

# Wendy Sarkissian PhD LFPIA



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## Biography

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Dr Wendy Sarkissian is a widely awarded and acknowledged author and community planner. She has worked at a range of spatial scales and contexts and has a familiarity with and deep understanding of planning and community development in Canada, Australia, the United States, and the UK. A qualified secondary school teacher in English, Wendy holds a Bachelor of Science in Education (Southern Connecticut State University), a Masters of Arts in literature (Connecticut College), a Master of Town Planning (Adelaide University) and a PhD in environmental ethics and education (Murdoch University).

Building a career as a social planning consultant, she has pioneered innovative planning and development approaches in a wide variety of contexts. This work earned over forty professional awards. Wendy was elevated to Life Fellow of the Planning Institute of Australia in 2011.

Wendy is the award-winning author and co-author of ten books on housing, planning and community engagement, as well as numerous articles, book reviews, chapters in books and three stories in literary journals. In 2009 and 2010, as the lead author, she co-authored three books on community engagement published by Earthscan/Routledge, London.

# Qualifications

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**PhD** Murdoch University, Western Australia, 1997  
(Environmental ethics and education)

**Master of Town Planning** University of Adelaide, South Australia, 1976

**Master of Arts** Connecticut College, New London, 1967 (in Literature).

**Bachelor of Science in Education**  
Southern Connecticut State University, New Haven, 1965  
(Secondary school English teaching qualification)

**Fellow and Life Fellow** Planning Institute of Australia, from 2001

**Trained as a mediator**, LEADR, Sydney, 1998.

**Dispute resolution and mediator training and accreditation**, Bond University Dispute Resolution Centre, Queensland, 2010, 2011.

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# Summary of Employment

**1981 to present:** Director, Sarkissian Associates Planners (1981 to 2013); Director, Wendy Sarkissian Independent Planner, since 2013 (located in Vancouver since May 2017).

I have held numerous full-time and sessional appointments in planning and community development in universities internationally: University of California at Berkeley, University of British Columbia, Cornell University, Harvard University, University of Sydney, Bond University, Queensland, including: Adjunct Associate Professor, **Curtin University Sustainability Policy Institute (CUSP)**, Perth, Western Australia, from 2009.; Adjunct Professor, **University of British Columbia, School of Community and Regional Planning**, 2006-2008, 2014-2015; Adjunct Professor, **Bond University, School of Sustainable Development**, Queensland, Australia, 2007 -2015; Member, Bond University Mirvac School of Sustainable Development Academic Advisory Panel, 2007-2008.

**My community arts involvement** includes the following: Member, Advisory Board, **Ideas at the Powerhouse**, Brisbane, Queensland, 2000-2004; Chair, **Queensland Community Arts Network**, 2001-2002; Chair of the Board, **Parks Community Centre**, Adelaide, 1989-1990.

# Academic Posts

- **2013: Visiting Scholar, Harvard University**, Graduate School of Design (GSD), Planning Program, January to March: presented five lectures in planning to postgraduate students, worked with students in a studio setting, supervised student research, mentoring. Presented a **public lecture** on NIMBY psychology to the Joint Centre for Housing Studies, Harvard University, February 2013.
- **2014: Visiting Scholar, Cornell University** Department of City and Regional Planning Invited lecture on NIMBY behaviour and place attachment, 29 August, Half-day seminar on community engagement in planning, 30 August.

- **2014: Lecturer in Applied Planning, Langara College**, Vancouver: Designed and taught a new one-semester course, Planning Theory, Practice and Ethics, which provided an overview of issues related to planning theory, ethics, and practice.
- **2014: Adjunct Professor**, School of Community and Regional Planning, **University of British Columbia**. Designer and director of 14-week postgraduate planning research studio on resident satisfaction and the design of higher density housing, 2014.
- **2007: Visiting Scholar, Center for the American Urban Landscape, University of Minnesota**, Minneapolis, workshops with students and community leaders, 7 March.
- **2006-2008: Adjunct Professor**, School of Community and Regional Planning, **University of British Columbia**. Designed and managed a three-semester post-occupancy evaluation of a large inner-city housing development, False Creek North, undertaken by students in the School as part of a three-semester course (with Larry Beasley, CM).

