



Earthsong Eco-Neighbourhood

INFORMATION FOR NEW MEMBERS Aug 2010

Are you interested in becoming an Earthsong member? You are invited to attend our meetings, meals, working bees and social events.

This leaflet outlines the membership and management structure of our neighbourhood, our consensus decision making process, and recommended reading.

Membership

Step 1: Begin with a Buddy

An Earthsong member will be appointed to act as your "buddy". This person is assigned to provide information about Earthsong, to answer your questions and to let you know about Earthsong events such as open days, festivals, common meals, working bees, workshops and meetings. We trust that this will be a useful relationship for you. Your buddy should be contacting you once a fortnight or so, but it makes the job easier if you also stay in touch with him/her. In the event of it not working out, simply phone the Membership Co-ordinator, Lippy, ph 09 832 8912 to discuss a replacement buddy.

Step 2: Associate Membership

Associate Membership indicates your willingness to become more involved with Earthsong. This may be as a supporter, or as a step towards becoming a full member and perhaps purchasing a home here. Associate membership entitles you to take part in decision-making at Full Group Meetings where you will be able to

use the coloured card system for discussion and decision making. (See page 3: "Consensus Decision Making".) Your buddy will take you through the process before your first meeting.

Some people choose to stay as Associate Members, whilst others move on to become Full Members.

Pre-requisites for Associate Membership:

- Read the book "*Cohousing*" by McCamant and Durrett
- Read the Initial Organising Agreement and discuss it with your buddy
- Attend at least 2 Full Group meetings as an observer
- Payment of \$100

Readiness for Associate Membership

Please inform your buddy when you are ready to take the step to becoming an Associate Member. He/she will need 7 days' notice to make the necessary arrangements.

You and your buddy will choose the date of the Full Group Meeting where you will be officially welcomed. You will receive your own copy of the

Resource File, as well as a set of our Coloured Cards and a name tag. You pay \$100 and sign the Initial Organizing Agreement making you an Associate Member.

Earthsong runs on the contributions of all members, and it is expected that you will join a focus group. (See Management Structure below)

Step 3: Full Membership

Full Membership denotes a higher level of commitment to Earthsong, and is a pre-requisite to purchasing a house. In the rare event of consensus not being achieved, Full Membership entitles the member to a vote. Payment of the \$2000 membership fee to the treasurer is the only pre-requisite.

Readiness for Full Membership

When you are ready to take this step, advise your buddy or the Membership Coordinator. At the start of the next Full Group meeting you will be officially welcomed as a Full Member.

Earthsong Management Structure

a) Body Corporate

Ownership of units within Earthsong is by Unit Title. All unit proprietors belong to the Earthsong Body Corporate, and pay annual Body Corporate fees to cover agreed common expenses.

b) Cohousing New Zealand Ltd

This is our official non-profit development company, formed in 1999 specifically to undertake the development of Earthsong Eco-Neighbourhood. All Full Members of Earthsong Eco-Neighbourhood are shareholders.

c) Earthsong Centre Trust

The ongoing educational objectives are managed by the Earthsong Centre Trust. Trustees are drawn from both unit owners of Earthsong and the wider community.

d) Earthsong Focus groups

Focus Groups meet regularly and are the powerhouse of the neighbourhood. Becoming involved with a Focus Group gives you the best possible opportunity to get to know other members and the workings of Earthsong. The purpose of the Focus Groups is to research and collate information, discuss issues and formulate proposals to the Full Group, and to carry out tasks once agreement has been reached.

It is a two way democratic process – Focus Groups consult and then report to the Full Group. They have some delegated authority. Major issues are referred to Full Group meetings with supporting information for decision-making. Many members belong to more than one Focus group.

Current Focus Groups include Permaculture Group; Common House Management Group; Membership and Community Life, Site Management Group, Administration and Body Corp, Education Group, Workshop, IT, Legal & Finance; and Design.

Which Focus Group?

We encourage you to join one or more Focus Groups. You are welcome to visit a number of them before deciding which one/s to join. You may like to choose a group

which matches your particular skills and experience, and consider the areas of greatest need of the project. On the other hand, you may like to join a group where you can learn new skills.

Belonging to a specific Focus Group does not limit your sphere of input into other groups as you can assist with other groups' work where time and interest permits. You will also receive copies of all Focus Groups' minutes.

Other Contributions

There are many other ways you can also contribute to the collective wellbeing of our neighbourhood. These include gardening, doing the accounts, occasional professional advice, or working bees.

Consensus Decision-making:

Earthsong meetings use a consensus decision making process which involves the use of coloured cards. You'll find an explanation of this system on the Earthsong website (and talk with your buddy about it). Consensus depends on a solid group culture with strong respect and trust which takes time to develop.

Coming in as a new member of an established group can be challenging. We certainly want it to be as pleasant and satisfying as possible, but remember that settling in can take some time. Do ask for any support you need from

your buddy or others – we have all been through the settling in process as well!

Reading material:

A great deal of useful reading material is contained in our library in the Common house. Important reading is:

- *Cohousing* by McCamant and Durrett – describes the cohousing concept extremely well (this book is required reading before becoming an Associate Member)
- *The project Resource File* – a collection of our most significant documentation. These are in the maroon pocket files (4 sets)
- *Summaries of Past Minutes* – will give you an idea of past discussions and decisions. They are in blue cardboard folders (3 sets)
- *The Cohousing Handbook* by Hansen (1996) – this describes 'how to do Cohousing'

There are many other books, magazines, articles, videos and tapes in the library. Members can borrow books or other material. Prospective members may borrow them through their buddy upon payment of a deposit of \$20. Please make sure you fill in your name and contact details before borrowing anything from the library.

www.earthsong.org.nz

Earthsong Enquiries 09 832 5558