



Introduction

Home is where the hearth is...



...but more than this, home is where our community is, our family, friends and the networks that support and nourish us.

The Urban Coup (the 'Coup') is an initiative of a group of Melbournians who share a vision of creating not just housing, but community.

This document describes that vision.

About Cohousing

What is cohousing?

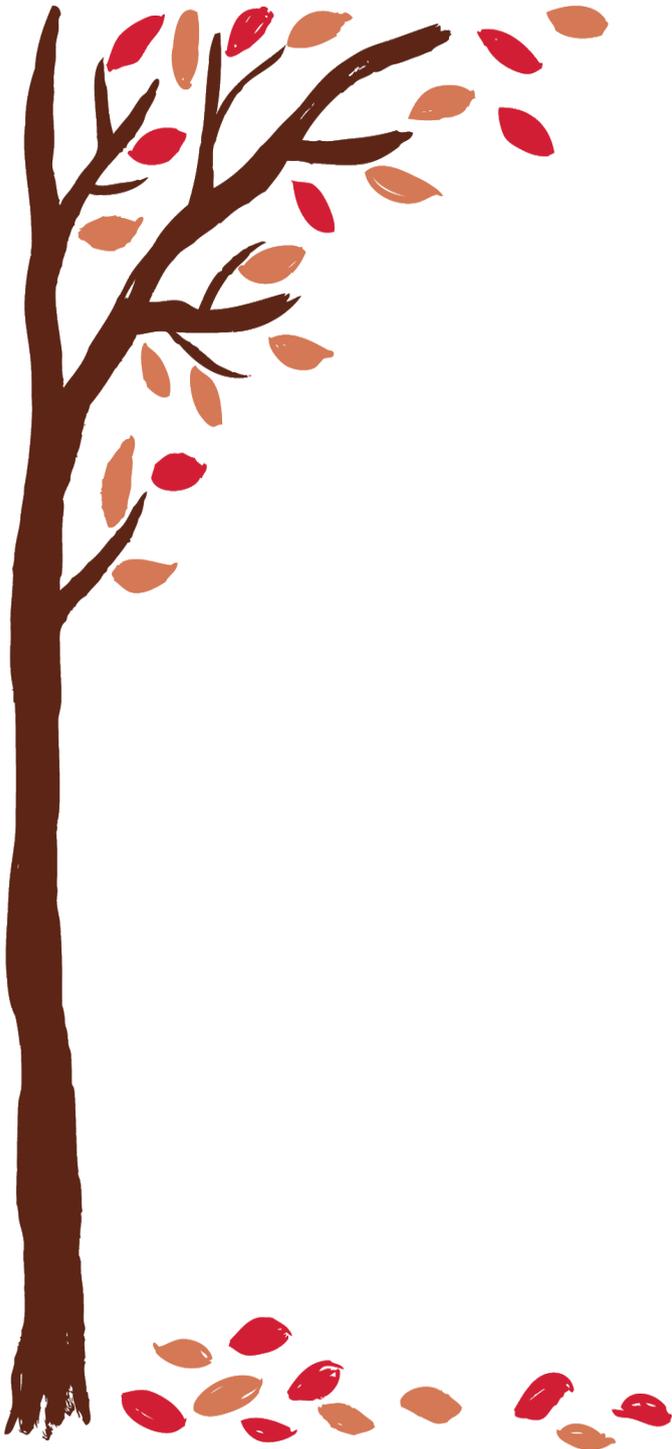
Cohousing allows you to enjoy the privacy of your own home, and yet walk out your back door and be part of a community with which you share a garden, some common facilities and a regular meal. For three decades cohousing has been growing worldwide.

Some of these cohousing communities emerge gradually; some result from the renovation of existing buildings; and some are purpose built. They have been built in inner-city, suburban and rural locations for and by very diverse communities. They feature 'common areas'; spaces where meals can be shared and where the community has its regular get-togethers. Cohousing residents sometimes share laundry facilities, garden tools and other household items, and their communities provide a safe place for kids to play together. With residents having their own fully self-contained homes, a good balance is achieved between community living and privacy.

