBERS

### Children:

- a) exposure to a range of adults with a wide range of interests, skills and abilities to pass on.
- b) close and lasting relationships with other children on the community.
- c) rich physical environment
- d) safe environment

### Single Parents:

- a) shared childcare.
- b) supportive environment and companionship.
- c) accessibility of resources otherwise denied (offering protection from the poverty trap).

### For Older People:

- a) A rich and meaningful life tailored to individual needs.
- b) Physical support with tasks to maintain non-institutional living.
- c) Emotional support/companionship/stimulation as opposed to lonely isolation.
- d) Contributing to the community as physically appropriate (gardening, cooking, child care etc.).
- e) Having a significant role in community life.

## 5. BENEFITS TO SOCIETY

- 5.1 Intentional communities, such as Dharmananda, offer an option of affordable accommodation to young families, young

individuals and older people (and others on a low income) at a time when the availability of public housing is becoming seriously eroded.

- 5.2 Our community has taken a pioneering role in many areas eg, The Channon Craft Market started here, ours was the first owner built composting toilet system tested and approved by Council, currently we are experimenting with an on site grey water treatment system.
- 5.3 The community regularly holds bio-dynamic field days to train people in bio-dynamic agriculture.
- 5.4 Innovative low cost housing techniques have been trialed here, such as the use of recycled building materials and sand sawdust and cement construction.
- 5.5 The cost of internal road works, servicing over twenty people, is borne by the community - \$20,000 in 1995-96 financial year
- 5.6 Enormous saving in natural resources through shared ownership of many household/family items
- 5.7 The idealism which fires the Community extends to the broader community with membership and participation in a wide range of voluntary groups and activities eg. Big Scrub Environment Centre Interhelp, Landcare, Catchment Management Committee, Heart Politics Conference, National Bio-dynamic Farming Association, Channon Teahouse and Craftshop, Local Employment and Trading System, conflict resolution work in the former Yugoslavia, Channon Market, local schools, Older Women's Network, working with non-government organisations in India Pan Community Council etc.

## 6. SUGGESTED CHANGES TO SEPP15

Dharmananda members believe that SEPP15 does not need a major overhaul before reinstatement. We see it as having withstood the test of time well. We believe the policy could be improved in three areas:

- 6.1 Greater emphasis on the clustering of housing and facilities in keeping with the terrain. This is to ensure minimal environmental

and financial costs, eg use of common grey water effluent systems and the maximisation of energy systems, such as hydro power.

6.2 Exclusive household and home improvement occupancy rights should be included in the policy. This is to protect community members rights were there are no binding community rules on this matter. This provision should also enable community members to gain access to personal loan finance. In no way can it be seen as creating separate title in the land.

6.3 There should be a specific prohibition on the development of MO for speculative purposes. This could be enforced by making it a condition of development approval that a democratically elected community management committee of residents has control of the community's development.

## 7. RATES

Rates as such are outside the area of this review as they are the responsibility of the Department of Local Government. However a common perception is that M.O's are being subsidised. We counter this accusation with the facts that for example on Dharmananda we:-

- a) Maintain over five kilometres of road at our expense with the resultant saving to council.
- b) We install and maintain our water infrastructure.
- c) Through our composting and recycling systems, we add a negligible amount to the council's tip.
- d) Through car sharing wherever possible we have a lower car use than the average household (see Lismore Council study by Sue Sawkins)
- e) Because we tend to be self sufficient socially with our own facilities we are less dependant on Council resources.

Our community is prepared to accept change in the area of rating providing that it is done equitably. We would want to see all multiple use of land situations such as caravan parks, mobile home parks and some blocks of units treated in a similar way. We certainly don't want Multiple Occupancy singled out as the only inconsistency in the rating system!

*copy*

John Morrison  
Secretary

Pretty Gully Co-operative Ltd.  
P.O. Box 74  
Uki, NSW 2484  
Phone (066) 797034

The Manager  
Planning and Design Branch  
Department of Urban Affairs and Planning  
Box 3927 GPO  
Sydney NSW 2001

Re; draft SEPP 15

Sir,

On reading the draft SEPP 15, I noticed a serious problem in the Aims Of Policy, specifically 2 (c) (ii).

2 (c) (ii) excludes the use of DEEDS OF AGREEMENT to provide exclusive use and enjoyment Rights of dwellings and home improvement areas. This part of the Policy seriously inhibits the financial viability of young families investing in the construction of dwellings.

Banks and other lending institutions will not lend without security, usually in the form of a mortgage over privately owned 'real' estate. Deeds of Agreement have in the past, been partly successful at overcoming this difficulty. Though usually at personal loan interest rates instead of those enjoyed by someone building on freehold land.

9 (1) (a) defines what is necessary to ensure successful management of a Multiple Occupancy development, however the application of 2 (c) (ii) is an impediment to that management and ultimately the financial viability of M.O.s

I would suggest the deletion of 2 (c) (ii) in its present form to be rewritten;

2 AIMS OF POLICY

This Policy aims:

- (a)..... ✓
- (b)..... ✓
- (c) (i)..... ✓

(ii) in a manner that does not involve subdivision, strata title or any other form of separate land title, excepting

.....2/

RE: DRAFT SEPP 15

'DEEDS OF AGREEMENT' between the body corporate Title holder and shareholders defining Home Improvement Areas and granting exclusive use and enjoyment rights of allocated area including rights of resale under the same terms and conditions, and

(iii) to create.....✓

To adequately address the matters raised in 9, it would appear necessary that the Title holder of the land should be a 'body corporate' either as a registered company or registered co-operative with the participants being financial shareholders, the shares being linked by 'Deed of Agreement' to a particular home improvement area.

