

# Thinking about a New Suburban Community

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## In this presentation...

1. Social Goals for a New Suburban Community
2. A Social Planner Thinks about Housing on a New Suburban Site...
3. Social Factors in the Design of Urban Public Spaces and Parks
4. Growing Up: Why Nature is Essential in Residential Areas

## 1. Social Goals for a New Suburban Development

### Goal 1: An integrated community



### Goal 2: An Equitable & Accessible Community



### Goal 3: A Sustainable Community



**Goal 4: An Urbane Community**



**Goal 5: A Healthy Community**



**Goal 6: An Empowered & Empowering Community**



**Goal 7: A Stable Community**



**Goal 8: A Flexible Community**



**Goal 9: An Enterprising Community  
Where Ingenuity is Valued**



## Goal 10: A Spiritually Enriching & Nurturing Community



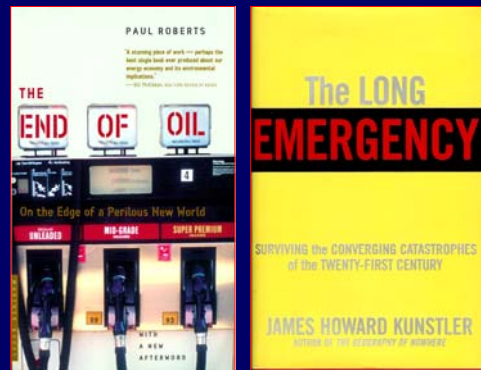
## 2. A Social Planner Thinks about Housing... on a New Suburban Site...



Something is happening that is not sustainable



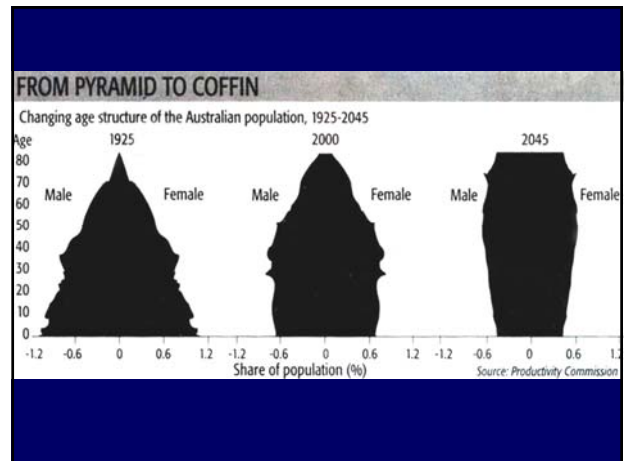
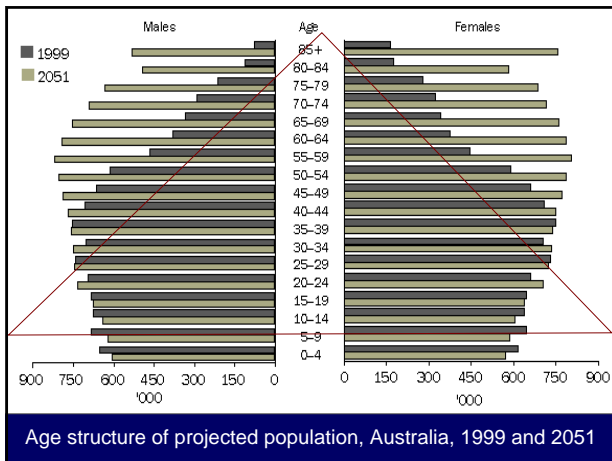
## A CRUCIAL POINT



## Demographic Realities

## Who are our households?





2006: approx. 40 % of Australian population > 45

## Retirement: a continuum

- shorter working hours
- take a package + then consult
- part-time consulting
- home office

## Other lifestyle changes

- Marrying late (or never)
- Smaller families
- Share households
- More single-person households
- Fewer children
- Divorce
- Not-so-empty nest; never empty nest
- Grandparents' full-time care of grandchildren
- Working from home
- Cultural considerations