Australia has a number of intentional communities: in Adelaide, Hobart, Melbourne and regional Victoria, and Perth. In Denmark, where cohousing was pioneered in the 1970s, there are hundreds of cohousing communities. Cohousing has also been growing in the UK, Canada, New Zealand and USA, so there are plenty of examples of successful communities to learn from.

For more information:

<http://www.urbancoup.org/documents-and-links>



About US

What is Urban Coup?

At a meeting in March 2008 a group of like-minded folk gathered to discuss what living in such a community would be like. The group found they had a lot in common and decided to work together to build a new cohousing community.

Strong friendships have developed, and since the inaugural meeting we have drafted a constitution, as well as a number of important policies (which guide decision making, conflict resolution, communication, and joining and leaving). We hold regular working meetings and social events, and have hosted visits and consultations with members of other cohousing communities, developers, and advocates of cohousing. In June 2010 we became an incorporated body. Coup members include healthcare professionals, teachers, welfare sector

workers, artists, architects, urban planners: all informed by a strong environmental ethic. The experience of intentional communities in Australia and overseas suggests that the optimum number of households is 30, and this is our target.

And the name? No, 'Coup' is not a spelling mistake. The name reflects our desire to be part of a positive change (a coup if you will). We want to differentiate ourselves from cooperatives (co-ops); a concept which has a very different ownership structure than that which we intend to use.



The Coup is a way of fostering community spirit and helping the planet. Building cohousing in urban areas is our response to a culture that puts tremendous strain on natural resources, promotes urban sprawl, and erodes community spirit.

Our aim is to establish a cohousing community featuring:

- *Around 24 to 30 privately owned dwellings that can be bought and sold on the open market like a conventional house or apartment, and each with its own private balcony or courtyard, kitchen and living areas.*
- *Community ownership of the common facilities, to be managed by us, the community.*
- *Common areas and facilities that we all share. This is a place where the community can meet regularly for meals, meetings, socialising and for other activities and special events. Specific spaces envisioned include: large dining and kitchen area, music room, children's play space, workshop, common laundry and guest rooms.*
- *Shared community open space – perhaps a rooftop garden in the near and tall model or a mixed leisure and productive garden in the far and wide model – somewhere that encourages community interaction and the occasional BBQ.*
- *Family-friendly design which caters for the needs of people of all ages and abilities.*
- *Medium-high density design comprising townhouses or apartments reaching a height of up to six storeys.*
- *Eco-sensitive homes designed to maximise energy efficiency and that include passive solar design, onsite water collection and reuse, and building design to promote natural ventilation.*
- *A mix of accessible 1, 2, 3 and 4 bedroom homes that will cater for the changing needs of residents as they pass through the life stages.*
- *A mutual respect for individual privacy and ownership while emphasising social relationships.*
- *A small ecological footprint achieved by sustainable building design, higher density living and the efficient use of resources.*

Importantly, we are looking to create a model for the broader community of a sustainable and socially responsible form of urban design.



Our Vision, Mission & Values

Our vision

The Urban Coup will be a resilient, positive, and diverse community that contributes to a healthier world and one that enriches its residents' lives.

To bring our vision to reality we will:

- Utilise our values to realise the physical, economic and social structure of the community.
- Celebrate both individuality and community, and regard our collective strength to be greater than the sum of individual contributions.
- Seek to consolidate resources for the benefit of our community and the planet.
- Respect each other's opinions, needs and boundaries.
- Regularly share food and meals together.
- Acknowledge that our community, individual lives, and even values will undergo change during our journey. We intend to be resilient and accommodate such change.
- Recognise that conflict will occur. We commit to resolve conflict in an open and respectful manner, in an environment free of blame, and by utilising the consensus approaches outlined in the Urban Coup's Rules and associated policies.
- Make every effort to follow through on the commitments we make individually and as a group to ensure that our timelines are met.
- Be open to amending our Rules and policies so they reflect the changing needs of our community.
- Recognise and respect the sovereignty of First Nations in Australia. Engage with the Traditional Owners of any Urban Coup site(s) to develop agreed actions in alignment with this recognition.