While some participants may view their dwelling as their principle residence for life, others will need to move due to changes of circumstance like health, employment, further education etc.

Unless they are able to sell their dwelling and improvements at market or near market value, they will be severely disadvantaged when they re-establish in the 'freehold world'.

Without acceptable security, banks will not lend so sellers of dwellings on M.O. developments are limited to buyers who are 'cashed up' and not in need of bank assistance. This causes houses to be severely under valued in comparison to similar on freehold title.

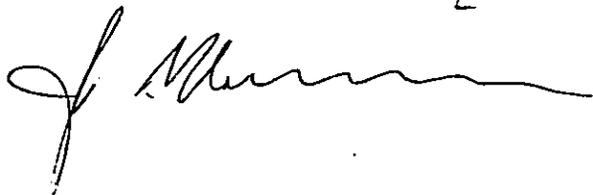
Draft SEPP15 appears intended to encourage the development of 'low-cost, affordable rural living opportunities', but as the costs of constructing dwellings is largely determined by the Building Code of Australia, the phrase 'low-cost' could be deleted. The only stage that 'low-costs' are involved are in the initial land acquisition and infrastructure instalment, after which as participants settle all dwelling and home improvement costs are equal or higher than elsewhere in the community.

The imposition of clause 2(c)(ii) in its present form precludes access to finance and thereby creates a significant obstacle to the success of the policy,

Yours sincerely

John Morrison

9th March 1997





+

Book Form Feb. on SEPP-15

(2)

- ~~as~~ Fun Foods now a chain of such stores in various villages in the region
- self employment. Summary.
- as model for youth.
- eg. Chris apprentice ex TAFE
- future education
  - young people
  - adult self ed tertiary
  - post tertiary.

to outside

of note <sup>in fact</sup> also that some <sup>presidents</sup> members have  
been adopted a common surname

---

Star Trek  
Be 9/2... No idiosyncrasy

COMMENTS TO  
DEPARTMENT OF URBAN  
AFFAIRS AND PLANNING  
ON  
DRAFT SEPP 15 (MULTIPLE  
OCCUPANCY OF RURAL LAND)  
FROM  
DHARMANANDA COMMUNITY

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**The Manager**  
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 Dept of Urban Affairs and Planning  
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 SYDNEY NSW 2001

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this submission is to show how the members of Dharmananda community have benefited from SEPP 15 and make a strong argument for its reinstatement so that others may benefit from this policy. Our community is convinced that society as a whole gains from this policy and we have outlined the many ways in which contributions to the wider society are made. We have also made suggestions as to how the policy can be improved.

## SUMMARY

Dharmananda is a long term stable community. The members of this community strongly support SEPP 15 because it meets our needs for community/co-operation, environmental protection and for low cost housing. It is our experience that only a state wide policy such as a SEPP can assure people's right to live in a communal way in the country.

The MO policy has enabled our community to be highly self sufficient in food production. Through sharing, land, animals infrastructure, facilities, energy and money our members enjoy many benefits they either couldn't have achieved individually or couldn't afford. Undivided ownership of the land has meant that we have been able to do a great deal of restoration of this degraded land.

We also reap many social benefits from living communally. We see ourselves as an extended family which means that there is a great deal of love and support for each other. Children, single parents and older people make a special contribution to our community and also receive many benefits, mainly in that they are never isolated or alienated here.

We see our community making a substantial contribution to the wider society which we are passionately involved in. Dharmananda has pioneered on site waste disposal, low cost housing, conflict resolution on communities and innovative systems of agriculture. We maintain our own infrastructure, reduce energy costs and support and initiate numerous community organisations.

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Though rating is not an issue for this review we would be happy for it to be reviewed if it were to be done equitably taking all matters into account.

SEPP 15 provides a reasonable policy framework for a community such as ours to prosper in every sense. We would like to see the policy strengthened in some respects. We very much want the policy reintroduced so that our children and others who seek to live in this way can have the same benefits we have enjoyed.

### 1. BRIEF HISTORY OF DHARMANANDA

- 1.1 260 acres of degraded banana country, purchased 25 years ago.
- 1.2 One of the first M.O's to be approved by Lismore Council and the State Government.
- 1.3 All buildings have been approved by Council
- 1.4 Dharmanananda is a very stable community - the average length of membership is approximately twelve years. There are fourteen members, only two of whom are non-resident. There are also nine children.
- 1.5 200 acres of the community is being reforested with the balance used for agricultural activity, mainly dairying.

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Lismore Council is keen for Multiple Occupancy communities to convert to Community Title. Our community believes that there is a place for Community Title, but that it should not supplant Multiple Occupancy.

The argument is often advanced that Community Title is superior to Multiple Occupancy because it gives the individual freehold title. This certainly has advantages if you wish to get a mortgage. Our approach has been not to have individual ownership of the land in any form and to build in a way that does not require large loans. It should be remembered that it is possible to get a personal loan for home building.

Multiple Occupancy allows members to live collectively, fostering a sense of community and enabling members to choose who will join

### 3.

the community. Conversely, Community Title allows little or no choice over ownership. Therefore, it does not foster the community spirit of cooperation. The Infrastructure costs of community title, with the quantity and quality of roads, legal and surveying costs and the cost of facilities necessary for what amounts to a rural subdivision, make the price of blocks out of reach of low income earners.

