

Northern Suburbs Housing Co-operative Inc. Commemorating 21 years of providing successful housing outcomes

From Dream to Reality - A History of Northern Suburbs Housing Co-operative Inc. 1981 - 2002

*Northern Suburbs Housing Co-operative Inc. is pleased
to announce the publication of its history
from its conception to its coming of age in 2002.*

About the Book

The book is the story of how the co-operative developed over time from its small beginnings into a significant social institution in its local area. It is also the story of the people who have lived in its units, worked for it, or supported it through volunteer or professional effort.

The book was written to perpetuate the co-operative's history, celebrate its achievements and 21st birthday in 2002, record the pioneering work of the co-operative, profile the contributions made by its members and the benefits obtained by being members, to document the unique features of the co-operative and to provide an educational resource for students and others interested in affordable community housing.

About the Author

Dr. David Kilner has a wealth of knowledge and experience having been personally involved in the conception of the co-operative and a number of years dedicated service on the co-operative's Management Committee. David trained as a Social Worker and has worked in aged care, disability support, community health, social housing and the Carers' sector as well as carrying out a wide range of consultancies and training.

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A word from Hugh Stretton

***Reader in Economics at the Adelaide University,
Former Board Member of the Housing Trust of South Australia,
And prominent South Australian***

Mr. Stretton kindly agreed to write the preface for the book *From Dream to Reality - A History of Northern Suburbs Housing Co-operative Inc. 1981 - 2001*. The following words have been extracted from Mr. Stretton's preface.

They provide an invaluable "outsiders" opinion on the evolution of the Northern Suburbs Housing Co-operative Inc.

How can the story of a modest suburban co-op with scarcely two hundred members be *important* to anyone but its members? This one is important for at least three reasons.

It describes a gently civilized way of housing some of the two or three million Australians who can't afford to buy or rent decent houses at market prices.

It explores a shining example of cooperation. Its members determine their membership and housing arrangements. They elect a management committee and employ the few paid staff that they need. And in the course of doing that business they have developed bonds of community, voluntary service and mutual care among people living at thirty seven different suburban locations.

Does that sound like a pleasing change from bureaucratic landlords like the state housing commissions?

The author, Dr. David Kilner's celebration of their achievement brings it alive in a dozen ways. His history of the institution and its changing relations with government is always clear and readable.

But real life keeps breaking in – or breaking out. Readers can see it, hear it, and recognize its best and worst, in Dr Kilner's lively, candid and unsentimental account. Tenants do a lot of their own and one another's maintenance - changing tap and toilet washers, tackling minor plumbing jobs, repairing damaged fly-wire screens on doors and windows, refurbishing clothes lines, re-lighting pilot lights, mending gates, doing minor cement work, fixing minor woodwork problems, checking smoke detectors.

And besides listing those recognizable bits of real life, Dr Kilner writes sensitively about their contributions to friendship, welcome activity, and enjoyment of what could otherwise have been sadly uninteresting, unoccupied, lonely lives.

And he is candid. There are troubles, disagreements, conflicts, sometimes severe. Also - to conclude with a passage the reader will meet early in the book - *"Of course in most ways it's like daily life anywhere. People go about their business, stay in touch with families and friends, talk to neighbours, do the washing and shopping, pursue pastimes and outside interests, and eat meals. The Co-op is not the only thing in life."* Nevertheless many members find that it *"adds a significant new dimension to their lives"*.

Should we be offering that experience to a lot more of the rising number of old, lonely, hard-up Australians? This honest, perceptive, and deeply interesting book can equip its readers to decide that for themselves.

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