### Other posts

- **Member**, Research Ethics Board, Adler University, Vancouver, Canada, 2020-present.
- **Member**: Vancouver Friends for Life Society, 2019-2021.

## Selected keynote addresses and major presentations

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**2019: Keynote address, “Fearless Community Engagement”**, national conference of Community Colleges Australia, Brisbane, Queensland, 18 November.

**2018: Keynote address and professional workshop on community engagement in planning**, United Nations Saudi Urban Forum, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, 15 October.

**2018: Designer and manager/facilitator, *Bless this Road***: one-day community education, engagement, and healing event about road safety and trauma, Uki, NSW, Australia, 30 September. See: <https://blessthisroad.net>

**2016: My Asymmetrical Life: Reconciling Activism, Environmentalism, and the Contradictions of Life as a Community Planning Consultant**, Keynote Address: Symmadelaide annual conference, Adelaide, October.

**2016: “Something changes in me when I witness someone’s courage,”** Marg Barry annual memorial lecture, 12 October, Parliament House, Sydney, Australia. Published in *Inner Sydney Voice*. See: <http://www.innersydneyvoice.org.au/wendy-sarkissian-marg-barry-lecture-2016/>

**2013: Public lecture, “SOS: Shared Open Space to the Rescue,”** New Zealand Planning Institute, Nelson, New Zealand, 20 November.

**2013: Invited public lecture on NIMBY responses to higher density housing, Bob Hawke Prime Ministerial Centre, University of South Australia**, Adelaide, 29 May. [http://w3.unisa.edu.au/hawkecentre/events/2013events/Wendy\\_Sarkissian.asp](http://w3.unisa.edu.au/hawkecentre/events/2013events/Wendy_Sarkissian.asp)

**2013: Public Lecture, Harvard University, Joint Center for Housing Studies at Harvard University, 22 February.** *What's Psychology Got to Do with NIMBY? Exploring the Deeper Meanings to Community Resistance to Proposed Housing Density Increases.* Lunchtime seminar. <http://www.jchs.harvard.edu/event/what%E2%80%99s-psychology-got-do-nimby-exploring-deeper-meanings-community-resistance-proposed-housing>

**2013: Tufts University, Department of Urban and Environmental Planning, 6 February 2013** *What's Psychology Got to Do with NIMBY? Exploring the Deeper Meanings to Community Resistance to Proposed Housing Density Increases,* Lunchtime colloquium.

**2013: Public address on community engagement and planning legislation, Better Planning Network Forum, Parliament House, Sydney, 20 May.** <http://www.sarkissian.com.au/the-better-planning-network-forum-on-nsw-planning-reforms/http://www.thefifthestate.com.au/archives/49427/>

**2012: Woodford Folk Festival, Presentation to the GREENhouse, 28 December.** "Blacklisting Blackwater; what happens when government and industry abandon a small mining town," with Kev Cracknell.

**2012: Hong Kong University and Hong Kong Planning Department, 2012** "Heartstorming: Putting the Vision back into Community Visioning", Hong Kong Conference on Community Planning, 28 September.

**2010: Keynote Address, "Kitchen Table Sustainability: Community Engagement with Sustainability", 2010** EAROPH Jubilee Congress, Adelaide, November.

**2007: Asia-Pacific Cities Summit, August 2007** "Urban Nature for Everyone: The Value of Natural Places in Cities for Tourists and Local People", with Catherine Zheyu Zhou, August.

**2007: ISOCARP 43<sup>rd</sup> Urban Planning Congress: Urban Dialogues, 20 September 2007** "Kitchen Table Sustainability: Tested recipes for bringing the sustainability debate down to Earth", Antwerp, 20 September.

**2006: World Planners Congress, Vancouver, Canada, 19 June,** "Giving Voice to Nature in Community Engagement."

**2006: International Association for Public Participation, Conference, Montreal, November.** "Trading Places: How a major recent Perth development project turned a developer into a "green social planner" AND how a community came to understand and care about a developer's profits" keynote address with Darren Cooper, Mirvac, Perth.