Our values are based on mutual respect and this is enhanced by:

- Creating a welcoming environment for people visiting our community.
- Nurturing the uniqueness of our home and community.
- Living sustainably within the limits of what the earth provides.
- Creating a home that will be a rich hub of creativity.
- Committing to justice and equity.
- Creating a living environment that is safe and secure.
- Documenting our journey for the benefit of ourselves and others.
- Developing a way of life that balances privacy and community
- Valuing green space, including vegetable gardens.
- Acknowledging the need for compromise.
- Acting in solidarity with Traditional Owners (and other Aboriginal groups as appropriate).

Where we want to live

Two projects underway

Near & Tall: A high density apartment development close to the CBD. This project is at an advanced stage with partner architects and a development manager engaged. It is currently seeking participants as either owner / occupiers or investors/

Far & Wide: A lower density garden-set development in the middle to outer suburbs. The project is in an earlier stage and seeking participants to further develop the plan.

Three main criteria will determine our site selection:

- The time taken to reach the CBD by public transport: less than 30 minutes for near and tall and 60 minutes for far and wide (includes walk to transport).
- There must be local amenities, such as shops, within 1 km. Given the cost of land required, the most likely sites will be in the former industrial suburbs of the inner north and west.
- Recent survey completed by near and tall members suggests a location in the Darebin, Moreland and Yarra councils.
- Recent survey completed by far and wide members suggests the main rail routes of Heidelberg, Lilydale and Belgrave, as far as Ferntree Gully are most popular.

How we make decisions

Many important decisions will need to be made throughout the entire life of the Coup. For significant decisions the Coup is committed to a *modified consensus* model. This was adopted following a thorough research and consultative process.

A key element of the modified consensus model is a commitment to work together until a decision is reached that everyone can agree to. The model ensures that members are informed before they are asked to give their preference for a decision. In the event that consensus of all members cannot be reached after two attempts, decisions may fall to 75% majority vote by household.

What if there is conflict?

The Coup recognises that not everyone will get along all the time and that conflict may arise. To help us deal with conflict in an open and transparent manner, the Coup uses a conflict resolution procedure. This procedure is specified in our Conflict Resolution Guidelines document, which is part of our Rules.

Joining: The principles that underpin our approach to membership

Our aim is to create a vibrant community consisting of a broad range of people. Diversity is one of our key goals. Diversity includes different family types, age groups, economic status, cultural backgrounds, and sexual orientations.

Unit holders are self-selecting, that is, the Urban Coup Inc. does not vet them prior to their joining. New unit holders will be processed as soon as practicable. All new unit holders – and additional householders – are expected to acknowledge the legitimacy of decisions made prior to their joining the Urban Coup Inc. Once the new unit holder has paid the specified fees they, and the nominated members, are entitled to attend meetings, partake in decision making activities and access the Urban Coup Inc. members' website.

Joining fees

Whilst much of the work required for the realisation of the Coup has been and will continue to be undertaken gratis by members, there are still numerous expenses that will be incurred. These costs include hiring venues and facilitators, as well as planning, consultant and legal fees. Such costs are anticipated before the Coup enters a contract to purchase a property or to construct dwellings. For these reasons the Coup adopts a structure with two membership types.

Full Membership joining fee: \$950 (one-off)

Payment of this fees will entitle the unit holder to one share of the Coup. The fee will help carry forward the work already undertaken and fund a feasibility study and other important consultations leading up to land purchase. Additional fees will be determined by the

membership as a whole to cover expenses that will be incurred, and these will be distributed evenly across the membership. These fees are non-refundable.

Provisional Membership joining fee: \$200

Provisional membership provides limited access to meetings and social events to those who would like to observe our group while weighing up their options. Membership at this level lasts one year. You can then decide whether to upgrade to full membership, with a one-off fee of \$750 (you will be required to complete a new Urban Coup application form).

Dwelling selection process

There will be a formal process that determines the relative priority given to full members for selection of dwellings in a development, based upon the member joining date (as a full member).

