



Earthsong Eco-Neighbourhood

Earthsong Eco-Neighbourhood is a 32 home cohousing neighbourhood on 1.29 hectares in the suburb of Ranui, Waitakere City. Cohousing communities are small scale neighbourhoods that combine the autonomy of private dwellings with the advantages of community living. Ownership is by Unit Title, with the title to each dwelling also including a share of the common land and facilities. 24 houses have been completed to date and a flourishing community is in place. The common house will be completed in early 2006 and the final 8 homes are currently under construction.

Located adjacent to the commercial centre of Ranui, residents have easy access to shops, library and community centre, train and buses. Eco-friendly businesses, including offices, shops and a cafe, are planned for the road frontage of the site.



Earthsong has been developed by the cooperative group of prospective residents. This group worked together to produce a comprehensive brief for the architect, William Algie, and were closely involved in the design process. Decisions on all issues of both development and resident management are made by consensus by members of Earthsong.



The common house and associated open space form the 'heart' of the neighbourhood at the focal point of the site, providing a gathering and community place for the residents and supplementing the individual dwellings.

From 2006 the common house will also be known as the Earthsong Centre, a community facility for education on sustainability issues managed by the Earthsong Centre Trust.



- KEYS:
- Rainwater tanks
 - Verandahs
 - Private garden
 - Suburbs
 - Common
 - Pergolas
 - Permeable paving - driver
 - Permeable paving - carparks

Earthsong is predominantly pedestrian, with cars parked at the edges of the site and a network of paths linking homes. Clusters of two-storey attached dwellings are arranged along the common pathways and shared courtyards to facilitate a sense of belonging and identity within the larger neighbourhood.

The dwellings range from one-bedroom studios to four-bedroom houses to accommodate a range of ages and household types. Easy gradients on all paths allow full accessibility to all, and seven single level homes are designed for those less mobile.



All buildings are designed for energy efficiency and natural climate control using passive solar design. They include both rammed earth and timber-framed construction, with coloured concrete floors, macrocarpa joinery and solar water heaters. Building materials and components have been carefully chosen with attention to energy content, toxicity, environmental impact, durability and recyclability.

Rainwater is collected from roof tanks and piped back for use within the houses. All surface water flows into planted swales (shallow dish drains) beside the paths and down to a large stormwater retention pond, reducing total water runoff from the site.

A comprehensive site design includes productive and edible landscaping, native bush and orchard areas, water management areas and composting