### 3. NEED FOR SEPP 15

Historically, because of prejudice, parochialism and misinformation, local councils have consistently refused to approve M.O's, when they have had sole responsibility to do so. It is for these reasons that we believe it to be essential that there be a state wide policy, ensuring MO communities continue to be approved for those people who want to live in a way that "protects the environment and does not create a demand for the unreasonable ... provision of public resources" (SEPP 15).

The alternative is to see continuing conflict between existing and potential M.O. people and Local Government, particularly as the younger generation wants to live communally and there is no space for them. It should be remembered that if SEPP 15 is reinstated, the rights of local government, other ratepayers and M.O. residents (both potential and existing) are protected by access to the Land and Environment Court.

### 4. THE BENEFITS OF MULTIPLE OCCUPANCY FOR DHARMANANDA MEMBERS

#### 4.1 SELF-SUFFICIENCY

We grow 90% of our fresh vegetables, fruit and nuts and produce all our own dairy needs (cheese, including fetta, yoghurt, butter, icecream, buttermilk, whey etc.). Our farm is also self-sufficient in eggs and everything is grown without the use of harmful chemicals and fertilisers.

Members of the community find great personal satisfaction in working co-operatively to achieve this high degree of food production.

## 4.2 ENVIRONMENTAL

- On site waste management including communal composting, grey water systems and composting toilets.
- Alternative energy systems such as hydro and solar
- Forest regeneration of 200 acres
- Restoration of the remaining 60 acres in terms of soil fertility with the use of organic and biodynamic farming practices

## 4.3 PHYSICAL BENEFITS

Benefits for members include:

- working together on individual and farm projects
- production of the evening meals six nights a week in a communal kitchen
- co-operative shopping and the benefits of bulk-buying
- fifteen cow dairy herd
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## 4.4 FINANCIAL

- Land becomes more affordable for those on a low income
- The bulk purchasing of staples, building materials, white goods etc., and the production of so much of our food, means members can meet their basic survival needs on a contribution to the collective kitty of \$36 a week.

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The benefits of co-operative living are:-

- An extended family for social interaction
- Physical support for individual projects - notably house building.

#### 4.6 BENEFITS FOR PARTICULAR TYPES OF MEMBERS

##### Children:

- a) exposure to a range of adults with a wide range of interests, skills and abilities to pass on.
- b) close and lasting relationships with other children on the community.
- c) rich physical environment
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##### Single Parents:

- a) shared childcare.
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##### For Older People:

- a) A rich and meaningful life tailored to individual needs.
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- 5.1 Intentional communities, such as Dharmananda, offer an option of affordable accommodation to young families, young individuals and older people (and others on a low income) at a time when the availability of public housing is becoming seriously eroded.
- 5.2 Our community has taken a pioneering role in many areas e.g, The Channon Craft Market started here, ours was the first owner built composting toilet system tested and approved by Council, currently we are experimenting with an on site grey water treatment system.
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Dharmananda members believe that SEPP15 does not need a major overhaul before reinstatement. We see it as having withstood the test of time well. We believe the policy could be improved in three areas:

6.1 Greater emphasis on the clustering of housing and facilities in keeping with the terrain. This is to ensure minimal environmental and financial costs.

6.2 Exclusive household and home improvement occupancy rights should be included in the policy. This is to protect community members rights were there are no binding community rules on this matter. This provision could also enable community members to gain access to personal loan finance. In no way can it be seen as creating separate title in the land.

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- a) Maintain over one kilometre of roads at our expense with the resultant saving to council.
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To: Bodhi Farmers

From: Peter H.

Date: 10-3-96

Subject: "Dharmarada" Submission on SEPP-15.

I consider this to be an excellent submission, comprehensive yet brief and not exaggerated. Eloquent even inspiring!

1. Reference is made on page 1 and 5 to the concept of the "extended family".

This is an issue which I feel Bodhi Farmers can emphasise as this is enshrined in the aims of our Constitution viz. "... as one family"

(NB the right to be a "family of ones own choice" is a common law right, that is an entitlement under the democratic principle of "free association"

This "entitlement" has been recognised at law via the Dempsey Family v - The South Sydney Council.)

2. The State Government has set up a "youthforce" programme directed at developing skills and "education as a lifetime experience"

(See attached). Consideration of cross referencing Bodhi Form's aspirations and achievements in providing a "lifestyle role model for our young people" with the aims of this Task Force could strike a chord with this Government!

#

Attach: Advertisement for submissions to "Youthforce".

**The Manager**  
Planning and Design Branch  
Dept of Urban Affairs and Planning  
Box 3927 GPO  
SYDNEY NSW 2001

## **INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this submission is to show how the members of Dharmananda community have benefited from SEEP 15 and make a strong argument for its reinstatement so that others may benefit from this policy. Our community is convinced that society as a whole gains from this policy and we have outlined the many ways in which contributions to the wider society are made. We have also made suggestions as to how the policy can be improved.