Provisional members cannot participate in any dwelling selection process.

Prospective members list

The experience of other cohousing initiatives suggests we can anticipate a membership attrition rate of up to 50%. For this reason, we maintain a list of prospective members/supporters.

Once we have enough full members, i.e. the number reaches the number of dwellings available, any additional applicant may apply to become a provisional member.

Who gets first choice to join?

Membership will be accepted in the order in which applications and joining fees are received.

What are my obligations?

Own the vision.

As a new member of the Coup, the expectation is that you will respect and support the Coup's aforementioned Vision, Mission and Values.

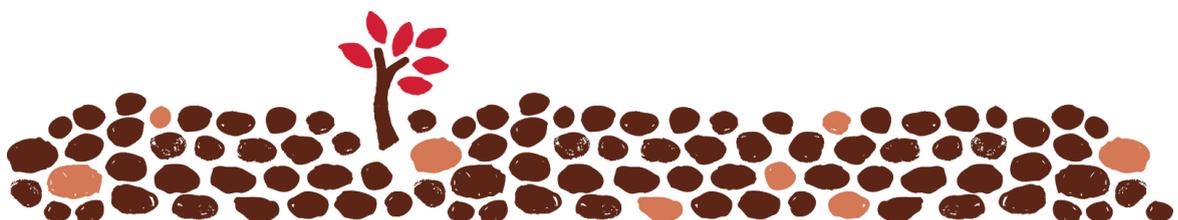
Actively contribute

Your second obligation is to actively contribute to the Coup. This will include attending the meetings and helping manage the Coup. This may involve taking minutes, facilitating meetings, or joining one or more working groups. This means each member will have a share of the workload.

A key feature of most cohousing communities is regular social events, for example preparing and eating a meal together. We look forward to sharing these experiences and getting to know you. The expectation is that each member and resident of the Coup makes a regular contribution. However, there is no expectation that members will participate in every meeting and event. Many of us have busy lives and can't always contribute as much as we would like.

Contribute financially

In addition to the joining fee, there may be other financial contributions at specific milestones. Obviously, after move-in, we expect there will be owners corporation fees, as well as costs related to community events and activities.



Does this appeal to you?

The Coup will not appeal to everyone. You may find the following exercise helpful as you ponder your decision. If you answer 'yes' to the following questions you are likely to be an ideal candidate.

Do I want to live in a community that prioritises a low ecological footprint and actively seeks to learn new ways of reducing their negative impacts and increasing their positive impacts?

Do I want to live in a community that uses good and efficient building design and shared learning to save time, money and resources?

Do I want to live in a supportive, vibrant community where everyone knows their neighbour?

Do I want to live in a place where I regularly share meals, the occasional drink and other social activities with other people in the community?

Do I have an open mind? Do I respect people's right to their own opinions even if they are different from my own?

Do I want to live in a community that is safe?

Would I welcome neighbours dropping in to borrow a cup of sugar or for a chat from time to time?

If I was concerned about something my neighbour was doing, would I be prepared to seek them out and discuss the problem with them?

Would I value the companionship, support and advice of other people in the community even though it may be uninvited?

Would I value sharing open space with neighbours?

Do I think it is fair and reasonable to respect my neighbour's right to privacy, wellbeing, and peaceful surrounds?



Why join now?

A key benefit is the opportunity to play a part in shaping how the Coup will look; its design, where it will be located, and the environmental initiatives it will adopt. You will benefit from our accumulated knowledge, and work accomplished to date. You will also benefit from building relationships and being part of a community.

By joining you can:

Respond to global issues

The Coup is one response to the widespread concern that community spirit has become a neglected aspect of new residential developments. Cohousing projects like the Coup address this problem at the grassroots level by creating strong and supportive communities. Cohousing communities aim to have a lower environmental impact than conventional developments. They are achieving real improvements through environmentally sustainable design, sharing material goods and conserving finite resources. Likewise, the Coup will strive to achieve a low environmental footprint.