**2004: 'Chautauqua' Extravaganza of Participatory Planning and Design, University of Winnipeg, Manitoba, October.** Keynote and workshop presenter, Chautauqua, nine lectures and workshops on subject ranging from community engagement to environmental ethics.

## Selected Academic Awards

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**2010 Commendation, Planning Scholarship, Research or Teaching, PIA National Awards for Excellence**, for three co-authored Earthscan books on community engagement.

**2010 Award for Excellence: Planning Scholarship, Research or Teaching, PIA NSW**, for three co-authored Earthscan books on community engagement.

**2002 Award for Excellence: Planning Scholarship**, PIA Queensland for *Community Participation in Practice: New Directions* (2002), with Beauford Stenberg and Angela Hirst.

**1998 National Award for Excellence: planning scholarship**, Royal Australian Planning Institute, for Ph.D. dissertation on environmental ethics and planning education.

**1997 International finalist, Green Dove Award**, Common Boundary, for Chapter 5 of Ph.D. dissertation, "A Journey to the Ecological Self."

**Fellowship, Scholar in Residence program**, Centre for Women's Studies and Gender Relations, University of British Columbia, Canada.

## Publications

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Wendy Sarkissian (2022). *Creeksong: One Woman Sings the Climate Blues*. Forthcoming, Fall 2022

*Stay Close: How to Heal from Grief and Keep Connected with One Who Has Died*. Napa, California: Fearless Literary. Ebook: <https://amzn.to/2CR6q29>. See [www.stay-close.com](http://www.stay-close.com)

### Earthscan Books on Community Planning, 2008-2010

1. Sarkissian, Wendy and Dianna Hurford with Christine Wenman (2010). ***Creative Community Engagement: Transformative Engagement Methods for Working at the Edge***. London: Earthscan/Routledge.
2. Sarkissian, Wendy with Nancy Hofer, Yollana Shore, Steph Vajda and Cathy Wilkinson (2009). ***Kitchen Table Sustainability: Practical Recipes for Community Engagement with Sustainability***. London: Earthscan/Routledge.
3. Sarkissian, Wendy and Wiwik Bunjamin-Mau with Andrea Cook, Kelvin Walsh and Steph Vajda (2008). ***SpeakOut: The Step-by-Step Guide to SpeakOuts and Community Workshops***. London: Earthscan/Routledge.

### Community Participation in Practice suite of publications, 1994-2003

1. Wendy Sarkissian, Beauford Stenberg and Angela Hirst with Steph Walton (2003). *Community Participation in Practice: New Directions*. Perth: Murdoch University, Institute for Sustainability and Technology Policy.
2. Wendy Sarkissian, Andrea Cook and Kelvin Walsh (1997). *Community Participation in Practice: A Practical Guide*. Perth: Murdoch University, Institute for Sustainability and Technology Policy.

3. Wendy Sarkissian and Kelvin Walsh, eds. (1994). *Community Participation in Practice: Casebook*. Perth: Murdoch University, Institute for Sustainability and Technology Policy.

## Other Major Books

Marcus, Clare Cooper and Wendy Sarkissian (1986). *Housing as If People Mattered: Illustrated Site Planning Guidelines for Medium-Density Family Housing*. Berkeley: University of California. Awarded *Progressive Architecture* Citation for Architectural Research, 1992. Translated into Japanese, 1999. Still in print.

Sarkissian, Wendy and Warwick Heine (1978). *Social Mix: The Bournville Experience*. Birmingham, U.K. and Adelaide: Bournville Village Trust and South Australian Housing Trust.

Sarkissian, Wendy (2020). *Stay Close: How to Heal from Grief and Stay Connected to One Who Has Died*. Ebook. Fearless Literary, Napa, California.

## Chapters in Books

Wendy Sarkissian (2010). "The Beginning of Something': Using Video as a Tool in Community Engagement," in *Multimedia Explorations in Urban Policy and Planning: Beyond the Flatlands*, eds. Leonie Sandercock and Giovanni Attili. Dordrecht: Springer.