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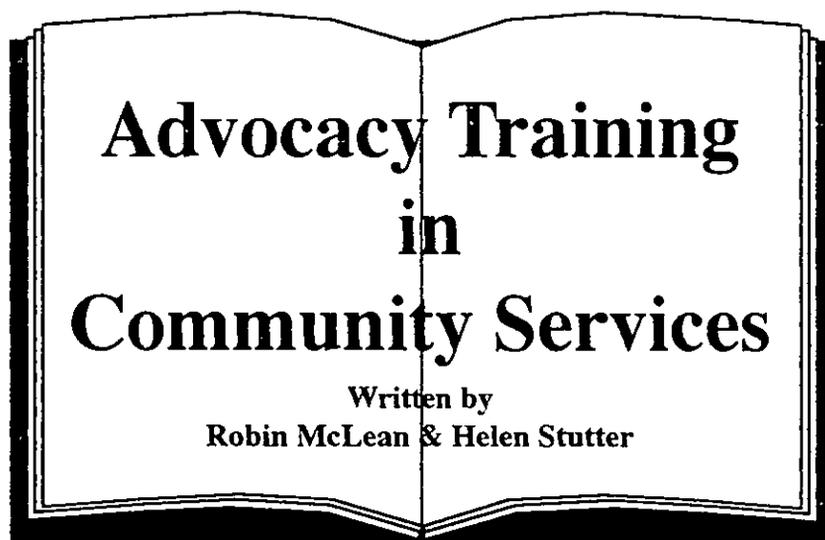
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**TasCOSS**

# Advocacy Training Manual



This Advocacy Training Package is an interlinking modular training program for consumers and service providers in the Community Services Industry.

The package is a valuable resource for both community-based services and government bodies. We are offering a reprint of this professionally presented manual for \$60.00 which includes postage.

The package was developed from a collaborative project between the School of Community Services at the Hobart College of TAFE and the Community Services Industry.

**The Manual's Modules are;**

Module 1	Advocacy: Definitions, Principles and Practises
Module 2	Consumer and Their Rights
Module 3	How to Get Your Rights: Complaints, Complaint Mechanisms and Greivance Procedures
Module 4	Consumer Participation
Module 5	Advocacy as an empowering Process
Module 6	System Advocacy

Orders will be taken in advance for ordering stock on the 1st November 1995.

**For more information please contact Cindy on (002) 31 0755**

In view of what community living means to me.

I am a thirty-five year old single parent with a four year old son. I have been living on Berthi farm in northern NSW for five years. I understand that policy is underfoot to stop individuals living together as people here have done for twenty years. I am deeply distressed to hear this.

Living here on Berthi farm is the best option I could ever wish for for my son and I. The painful separation of a family once parents have tried all possibilities of living under the same roof, and no longer can, is somewhat lessened here.

When my son and I moved from our family home with his father we moved five minutes walk on the same property to another house. My son enjoys time with both his father and mother, access is easy and the tension that existed when we all lived together is non-existent.

His father has a continuity with his son that most separated fathers can only dream about. This happens within a support network that is compassionate to the needs of changing family structures. My case is only one of several that have enabled children and separated parents a more equitable coherent structure.

My current income is approximately \$260.00 per week; renting a house in the city I am sure would completely consume most of my income. Here on Berthi farm I enjoy low cost housing and coverage to grow vegetables and fruit, lessening the grip that many, many people have in day to day living regarding lack of money. Australia is not the rich first world country with equal opportunity that it would like to think it is. My son can have new shoes for the winter.

Being a single parent is often a very isolated experience especially since the nuclear family situation is still seen as

#### **2.4.5 Beginning Language Courses**

A Regional non accredited, non examinable course. Aimed at introducing teachers to the sounds and basic patterns of Japanese or Indonesian. Presently offered at SERC. Soon to be offered in Clarence, Coffs/Nambucca. Local tutors employed.

##### **SERC Indonesian Beginners 1995**

Participants from:

Ocean Shores Primary School  
Mullumbimby High School  
Cabbage Tree Island  
Byron Bay High School  
Wardell Primary School  
Teven/Tintenbar Primary School  
Student teachers, Southern Cross University

#### **2.4.6 Other Opportunities**

In conjunction with "Grafton Professional Educators", intensive courses in Primary LOTE and the HSIE Generic LOTE have been offered.

Immersion Weekends for Teachers - being offered in French to build up language skills and fluency.

Film Festivals/DocuFests - Being offered as part of language maintenance in French/Japanese/Indonesian.

#### **2.5 HECS EXEMPTIONS 1995 - LANGUAGES**

Nil

#### **2.6 OVERSEAS SCHOLARSHIPS/VACATION STUDY AWARDS**

The Region has received many overseas scholarships for LOTE teachers over the past four years.

Following is a guide only: Department of Education "Vacation Study Awards"/ALTSIC, Japan Council, Goethe Institute.

##### **Ballina Cluster**

Ballina High School	To Japan x 4 To Indonesia x 1
Coorabell Primary School	To Indonesia x 1
Bangalow Primary School	To Indonesia x 1
Ocean Shores Primary School	To Indonesia x 1 To Japan x 1
Teven/Tintenbar	To Indonesia x 1

#### **2.7 HSC MARKING WORKSHOPS (FOR TEACHERS)**

The first of these has been offered at SERC in Japanese 2U, 2UZ and Indonesian 2UZ. Further Japanese 2UZ/2U workshops offered at Oxley. French 2U HSC Workshops offered at Lismore High School.

Introductory workshops in 2U Indonesian and the new 2UZ Japanese planned for Term 4.

the only "appropriate" model. Statistics show that "appropriate" or not the nuclear family is fast becoming a historical framework on which to grow children. I live surrounded by other single people, some parents some not, families living together, others living apart but all undoubtedly caring for or another's wellbeing. If my child is not with me, I have total trust that he is being cared for and looked after. He has the privilege of growing up with a very extended family which love and care for him. There is no greater gift one can give to their child than that of personal safety in his/her environment. Where else in Australia would we find this, in a suburban housing estate, trying desperately to make ends meet along with tens of others not quite surviving. 'Not quite surviving' is very common amongst those on pensions and low incomes. With money being short, emotional, physical and social surviving becomes a wish list and the violence and abuse that we see more and more in Australia starts to breed. To me and my son, we have a very healthy option despite our low income, we can feel good about ourselves, stay healthy and have a sense of 'we are doing 'O.K.'!

