



MEDIA RELEASE

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WITCHCLIFFE ECOVILLAGE WINS FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND AFFORDABILITY AT INDUSTRY EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Sustainable Settlements and Perron Developments, the team behind the unique Witchcliffe Ecovillage, was thrilled to win two awards for 'Sustainability' and 'Affordable Housing' at the prestigious UDIA WA Awards For Excellence on Saturday night.

Up against the best examples of urban development in the State at the industry's gala event, the Witchcliffe Ecovillage was lauded for its comprehensive delivery of sustainability principles across the project in areas such as renewable energy, fresh food production, water self-sufficiency, conservation and waste management.

In a housing market under immense pressure, the Ecovillage was also recognised for its efforts in tackling housing affordability through the creation of "Groupie" lots, which have a lower price point and maximum 100sqm build sizes. Financial eligibility criteria are set on these lots to ensure they are available exclusively to people who meet this lower income threshold.

"It means a lot to us to be recognised amongst all of our peers," said Sustainable Settlements Director Mike Hulme who dedicated the Affordable Housing award to his mentor and joint venture development partner, Stan Perron.

Now officially recognised as the most sustainable project in the State, the Witchcliffe Ecovillage developers are looking forward to presenting this unique and innovative project to the rest of Australia at the UDIA National Congress in March 2024.

After nearly 14 years in development, the project has weathered its fair share of storms. Following years of planning approval delays to launching sales during Covid, and amidst ongoing state-wide energy infrastructure issues that block our ability to turn on our renewable energy systems, it is gratifying to be held up as a model development for the industry.

The Ecovillage team is currently selling its final stage of residential lots and is starting to turn its attention back to development of the highly anticipated public realm surrounding Wolghine Square and linking into Witchcliffe's main street.

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

ABOUT THE ECOVILLAGE

The [Witchcliffe Ecovillage](#) is a highly sustainable, fully integrated residential community located in semi-rural Witchcliffe, Western Australia. Led by Sustainable Settlements, the privately-owned joint venture will be self-sufficient in water, renewable energy and fresh food production. Utilising best practice technological innovations and human settlement design based on permaculture principles, the Witchcliffe Ecovillage aims to be a world leading model of sustainable living.

ENERGY

Designed to create significantly more energy than it consumes, the Ecovillage's sophisticated energy network will incorporate solar PVs on every roof, and Tesla Powerpack and Powerwall batteries, and microgrids that enable power sharing between residents and businesses. Solar powered electric vehicle fast-charging stations will be located in every residential cluster to cater for tourists and locals alike. The entire Ecovillage will be 100% solar powered.

WATER

Ample, high quality water will be captured and reused on site by three large dams, household rainwater tanks and a network of stormwater rain gardens. A community-scale wastewater treatment plant will treat all sewerage on site and irrigate onto a community avocado orchard and wood lot. The entire Ecovillage will be 100% self-sufficient in water.

FOOD

Fourteen agricultural lots irrigated by the dams will be available for purchase by residents and will provide opportunities for high value, small scale commercial horticulture. Supplemented by 11 cluster community gardens, this fresh produce will feed residents and can be sold at the Ecovillage Food Hub, which will eventually become home to a food distribution network for the entire region.

COMMUNITY GARDENS

Utilising best practice human settlement design, homes will be configured in clusters surrounding feature-rich community gardens. These will become the heart of daily Ecovillage life, providing both a convivial social setting and abundant household fresh produce. The seemingly benign acts of gardening, socialising and sharing resources with neighbours is underpinned by a deliberate design principle that seeks to address society's growing social problems of isolation, depression and anxiety.

HOUSING

Every lot at the Ecovillage has been carefully oriented to maximise solar capture for passive solar homes that will be built in accordance with our [Sustainable Building Design Guidelines](#) using natural materials, such as timber, stone, hempcrete, and straw bale. Houses will undergo life cycle and thermal assessments and are required to be carbon negative.

ECONOMICS



In a region with a shortage of smaller and lower cost housing stock, affordability has also been a key driver of the project. There are nine different lot types designed to attract a diverse demographic, including families, retirees and young people. The project will also create a mix of commercial, creative, food, tourism and agricultural business opportunities, which will boost regional tourism and create jobs, enabling some residents to live and work in the Ecovillage.

TOURISM

With public amenities that include a pub, café, creative and food hubs, clustered around a beautifully designed Village Square and commercial precinct, the Ecovillage is destined to become a major tourism drawcard in a region renowned for its world class local food and premium wine.