Cook, Andrea and Wendy Sarkissian (2000). "Who Cares? Australian Planners and Ethics," in Patrick Bishop and Noel Preston, eds. *Local Government: Public Enterprise and Ethics*. Sydney: Federation Press: 112-137.

Egar, Ruth and Wendy Sarkissian (1985). "Reviewing the Australian Suburban Dream: A Unique Approach to Neighbourhood Change with the Family Support Scheme," in Marilyn Safir *et al.* eds., *Women's Worlds: From the New Scholarship*. New York: Praeger: 270-279.

Sarkissian, Wendy (1989). "Safe as Houses: the Role of Residents and the Community of Users in Environmental Crime Prevention," in Susan Geason and Paul R. Wilson, eds., *Designing Out Crime*. Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology.

Wendy Sarkissian (1986). "The Vitalizing Challenge of Dissonance" and "How the Students Saw It", Chapters 9 and 10 in R. Lifchez, ed., *Rethinking Architecture: Design Students and Physically Disabled People*. Berkeley, California: University of California.

## Book Reviews

Sarkissian, Wendy (2013). "Mixed Communities: Gentrification by Stealth?", *Urban Policy and Research*, published online 17 December 2013.  
<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/08111146.2013.845134#.UrahbLQcXQM>

Sarkissian, Wendy (2010). Review of Lasker and Guidry (2009). *Engaging the Community in Decision Making*, *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, Volume 30, September.

## Articles in Refereed Journals since 1990

Sarkissian, Wendy (2013). "Mixed Communities: Gentrification by Stealth?", *Urban Policy and Research*, published online 17 December 2013.

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/08111146.2013.845134#.UrahbLQcXQM>

Sarkissian, Wendy (2012). "Heartstorming: Putting the Vision back into Community Visioning with Guided Imagery," *Progressive Planning* No. 193, Fall: 19-22.

Sarkissian, Wendy (2007). "Video as a Tool in Community Engagement," *Planning Theory and Practice* 8 (1), March: 98-102.

Sarkissian, Wendy (2005). "Stories in a Park: Giving voice to the voiceless in Eagleby, Australia," *Planning Theory and Practice* 6 (1), March: 103-117.

Forsyth, Ann and Wendy Sarkissian (1994). "Housing for Older Australians: Site-Planning Basics," *Australian Planner* 31(3): 177-183.

Sarkissian, Wendy and Monica Sidhu (1993). "Brown Hills Revisited," and "Vision of a City Where People Matter," *Urban Futures* 3 (3).

Bell, Wendy with Angela Hazebroek and Wendy Sarkissian (1992). "The Role of Urban Design in Crime Prevention," *Australian Planner*, August: 206-210.

Sivaciyan, Sevan and Wendy Sarkissian (1991). "Mixed-Tenure Retirement Housing: Old Age as Leveller?" *Australian Planner*, June: 14-18.

Sarkissian, Wendy, Ann Forsyth and Warwick Heine (1990). "Residential Social Mix: The Debate Continues," *Australian Planner*, March: 5-16.

## Articles in Other Journals

Sarkissian, Wendy (2005) "The Artistry of Community Consultation," *Artwork* 63, December: 27-32.

Sarkissian, Wendy with Graeme Dunstan (2003). "Stories in a Park: reducing crime and stigma through community storytelling," *Urban Design Forum Quarterly* 64, December.

Available at: [http://www.udf.org.au/archives/2004/02/stories\\_in\\_a\\_pa.php](http://www.udf.org.au/archives/2004/02/stories_in_a_pa.php)

## Short stories

Sarkissian, Wendy (1978). "Planning as if Women Mattered: The Story of Brown Hills," *Makara*, Vancouver, Canada, September. Reprinted in Wekerle, Gerda R. ed. (1980), *Signs* 5(3), Supplement: "Women and the American City" (Spring): S188-S214.

Sarkissian, Wendy (1993). "Watching the Fire," *Northern Perspective* 16(2), December: 109-115.

Sarkissian, Wendy (1994). "Counting," *Northern Perspective* 7(1), August: 40-43.