



John Hawkins
Senate Select Committee on Housing Affordability in
Australia
Fax: 0262775719

10th April 2008

Dear John

Re: AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN AUSTRALIA

BACKGROUND:

I was a school teacher who became a licensed builder in 1974. I began renovating old homes in country towns in the mid 1960's, began constructing new flats for teachers in these towns and manufacturing transportable factory modular housing to help to resolve remote area housing.

My company built for the N.S.W Housing Dept, the Teacher Housing Authority and the N.S.W Low Cost Housing Initiative.

Today my business and hobby is the development of:

- (A) New land usage models
- (B) New building technology
- (C) New housing models

Ausindustry has supported my company, Aussiebuild 3000 Pty Ltd with grants for this technology over the last 5 years.

I wish to share with you my forty year's experience in this field. I feel we need to use our residential land more effectively and we need to use technology to produce first class affordable housing. I wish to suggest that we:

Re: (A) LAND USE:

Allow a second dwelling to be built on all residential 'A' blocks thus doubling the potential land use without the time delay of producing new blocks of land - more details below in Note A.

BUILDING FOR THE 21st CENTURY

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Re: B BUILDING TECHNOLOGY:

De -- specialise the construction process so that the expensive sequential steps currently used are simplified to the extent that people can build their own houses, under supervision, thus helping themselves to solve their housing crisis- more details below in note 'B'

Re: C NEW HOUSING MODELS:

Again in this area we Australians have shown a very narrow vision in addressing housing that is appropriate for our modern day family.

By designing housing that can be used in a way appropriate to the occupants over their lifetime, much more affordability can be built in. Further details are available from us.

Other Investigation Areas Include:

- (a) Steep Site models
- (b) Backwater inundation, Flood prone land models
- (c) Medium density Town House models
- (d) Inner city narrow block redevelopment
- (e) Small lot individual housing
- (f) Remote area housing
- (g) Commercial and Industrial applications

NOTE A - LAND USE MODELLING

- (1) Allow an additional independent dwelling on all existing Residential A individual lots with the proviso that the new residence be the minor component in a major/minor configuration, be compatible in appearance and not significantly alter the streetscape. This will potentially double the availability of land for the construction of moderate cost housing which can be occupied by the extended family or offered to the open market to assist the rental crisis and family income.

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Other suggestions include:

- (2) Incorporate small lots; say 400m², some using nil lot boundaries as part of the domestic new subdivision mix.
- (3) Increase the proportion of duplex lots to say 20% of total lots in a new subdivision.
- (4) Allow pockets of medium density, adjacent to community facilities and public transport so that low rise, say 3 storeys can provide compact solutions and a mix of housing types.
- (5) Provide to community housing groups a small percentage of lots, across the above model types, in each new subdivision.
- (6) Investigate parcels of government land adjacent to railway stations in our major cities for the construction of low cost medium density projects as joint ventures between governments and private investment under community housing administration.
- (7) Encourage State Government to fund community housing companies e.g. Brisbane Housing Company, who specialise in building inner city medium density housing which have rentals relating to current social welfare incomes.

I have many other more detailed suggestions but offer the above as an introduction to addressing affordability in land usage.

NOTE B – NEW BUILDING TECHNOLOGY

The significant problems of housing construction in Australia include:

- (a) Extensive use of plantation pine timber framing and the inherent white ant problems.
- (b) The sequential nature of a multitude of trades resulting in extensive costs and time delays.
- (c) The reduction in owner builders being able to effectively build for themselves because of the factors in (b) above.

To address these issues, my company, Aussiebuild 3000 P/L have conducted extensive investigations into house modelling and efficient steel usage.

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OUR LATEST DEVELOPMENT IS THE PORTAL STEEL HOUSE.

The most economical way to enclose a building space is to build a series of portal frames and enclose the floor, walls and roof within these frames.

Aussiebuild 3000 P/L uses steel portals, at 3.6m centres, in one, two and three storey domestic buildings.

The bearers, floor joists, ceiling joists and roof battens are all bolted together and the pre made steel wall frames are fitted between the portal uprights.

It is virtually a meccano assembly, it requires no concrete slab (just 9 holes for portal leg footings), it eliminates roof trusses and a two storey three bedroom building can be prepared for roofing in four days.

It is suitable for steep sites, flood prone land, remote area housing etc, etc.

All components are delivered flat pack to site directly from the steel manufacturers who are located in capital cities and major provincial towns.

Costs are extremely economical and the owner builder can conduct most tasks excluding licensed building trades e.g. electrical & plumbing.

Flat pack buildings can be a one bedroom addition, single or two storey houses, three storey town houses, mining houses, aboriginal housing, zown housing etc, etc.

Conclusion - To solve the housing problem we have to be able to help ourselves. A group of four friends could prepare an Aussiebuild portal steel house for roofing in two weekends. Once the roofing is installed the internal trades work and wall sheeting can take place out of the weather.

I hope the above contribution is of interest as I feel that the economical provision of housing will help Australians maintain a living standard that has been brought into question by the current housing situation.

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