I cannot tell you how much my way of life means to me. I cannot begin to think of any other options that would be anywhere as wonderfully possible for my son and I, it sickens me to think that these safe, nurturing environments are not what the Government of the day wants to promote. Take a look at the level of social decay in the structures that already exist, and please consider another way, clearly not suitable for all but a life-saver for some.

Sincerely,

Blanche

Blanche and Tony

Beethi firm, Wallace Rd.

The Clarendon NSW 3450

Bangalow Primary School (Ballina Cluster)

**1995**

Teachers from the following schools:

Ocean Shores Primary School  
Coopers Creek Upper Primary School

**French Primary Methodology**

Nil

**2.4.2 LIM (Language Intensive Methodology for Secondary Teachers)**

**1992**

Mullumbimby High School x 1 (Ballina Cluster)

**1993**

Nil

**1995**

Nil

**2.4.3 Audiographic Courses - LAG**

**1994**

Teachers from:  
Ballina High School

School has facilities for teaching LOTE by audiographics.

**2.4.4 Language Maintenance**

The Region in 1995 is offering language tutorials for teachers of Japanese or Indonesian. The aim is to update language and pursue greater fluency - it is to prepare teachers who may not have taught a language for a while - to provide opportunities for language maintenance and to provide contemporary language exposure. The courses are non accredited, non examinable, non traumatic.

The first group is running at SERC. Courses are being offered at Clarence and Coffs Harbour. Negotiations on way at Tweed and Oxley.

**SERC Course 1995**

Ten participants from:

Lennox Head Primary School  
Ballina Primary School

Denise

FAX TO:

Nr Roger Elliot  
Manager, Planning and Design Branch  
Department of Urban Affairs & Planning  
GPO BOX 3927  
SYDNEY NSW 2001  
FAX NO 02 9391 2373

FAX FROM:

Denise Nagorcka  
Bodhi Farm  
Wallace Rd  
The Channon NSW 2480  
Phone 066 886396

DATE: 11/4/97

PAGES FOLLOWING: 5

The Manager  
Planning and Design Branch  
Department of Urban Affairs and Planning  
GPO BOX 3927  
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Dear Sir,

- I write in support of the reintroduction of SEPP 15 (Multiple Occupancy of Rural Land)
- I am a member of Pan Community Council and I have participated in and support the submission made by the Pan Community Council in this matter.
- I have particular concern that where rural landsharing by intentional communities is permitted that planning legislation totally protects that development from the <sup>future</sup> imposition of subdivision or other forms of individual ownership.

Genuine intentional communities are based on communal values and are not a process of speculative gain for the individual occupiers of the land.

I support legislation which defines performance outcomes of Multiple Occupancy so that speculative developers who may wish to gain future subdivision of land are not permitted to do so under this policy.

- Community Title is not a replacement for Multiple Occupancy. Higher development costs exclude low income earners. With less control over membership, Community Title excludes one of the essential components of successful intentional communities - that of a totally communal decision making process about who can live on the community's land.
- I request that Rural Landsharing Communities not be discriminated against in comparison with other forms of rural development and not be required to prove they do "not create a demand for unreasonable... provision of public... services" (2c(i))
- I am concerned that many people, especially in Local Government organisations, have singled out Rural Landsharing Communities as being subsidised by rates and that frequently this is used erroneously as an argument against the provision of state planning legislation. I would accept an enquiry into and change of the rating formula (by the Department of Local Government) provided an equitable formula applies to all development and that Rural Landsharing Communities are rated equitably with all developments where there is multiple use of land.
- Whilst Rural Landsharing Communities will never be a common form of lifestyle because very few people accept the challenge communal values place on the individual, I support the reintroduction of State Planning legislation to permit Rural Landsharing communities throughout New South Wales so that those people who want to live communally can do so without the stress of illegality and submissions to Governments to recognize such lifestyles as bona fide.
- An enquiry into the benefits of Rural Landsharing Communities would reveal that they offer participants an enhanced and secure lifestyle.

- The NSW Government is increasingly interested in a "whole of government" approach to services. Whilst the Department of Urban Affairs and Planning and SEPP 15 deal mainly with planning issues, I believe that the provision of planning legislation to permit Rural Landsharing Communities meets the social policy objectives of the government and the aims of many government departments. Rural Landsharing Communities enable poor participants to develop their own facilities that in other lifestyles they would rely on the government to provide. From my observations as a welfare worker the Government is not always able to provide these services and social problems are increasing.
- Rural Landsharing communities offer affordable housing, the provision of rural services eg schools, preschools and shops in isolated areas, better social conditions to impoverished families and single parents and support to families in crisis, access to shared transport, environmentally sensitive approaches to land management, conservation practices, reforestation, and waste management. This is entirely consistent with the aims of the departments of Housing, Community Services, Land and Water Conservation, State Forests and government objectives in Crime Prevention.
- In particular, one large community provides mental health services to people who are not considered sick enough to be admitted to the local mental health clinic but require supported accommodation. Until last year, there was no local supported accommodation for people suffering mental health crises and these people were often sheltered by this particular community.