## Intergenerational change

**Trends:**

- Living longer and with disability

**Implications:**

- Extended family support
- Additional financial pressures

## Diversity of families 1

**Trends:**

- Household numbers growing
- Changing household form
- Mothers working
- Not-so-empty nest

**Implications:**

- Physical separation between family members
- Support for family cohesion needed

Never empty nest

## Diversity of families 2

### Trends:

- 75 years + to double
- Young people staying longer at home
- Families and boarders

### Implications:

- Support services for older people
- Financial and emotional pressures
- Support programs for families



## Future housing needs 1

### Trends:

- Working from home

### Implications:

- Planning and designing for homeworkers



## Future housing needs 2

### Trends:

- Changing family types
- Share housing

### Implications:

- Universal / accessible design
- Boarder or family house sharing



## Changing nature of retirement 1

### Trends:

- Not leaving job after 25 years with a gold watch!
- Increased financial pressures on older people

### Implications:

- Long work life = social and health problems



## Changing nature of retirement 2

### Trends:

- Changing nature of "retirement"
- Looking after grandchildren

### Implications:

- Housing location and design
- Local amenities



## Living longer, with disability

### Trends:

- People are living longer
- Living with disability longer

### Implications:

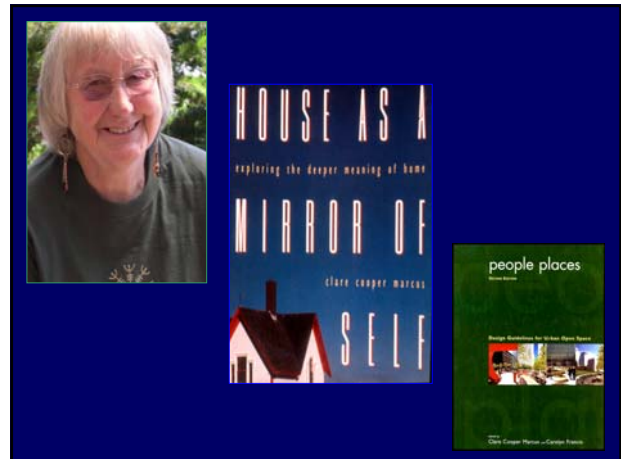
- Intensive health care
- Home-based care
- Nursing and care facilities
- Accessible housing



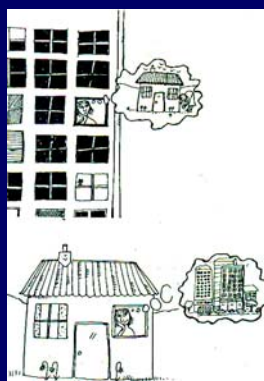
## Housing for students



## The Complex Meanings of Housing



## Different Perceptions of Home



## Practical Considerations for Planning...

## *Take ageing seriously*

- Older people not a homogenous group
- Consider needs of older people and ageing in place in:
  - site selection
  - site planning
  - building design
  - interior design or
  - on-site facilities and amenities

## *Design for diversity*

- Avoid targeting toward narrow range of household types
- Pay attention to cultural diversity and life-cycle changes
- Avoid “features” in high-price developments that might be inappropriate for range of household types

## *Take accessibility seriously*

- Universal Design
- Take leadership and gain market advantage



## *Accommodate predictable homeworking options*

- **Hybrid** home/work arrangements
- Sophisticated handling of homeworking requirements
- Adequate size for “home office” room
- Understanding of working beyond traditional retirement age
- Other facilities for homeworking

## *Design in opportunities to reduce crime*

## CPTED

- Eyes on the street
- Natural surveillance
- Target hardening
- Electronic surveillance
- Lighting
- Territorial boundaries..

What works best in different settings?



Intentional "natural ladders"

## *Support socialising with on-site community space and facilities*

## *Provide generous on-site shared open space*

- Problem with sites too small for shared open space and on-site community facilities
- Problem if gaps exist in host neighbourhood
- Need expert design
- Try to avoid privacy and territory problems

## The hierarchy of open space

illustrated







Open space in award-winning private housing in Brisbane  
Shared or public?