Be a part of a pioneering group

Cohousing is a new initiative for Melbourne. By being part of the Coup you will be at the forefront of thinking in Australia about how to create vibrant new communities.

Learn new skills

The Coup is a truly bottom-up development process. We are all gaining new knowledge, learning about environmental initiatives, conflict resolution, development hurdles, and consensus decision-making.

Questions and answers

What will this cost me?

The next steps of our planning will tell us more about the building and the final development costs. From similar developments we know that buying a property in the Coup will be like buying any inner-suburban property in Melbourne. While there are financial savings to be made in the model we are proposing, we are also anticipating having quality, architect-designed dwellings that provide comfortable and enjoyable living conditions. This means that the community will not be cheap to buy into. However we do expect ongoing living expenses

will be less than those in a comparable conventional development because of access to shared resources and clever, resource-efficient design. The advantage of becoming a part of the Coup is that you will be joining a community you have helped to design and create, as well as getting to know the people you will live with. These features are difficult to come by in the open market.

Who gets first choice of a dwelling?

Dwellings will be allocated according to the order that applications for full membership are received. This follows our Dwelling List Policy.

What if I want to rent?

The Coup does not formally screen members' intentions to occupy or invest, although we anticipate that investors will subscribe to the Coup's values.

What if I have special needs?

The Coup will need to resolve issues such as: how to best cater for those with special needs (access requirements, home care, allergies etc.). This is an important issue that is discussed regularly and that will feature prominently in the final planning and design stages. The Coup will endeavour to meet the needs of all its residents.

What happens if I change my mind and I want to leave?

If you decide you want to leave the Coup you are required to give written notice advising of your decision. Please note that the initial joining fee is non-refundable.

What happens if I wish to take a short-term leave of absence?

There may be many reasons why you cannot maintain a constant involvement in the Coup (e.g. a temporary interstate or overseas posting). If you need to take leave of absence, we would request you notify the secretary and nominate a proxy whom we can contact if we are unable to contact you. If you take a leave of absence you will still be responsible for any financial dues payable.

Can I sell my position in the group?

As per our current Rules, memberships are not transferable.

Can I be kicked out?

No provision is made in our current Rules for eviction from the community. However, there is provision for expulsion from the incorporated body (Rule 12.2.b.iii). The expectation is that if you are in conflict, or acting in a way that is at odds with the Vision, Mission and Values of the Coup, you are obliged to abide by the Conflict Resolution Process, as well as the rules set out in the Rules. If problems are irreconcilable we trust you will decide that the Coup is perhaps not for you.

How do we make decisions?

As mentioned, the Urban Coup uses a modified consensus model.

We have different categories of decision making that require different levels of input from members. These categories include Major, Important and Minor. For example, a major decision is one that will significantly affect the running of the Coup and therefore needs the input or at least agreement of all members. On the other hand, a minor decision will not significantly affect the running of the coup, or is related to the implementation of a previous major decision, and so may be made by a working group or individual.

For more information, visit our website:

www.urbancoup.org



Near & Tall

Design

- A high-density development of approx. 25 households with a mixture of 1, 2, 3 and 4 bedroom apartments.
- Common spaces (both indoor and outdoor) where the community can share meals, meet, socialise and also have other activities and special events. This includes a dining and kitchen area, common laundry, rooftop garden, multi-purpose spaces (e.g. music room, workshop, art and craft room) and guest rooms.
- Sustainable building design, higher density living and the efficient use of resources.
- Maximisation of energy efficiency, including passive solar design, double-glazing, onsite water collection and reuse.
- Reduced car park spaces, share cars and bike parking areas.
- Bike and car parking options that are suitable for the site and our budget.
- Fossil fuel free and incorporating renewable energy generation.
- Thermally efficient (aiming for an average of 8 stars on NatHERS) and incorporating sustainable and recycled materials.

Location search

24 - 26 Hope street, Brunswick East

Anticipated size & cost

- 1 bed – size between 45 and 55 m², price \$425,000 to \$460,000.
- 2 bed – size between 65 and 75 m², price \$560,000 to \$620,000.
- 3 bed – size between 80 and 95 m², price \$670,000 to \$785,000.
- Car parks – unsure about cost and availability at the moment.