## SOCIAL BENEFITS OF RURAL LANDSHARING COMMUNITIES

### IMPACT ON POVERTY

One of the most notable features of Rural Landsharing Communities is how poor people are. Our community is fairly typical. I and most others in the community were extremely poor. For example, in 1984 when I applied successfully for a sole parents pension my income increased 300%. Yet I had secure housing, access to transport, a high quality diet and lifestyle, access to shared tools and equipment. I was learning new skills - the knowledge and information of others was freely available - and meeting people from all over the world, many of whom offered new ideas in social, environmental, economic and political arenas. I had access to childcare and to the benefits of "owning" and cultivating land. I provided the safest, healthiest, most stimulating and high quality social lifestyle I could imagine for an only child.

In other lifestyles single parents especially are unable to access adequate childcare or equipment they need to maintain a house and yard; they often eat a poor quality diet because this is what they can afford; they pay up to 60% of their income in rent and do not have secure housing; they feel poor, trapped and hampered by their circumstances.

Rural Landsharing Communities offer participants a much higher quality of lifestyle and a chance to move out of a poverty trap. Money which otherwise would have been spent on rent can be spent building a house. Childcare and communal support offer the opportunity of getting paid employment whilst providing high quality care for children. This has been my experience and that of others in my community. Rural Landsharing Communities reduce the impact of poverty on the social and environmental conditions of children, offer a high quality lifestyle and a chance to improve circumstances over time.

## HOUSING

Low cost, affordable housing is the most noticeable feature of Rural Landsharing Communities. Poor people house themselves without requiring government assistance. New South Wales Council of Social Service notes that "NSW has a significant level of unmet need for affordable, appropriate and accessible housing"<sup>1</sup> In our region, rental houses are difficult to obtain and waiting time for Department of Housing accommodation is over 6 years. Thus impoverished families and single parents may spend up to 60% of their income on rent. Rental houses are often not stable housing and cheaper housing is often very poor quality. Rural Landsharing Communities have reduced reliance on housing assistance and provided housing in an area with a severe shortage of rental housing.

Furthermore, social security benefits in Rural Landsharing Communities can be used as a capital outlay in housing expenditure rather than recurrent rental cost. This enables the recipient to organize their finances towards better circumstances.

The provision of planning legislation to permit Rural Landsharing Communities is one step in a worthwhile social policy objective to assist the provision of affordable, quality housing.

## CRIME PREVENTION

High quality social interaction and support for families within Rural Landsharing Communities enables parents to provide high quality care for children. As well, parents who separate often settle separately on the same community thus providing a more stable lifestyle for the children of single parents and better access to both parents. Effective parenting has a direct impact on crime prevention. Research indicates a direct "relationship between neglectful parenting and juvenile involvement in crime."

"The more... a parent gets involved with a child... the less likely the child is to become involved in delinquency."<sup>2</sup>

Community lifestyles offer many advantages in the provision

of supervision of children, warmth and affection, long term stable relationships with parents and other adults, learning skills and direct involvement and interest in the child.

Communities are also able to provide feedback and assistance to parents who are not meeting the needs of the child, or whose children have exceptional needs.

I note that the young adults and teenagers on my community and other local communities lead rich and stimulating lives. They have a sense of continuity, a strong interest in the future and are already thinking about how to provide housing for themselves.

They choose to live on low incomes and seek out work wherever available.

Social problems which are magnified by poverty and involvement in crime are not evident in stable local communities of 20-40 people.

1. Council of Social Service of New South Wales, Submission to The <sup>Nsw</sup> government, ~~of~~ social and economic priorities for the 1997-88 State Budget A fairer community is worth paying for December, 1996.

2. NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research Crime and Justice Bulletin Number 33 December 1996 Child Neglect: Its Causes and its Role in Delinquency.

Yours sincerely,

Denise Nagorcka

(DENISE NAGORCKA)

11-4-98

Jula!

Dear

I have been based on this community for the past 14 years. With my 7 year old son, we live in a simple but comfortable home that I built 11 years ago.

I'm extremely grateful for the quality of life that we have, the care, the safety, to name a couple of factors. Knowing my child can wander and play on different parts of this property, knowing other adults are in his life, looking out for the children's welfare, means a lot.

Children living in households in urban areas are up against so many risks. Young people are having to be taught to be wary of strangers, the many negative influences of this fast changing world are almost out of a parent's control. Family and societal values are rapidly declining. There just isn't the stability that urban community once had. Transience, media and corporate influence plays a huge part. In an intentional community, it's so much easier to work with a difficult situation. Parents don't need to carry the lone burden, children and adults can work together to resolve conflicts. We can be aware of our neighbour having a difficult time.

There are many learning experiences for our young people growing up with the familiarity of other consistent adults and teenagers becoming young adults. Possibilities of learning skills of mechanics, carpentry, wood-carving, sewing, cooking, gardening, plumbing, welding, computing, for example.

It's a joy to not have to lock my car, my home and to know I can go to someone close by if in crisis and be supported..

I think it extremely unfair that other folk who are prepared to live a rural existence and are willing to give up some materialism cannot have the same opportunities as me and live in a similar way.

Being able to make our own decisions and work together, and of course there are occasional conflicts, but through conflict resolution processes these are able to be resolved. This is a huge blessing in today's world.

Taking responsibility for our own power source, roads, water, food production, caring for the natural environment places less impact on our natural resources that are fast declining. I see this as an asset to the wider community and many people from far and wide are inspired and motivated by this way of living.