*Take children's play needs into account*

- Consider children's outdoor play
- Young children (2 to 5) play within sight and calling distance of home
- Doorstep play much valued by supervising adults and children

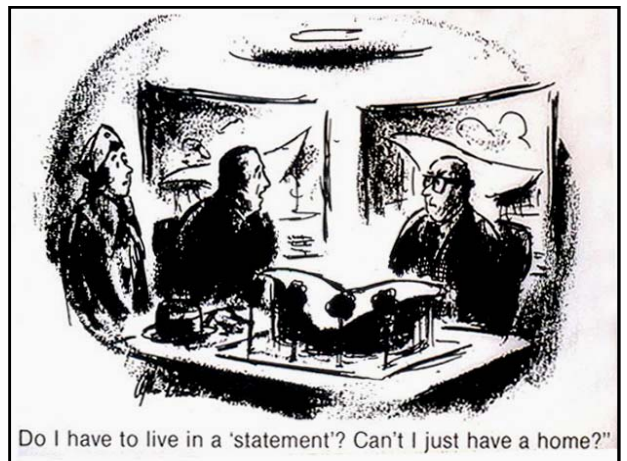
*Don't let one solution become another problem*

**A problem:**

- Large underground parking garages
- First habitable dwelling or building entryway situated above ground level (accessible only by stairs)
- reduces excavation costs

**BUT**

- creates significant accessibility problems



### 3. Social factors in the design of urban public spaces and parks

## What Makes a Successful Place?

Project for Public Spaces

[www.pps.org/topics/gps/gr\\_place\\_feat](http://www.pps.org/topics/gps/gr_place_feat)

1. **Uses & Activities:** Sustainable, special, active
2. **Comfort & Image:** Walkable, safe, clean, "green", attractive
3. **Access & Linkage:** Walkable, connectedness
4. **Sociability:** Welcoming, stewardship

## Good Public Spaces

1. **Responsive:** designed & managed to serve the needs of their users
2. **Democratic:** accessible to all groups & providing freedom of action
3. **Meaningful:** allowing people to make strong connections between the place, their personal lives & the larger world

Carr et al., eds, *Public Space*, 1992:19-20

## 8 Qualities of Good Public Places 1

1. **Accessible** to everyone (children, people with a disability, older people)
2. **Clear:** Conveys clear, appropriate, user-friendly messages
3. **Beautiful:** enhances health & emotional well-being of its users
4. **Safe:** provide a feeling of security & safety



## 8 Qualities of Good Public Places 2

5. **Culturally appropriate**
6. **For all:** encourage use by different users, without any one group's activities disrupting other's enjoyment
7. **Comfortable:** sun, shade, wind, etc.
8. **Ownership:** encourage community ownership & caring through involvement in design, construction, maintenance

From *People Places*, 1998

## All income groups value:

- Trees
- Clean air
- Natural landscapes
- Places that make them feel better
- Safe places for children's play
- Places to walk & sit outside

### Other studies:

no differences in open space values based on race, gender or class

## Differences

- **Professionals & activists working in parks, landscape, horticulture, forestry & or environmental fields:** distinctive likes & dislikes, often different from general public
- People also have **entirely personal tastes**

## Guidelines in Brief 1

### 1. Appeal to broad public:

- ✓ spreading trees
- ✓ little understorey
- ✓ smooth groundcovers
- ✓ curving sight lines
- ✓ few incongruous buildings
- ✓ water

## Guidelines in Brief 2

... but consider subgroups who like wilder or more formal aesthetics

- 2 Where parks must incorporate elements with ecological value but are unattractive, **use design cues to reveal that these areas are intended**

What happens when these basics are ignored...?

## "The Black Hole", Glebe





# Children & *Nature*



# Childhood Remembered

Memories of favoured childhood places are most often

**Parks**

**Hiding spots**



**"Leftover spaces"**



**Wild & untamed**

# How Children Begin...

- children begin with **personal, local & emotional responses** to Nature
- over time: replaced with **social, global & logical reflections** as children near adulthood
- **Linking specific instances of learning to contact with Nature:** strong argument for impact on human development

# How do children learn to value sustainability?



The environment is a communicating medium.

It communicates what we value.