Current activities

- Planning Permission achieved in January 2019.
- Expect to begin building in July 2019.
- Proposed finalisation in July 2021.

Far & Wide

Design

- Up to 20 households mixing 1, 2 and 3 bedroom homes, in freestanding or townhouse style (or a mixture), integrated into an open, human-scale and permeable site, with a mix of private and shared open space (including productive gardens and a chook house).
- One or more common buildings where the community can share meals, meet, socialise and use for other activities and special events, including a dining and kitchen area, shared spaces (music room, workshop, art and craft room, etc.), shared laundry and guest accommodation.
- Sustainable building design and materials, small house design, common infrastructure and the efficient use of resources, including consideration of whole-of-life building costs.
- Maximisation of energy efficiency, including passive solar design, double-glazing, onsite power generation, water collection and reuse.
- Landscape that enhances the community through integrating social and productive spaces. Use of sustainable gardening techniques that maximise re-use of water and waste.
- Reduced car park spaces (on the edge of the site), share car facilities and bike parking.

Preferred location

- Within the Melbourne metro area.
- Within a 15-minute walk of a train station.
- Within a 10-minute walk to local amenities.

Estimated size & cost

- Homes up to 120 m², with an anticipated price range of between \$400k and \$700k.

Current activities

- Firming up options for how the project is to be financed.
- Modelling in more detail the costs base for the project (including more definitive dwelling costs).
- Launching a site search to narrow options based on preferences for location, land size, proximity to transport etc.
- Firming up members for seed funding.
- Recruiting community members for the journey of development ahead.
- Social saunters to experience possible locations and amenities.

Urban Coup Application Form

MEMBERSHIP TYPE AND INTEREST (please tick the desired type)

MEMBERSHIP

\$950

\$750 for provisional members who are upgrading

- Full participation in all meetings, policy development, decision-making, dwelling list process, social events, workshops and access to members' website.
- Status as a 'household unit holder' and a place on a list of those eligible for a dwelling in the Urban Coup development. Note: full membership does not guarantee resident status, due to unknown particulars of the site and design.

PROVISIONAL MEMBERSHIP

\$200

- Attendance at regular meetings and access to members' website.
- Invitation to all social events and skills workshops.

My interest is mainly in the Near and Tall Project

My interest is mainly in the Far and Wide Project

Before requesting to join the Urban Coup Inc., please tick the boxes alongside these questions to indicate your agreement:

- Have you, and those whom you name, below read the Introduction to Urban Coup and the Joining and Leaving Policy?
- Will you, and those whom you name below, agree with and support our Vision, Mission and Values?
- Are you interested in buying into a community where you own your home, share ownership of private open space with your neighbours, and share ownership of common facilities?
- Will you, and those whom you name below, actively contribute to the community by participating both at the decision making level, and also with working groups and associated responsibilities?
- Will you, and those whom you name below, embrace facilitation and conflict resolution as a means of resolving important values between neighbours?
- Will you, and those whom you name below, respond in a timely manner to internal communications?
- Do you, and those whom you name below, agree to pay a regular owners' corporation fee levied to assist with the maintenance and governance of the community?
- Have you, and those whom you name below, read the Rules and the Decision Making Policy (available on our Website - Resources), understand and sought for clarifications (if needed) about the conditions and obligations outlined in each?
- Do you accept that your membership joining fee is non-refundable?
- Will you be able to access funds to buy your own dwelling?

Consult the Treasurer and/or Secretary for the appropriate means of payment.

I (Payee's Name)

Address

Contact number (h)

(m)

(w)

Email address

For Full Membership applicants: provide names of all of those with whom you intend to share the dwelling. If you wish these to have members separate user accounts for access to the member's website, please specify an email address for each.

Name

Email

Phone

Name

Email

Phone

Name

Email

Phone

Signed

Date

/ /

RETURN TO: The Secretary at secretary@urbancoup.org