It takes much hard work but the rewards of a shared vision; a safe environment to raise children, a place with respect for the land and each other; allow us to do the work we see as important in and for the wider world community.

I am currently on a low income and am attending TAFE. I have the opportunity to study and create work and be far less dependent on a welfare system in the long term, because the overheads of daily living are far less than they would be for me in a town or city situation of mortgage repayments, renting & needing assistance. Sole parents, the young, the aged are able to stay out of poverty with the support of community living and have a sense of belonging and purpose.

Communities are a necessity for a just and sane world, urban and rural. Creating safety for young people, working together in decision making, sharing resources; allow people to feel integrated. With a strong commitment to the land and each other we

Greta

There should not be hindrances to any state laws or statutes which encourage and protect the creation and continuance of varied forms and styles of community living. Indeed, these laws should be strengthened and widened. When people join together to make an experiment in sharing land and resources, and make some commitment to one another's welfare it should be a cause for rejoicing and optimism. It may be bad for business but it is not bad for the land, the resources or the people.

Some may argue that multiple occupancy is too inconvenient a structure, and that speculators and groups of people with no real interest in the original spirit of the policy will exploit it as a way of cheap subdivision. Well, there are spoilers for every institution and law that there is. The point about MO's is that they provide support for the few people willing to sacrifice a small portion of their individuality, who wish to take a look at what it means to be part of a group which in some way creates and maintains itself.

I have lived on Bodhi Farm, a multiple occupancy in northern N.S.W. for twenty years. There are many MOs in this region that are all roughly the same age. Each has evolved differently. I am only speaking from my experience within the community in which I live.

I want the MO policy to continue because it provides some sanction and support for groups of people to set up a self-determining community within the broader society. This does not mean a separation from the greater community - ultimately no separation is possible. It means that such a group of people are actually taking on an extra commitment to live some sort of social experiment. It is not a big deal, but neither is it of no importance. Things could have gone differently. Our and the other communities could have been torn up and knocked down many years ago by a hostile government. A hostile or disinterested government could now make a decision to make this sort of living impossible for anyone else in the future.

This is what we did. We bought some very marginal land which nobody seemed to want at the time. It suited us because we had no money and it was very cheap. We were mostly young and inexperienced in such areas as building and food production. We had some kind of commitment to exploring the questions of how a voluntary collection of individuals can get along, make decisions together, share resources and possibly conserve them, minimise destructive impacts on the land, maintain a safe and nurturing

<u>Region</u>	<u>School</u>	<u>LOTE</u>	<u>Year Level</u>
North Coast	Nimbin Central	Japanese	
North Coast	The Pocket Public School	Indonesian	3-4 and 5-6
North Coast	The Risk Public School	Indonesian	3-4 and 5-6
North Coast	Tregeagle Public School	Indonesian	3-4 and 5-6
North Coast	Wardell Public School	Indonesian	3-4 and 5-6
North Coast	Westlawn Public School	Indonesian	
North Coast	Woodburn Central	Indonesian	3-4 and 5-6
North Coast	Woodenbong Central	Indonesian	5-6
North Coast	Woolgoolga Public School	Indonesian	3-4 and 5-6
North Coast	Wyrallah Public School	Indonesian	3-4 and 5-6
North Coast	Wyrallah Road Public School	Indonesian	3-4 and 5-6
North Coast	Lismore Heights Public School	Italian	
North Coast	Albert Park Public School	Japanese	3-4 and 5-6
North Coast	Coffs Harbour Public School	Japanese	3-4 and 5-6
North Coast	Crescent Head Public School	Japanese	3-4 and 5-6
North Coast	Crossmaglen Public School	Japanese	3-4 and 5-6
North Coast	Doubtful Creek Public School	Japanese	3-4 and 5-6
North Coast	Drake Public School	Japanese	3-4 and 5-6
North Coast	Ellangowan Public School	Japanese	3-4 and 5-6
North Coast	Fingal Head Public School	Japanese	3-4 and 5-6
North Coast	Frank Partridge VC Public School	Japanese	3-4 and 5-6
North Coast	Hastings Public School	Japanese	3-4 and 5-6
North Coast	Hérons Creek Public School	Japanese	3-4 and 5-6
North Coast	Lowanna Public School	Japanese	3-4 and 5-6
North Coast	Macksville Public School	Japanese	3-4 and 5-6
North Coast	Narranga Public School	Japanese	5-6
North Coast	North Haven Public School	Japanese	3-4 and 5-6
North Coast	Port Macquarie Public School	Japanese	3-4 and 5-6
North Coast	Southern Cross Public School	Japanese	3-4 and 5-6
North Coast	Tweed Heads Public School	Japanese	3-4 and 5-6
North Coast	Tweed Heads South Public	Japanese	3-4 and 5-6
North Coast	Tyalla Public School	Japanese	3-4 and 5-6
North Coast	Urbanville Public School	Japanese	3-4
North Coast	Yarras Public School	Japanese	3-4 and 5-6