# Ecological Learning

## Diversity of city or urban environments:

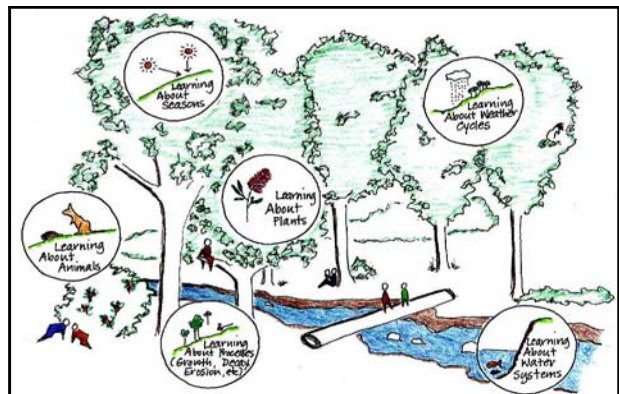
- learning ground for children's ecological values

## Creating sustainable environments communicates that sustainability:

- educates children (and adults) to value sustainability

## Valuing sustainability & intergenerational equity:

- communicates that we value children & their futures



# Ecological Learning

# Play

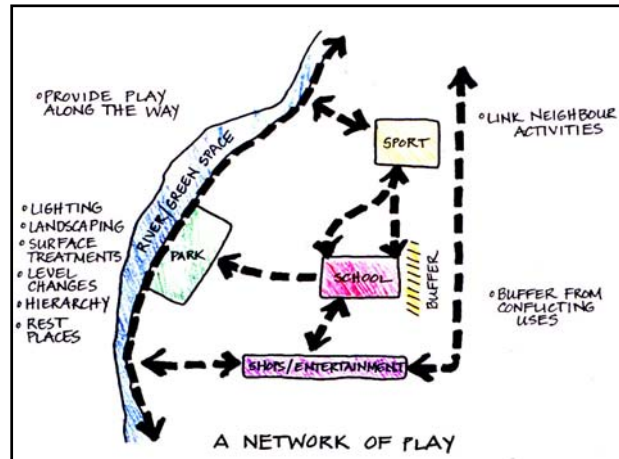
## Why is play important?

Play is children's way to..

- ◊ discover their social & natural environments
- ◊ be introduced to a world beyond their families
- ◊ learn to function on their own
- ◊ build feelings of self-confidence & self-esteem

## Children Prefer

refuges  
access to adults  
wild spots  
privacy  
malleable materials  
challenges  
sensory diversity  
safety  
water  
adaptable environments



## What Children Need in Parks 1

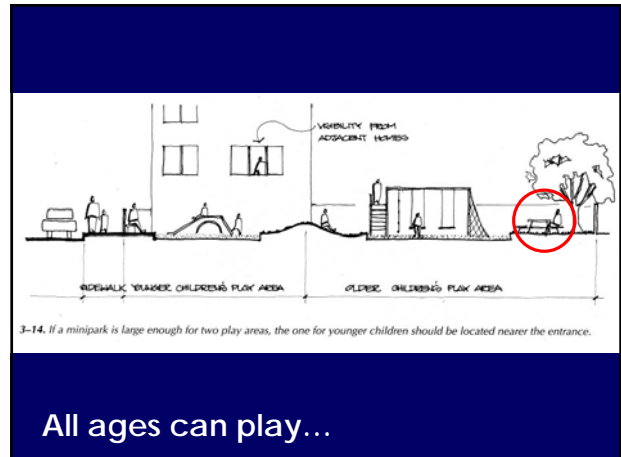
1. **Accessibility:** outside & within park
2. Safe & graduated **challenges**
3. **Diversity of settings** & spatial experiences: retreats & opportunities to play above ground
4. **Flexibility & open-endedness:** elements can be moved & manipulated by both children & adults
5. **Defensible, visible space** for safety

## What Children Need in Parks 2

6. **Supervision:** greater range of activities
7. **Permanence:** a familiar, identifiable space
8. Elements **change over time:** seasons & events
9. Design for **year-round use**
10. Multisensory **stimulation** & clues
11. **Shelter**

## What Children Need in Parks 3

12. Spaces for social interaction among groups:
  - many sizes
  - different ages
13. Defined play areas for children of different ages
14. Spaces for interacting with plants & animals
15. Orienting devices: visible completion points & landmarks



All ages can play...