Greta  
(Duff)  
sheet

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North Coast	Comboyne Public School	Indonesian	3-4 and 5-6
North Coast	Coorabell	Indonesian	3-4 and 5-6
North Coast	Copmanhurst Public School	Indonesian	
North Coast	Coramba Public School	Indonesian	3-4 and 5-6
North Coast	Corindi Public School	Indonesian	3-4 and 5-6
North Coast	Coutts Crossing Public School	Indonesian	
North Coast	Cowper Public School	Indonesian	
North Coast	Dorrigo Primary School	Indonesian	3-4 and 5-6
North Coast	Durrumbul Public School	Indonesian	3-4 and 5-6
North Coast	Empire Vale Public School	Indonesian	3-4 and 5-6
North Coast	Evans Head Public School	Indonesian	3-4 and 5-6
North Coast	Gillwinga Public School	Indonesian	
North Coast	Goonellabah Public School	Indonesian	3-4 and 5-6
North Coast	Goonengerry Public School	Indonesian	3-4 and 5-6
North Coast	Grafton South Public School	Indonesian	
North Coast	Grevillia Public School	Indonesian	3-4
North Coast	Harwood Island Public School	Indonesian	
North Coast	Jiggi Public School	Indonesian	
North Coast	Kendall Central	Indonesian	3-4 and 5-6
North Coast	Kinchela Public School	Indonesian	3-4 and 5-6
North Coast	Kyogle Public School	Indonesian	3-4 and 5-6
North Coast	Lawrence Public School	Indonesian	
North Coast	Leeville Public School	Indonesian	3-4 and 5-6
North Coast	Lennox Head Public School	Indonesian	
North Coast	Main Arm Upper Public School	Indonesian	3-4 and 5-6
North Coast	Modanville Public School	Indonesian	
North Coast	Nana Glen Public School	Indonesian	3-4 and 5-6
North Coast	Nymboida Public School	Indonesian	
North Coast	Ocean Shores Public School	Indonesian	3-4 and 5-6
North Coast	Orama Public School	Indonesian	3-4 and 5-6
North Coast	Rosebank Public School	Indonesian	
North Coast	Rous Public School	Indonesian	
North Coast	Sandy Beach Public School	Indonesian	3-4
North Coast	Sawtell Public School	Indonesian	3-4 and 5-6
North Coast	Teven-Tintenbar Public School	Indonesian	3-4

environment for our children and support each other in social and environmental activities as well as in personal development of the ethical, moral, spiritual and cultural aspects of our lives.

I would say we have succeeded in pursuing all of these goals. . . . Most of all we have had what I regard as an exceedingly meaningful experience in sharing these years in this one place together. We have evolved our own style of communication, conflict resolution, decision making. We realise the high level of our skills in these areas when we observe the difficulties that people have in organisations, institutions and suburbs. We now know that good human relations and a high quality of life can come out of such an experiment. We have been fortunate to share ideals that pointed us in the right direction, and the things we have done and learned were fostered by the opportunity we had to live on the land in this way.

Why deny such an opportunity to the few people who will have the interest and determination to create (or at least try) a variation on the prevailing social norms? Why deny a decent and healthy pursuit to young people who may have the imagination and courage to make a home for themselves and their families in their own little way.

Greta

Stu

# Living as if community mattered

Stu.

There's a lot of noise, brushcutters, people yelling questions, laughter... It's a Saturday morning and the weekly community workday has begun.

It's not really a workday, it's a work morning including morning tea and maybe lunch. And the community is not a general community as forms around a pre-school roster or church. The community is "intentional". Over 20 people have chosen to share their lives and the land together. This community, the one I am part of has been going for 20 years now.

A visitor, a young woman from England is doing her bit to fill in trenches that have been opened up for water pipes and Telstra cables. She is a GP and has travelled extensively when not practising. As we work we talk of Nepal, of life, of community. We get a consistent stream of visitors, most of them helpful and bringing their own fascinating life-stories and experience.

The clay that has to be put back in the trenches is wet and gluggy from the last two day's rain. It sticks to the shovels and hoes as well as shoes and feet. Heavy work. But everyone seems cheerful. A couple of people have sore backs and cannot join the sweating and joking workers. They weed a nearby garden or go and get tools or other items for the "trenchers".

I admit community life is not for everyone. The rewards are great but there is certainly a price to pay.

Let's start with the costs:

- Loss of a certain amount of independence.
- Having to negotiate decisions with others
- Having to integrate your lover/partner of your life with a huge extended family
- Commitment to workdays and meetings
- Hours of listening to other's opinions that you have heard before and disagree with.
- Compromising your desires and needs for the community good

And the benefits:

- Love and acceptance
- Security, both physical and emotional
- Long-term, accessible friends
- Watching and feeling close to the new generation growing up
- Childcare and child entertainment no problem
- Support
- Companionship
- Living on a large piece of land that you could never hope to maintain alone.
- Low cost lifestyle

Bonding with the land and people on it  
Access to a huge range of tools and abilities  
Sense of being part of something special

Of course I think the benefits outweigh the costs, but I've been here for 20 years. When my children no longer need me to be around full-time I will wander and live in other places for a while. But this place, this community will always be my home, my place of reference, refuge and inspiration.

It is a marvellous place to bring up children. They have a wide range of other kids to play with. They also have a wide range of other adults to learn from and interact with. They are safe, any sort of abuse would be quickly uncovered and handled with the directness and wisdom characteristic of a group of people who know each other well and have been making difficult decisions together for a long time.

I have heard conservatives yearning for the old days of extended families, Aunts, Uncles, Grandparents all involved in large family life. But there were drawbacks to this passing tradition. For a start you cannot choose your relatives. If there were skeletons in the family closet all had to suffer the consequences. In joining an intentional community you get to choose your "relatives". There is more equality between the generations. You get to have a say in the culture and lifestyle of the extended networks. Friction and misunderstanding has a better chance of being sorted out.

What you put in, you get back, multiplied.

My community, I love it.