## All Ages can Play



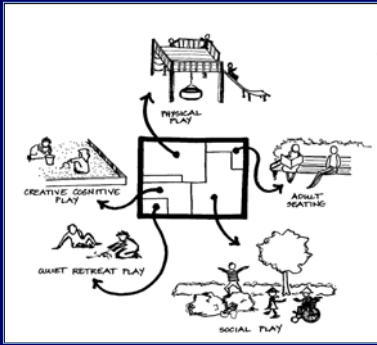
all ages can play...



PLAY DIVERSITY  
AND NATURAL PLAY

## Diversity of Play Opportunities

- Variety of play environments
- Different & appropriate locations
- Variety of spaces, surfaces, levels & plant materials
- No one location sufficient
- Provide for all types of play



Make sure you don't forget the basics!





# NATURAL PLAY

- helps children build, develop & learn through doing
- Wooded areas, creeks & watercourses for exploratory & fantasy play



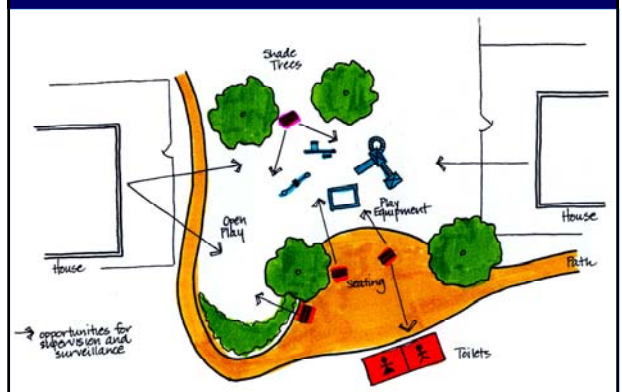
# URBAN BUSHLAND

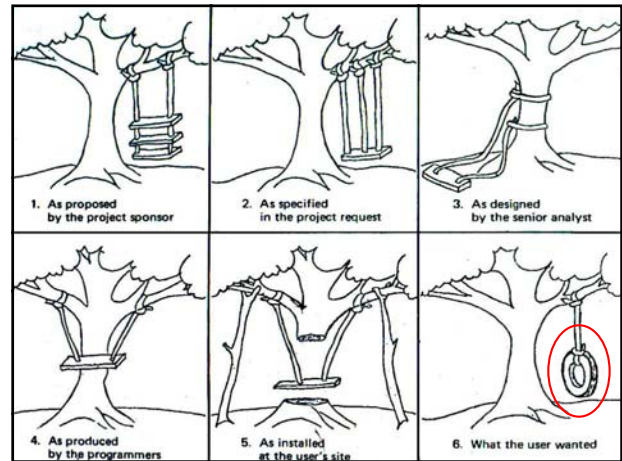
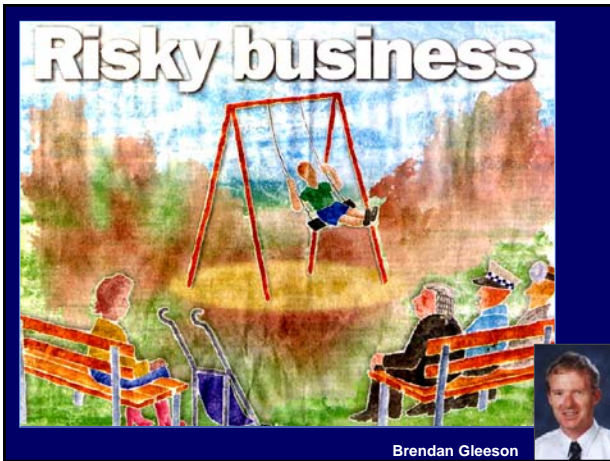
- ❖ 'wild' areas: few overt messages about what children 'should' do
- ❖ valuable educational resource
- ❖ protect & encourage animals & birds

# Water Play



# NEIGHBOURLY SURVEILLANCE





What do you make of this?

With gratitude.

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