



Robin Allison *Developing sustainable community*

• inspiration • consultation • facilitation • project management

Robin Allison

Bachelor of Architecture

Earthsong Eco-Neighbourhood
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CURRICULUM VITAE

PROFILE

Founder, driver, and development coordinator of Earthsong Eco-Neighbourhood, the innovative community-led housing development of 32 homes and common facilities in the suburb of Ranui, Auckland, New Zealand.

Educator, writer, and presenter on environmentally and socially sustainable community-led housing. Catalyst of the growing cohousing movement in Aotearoa, and consultant and mentor to cohousing groups nation-wide. Architecture background includes a range of experience in domestic and community design and project management.

PERSONAL SKILLS AND QUALITIES

- Ability to lead and inspire, as well as work collaboratively in a team
- Ability to initiate projects, coordinate throughout their life cycle, and bring to a successful completion
- Visionary and practical, strategic and inclusive
- Highly organised and focused
- Excellent written and oral communication skills
- Interpersonal and group skills

CAREER SUMMARY

SELF-EMPLOYED COHOUSING CONSULTANT

2008 – 2020

Seminars, lectures and workshops on community-led housing development and governance, eco-building, and sustainable urban design to national and international groups and organisations including universities, iwi and Māori Urban Authorities, professional bodies, local authorities and community groups.

Author of the book “Cohousing for Life: A Practical and Personal Story of Earthsong Eco-Neighbourhood”, to be published in August 2020. Other writing includes journal articles, book contributions and extensive material on the Earthsong website.

Consultant, guide, and mentor to cohousing groups throughout Aotearoa.

DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR, EARTHSONG ECO-NEIGHBOURHOOD

1999 – 2008

In 1995 Robin initiated the cohousing project that became known as Earthsong Eco-Neighbourhood. She worked for four years in a voluntary capacity as the group formed and developed group communication and decision-making agreements, established the legal and financial framework, developed site and financial feasibilities, formulated the detailed design brief, and did considerable research into eco-architecture and development.

From mid-1999 she was employed by Cohousing New Zealand Ltd, Earthsong’s development company, to oversee and coordinate the development and construction phase. As the driver of the project, her work included coordinating the extensive input of the group of future residents; managing contracts, budgets and regulatory requirements; liaising with consultants, Council and builders; and detailed oversight of the construction. Construction was staged over eight years and completed in mid-2008.

NOW HOUSE, NEW LYNN

2003 – 2005

Construction Project Manager and member of the design team for this research house by Beacon Pathway, designed as a ‘standard’ New Zealand house, but using best-practise sustainable design that could be easily replicated by mainstream New Zealanders. Extensive monitoring during two years of occupation showed that energy performance and passive comfort levels could be considerably improved for little cost in all new houses.

PRIVATE PRACTISE

1992 - 1999

Architect in private practise designing a range of residential and community projects, both new buildings and alterations, based on the principles of environmentally conscious building design and materials.

PART-TIME LECTURER

1993 - 1994

Taught a compulsory Fourth Year paper in Thermal Environment and passive solar design at the University of Auckland School of Architecture.

HOUSING CORPORATION NZ

1990-1992

Graduate Architect with the Design Consultancy Group of the Housing Corporation of NZ. Responsible for design, detailing, tendering, and observation of construction for multi-unit rental housing developments, including designing units to suit the specific needs of disabled tenants, and writing guidelines on disabled and mobility housing, environmental aspects, and culturally-appropriate housing for HCNZ design codes.

Held a range of architectural positions while child-raising.

1987 – 1990

PUBLICATIONS AND MEDIA

Publications and Awards:

- *“Cohousing for Life: A Practical and Personal Story of Earthsong Eco-Neighbourhood”* by Robin Allison, Mary Egan Publishing, to be published in August 2020.
- *“Good Neighbours with Earth: Using Natural Building Materials in Community-Scale Construction”*. Article by Robin Allison for Communities Magazine, Summer 2018. Re-published in *“Wisdom of Communities, Volume 4: Sustainability in Community”* by the Fellowship for Intentional Community, Rutledge, Missouri, USA, 2018.
- *“Earthsong Eco-Neighbourhood: Rebuilding Community Within the City”*. Article by Robin Allison for Communities Magazine, Fall 2012. Re-published in *“Wisdom of Communities, Volume 1: Starting a Community”* by the Fellowship for Intentional Community, Rutledge, Missouri, USA, 2018.
- *“Rebuilding Connection - Community and Sustainability”*, Article by Robin Allison on Community, Earthsong and China on the Cuppa Tea Blog, Dec 2013. <https://www.brct.org.nz/cuppa-tea/>
- Author of website of Earthsong Eco-Neighbourhood, 2010. See www.earthsong.org.nz
- Author of submissions to the World Habitat Awards 2009 and the UN Habitat Awards 2009. Earthsong Eco-Neighbourhood was a finalist in both. See <https://www.earthsong.org.nz/about/articles-and-awards>
- *“Sustainable Town Centres and Communities”*. Research Report by Robin Allison for Winston Churchill Fellowship, 2008.

- Author of chapter on Ecovillages and case study of Earthsong Eco-Neighbourhood in *“A Deeper Shade of Green: Sustainable Urban Development, Building and Architecture in New Zealand”*, edited by Johann Bernhardt, Balasoglou Books, Auckland, 2008.
- Social Entrepreneur Grant from Community Employment Grants Scheme of Department of Labour in 2003 to research and collate the history, development processes and key learnings of Earthsong Eco-Neighbourhood in the wider context of sustainable building and community development.
- Please see also: <https://www.earthsong.org.nz/about/articles-and-awards>

Publications by Others:

- *“Robin Allison: For Earth and Neighbourhood”*, chapter in *“How Communities Heal – Stories of Social Innovation and Social Change”* by Vivian Hutchinson, 2012. Chapter available for download at <http://tinyurl.com/hchallison>
- Case study on Earthsong in *“Pocket Neighborhoods: Creating Small-Scale Community in a Large-Scale World”* by Ross Chapin, Taunton Press, USA, 2011.
- Chapter on Earthsong Eco-Neighbourhood in *“Sustainable Community: Learning from the Cohousing Model”* by Graham Meltzer, Trafford, Canada, 2005.

Conference Presentations:

- *“For Earth and Neighbourhood: Using natural building materials in community-scale construction”*. Paper presented to USA Cohousing Conference, Nashville, USA, 29th May 2017
- *“Community Scale Construction: Issues and Challenges for Natural Building”*. Paper presented to International Strawbale Conference, Methven, New Zealand, 5th March 2016
- *“Earthsong Eco-Neighbourhood – Cohousing and Sustainability”*. Paper presented to NZ Institute of Architects Conference on Houses and Housing in May 2003.
- *“Cohousing – A New Neighbourhood Model”*. Paper presented to NZ Institute of Architects Conference, February 2000.
- *“An Eco-Neighbourhood in Waitakere City”*. Paper presented to EAROPH World Planning Congress, Auckland 1996.
- *“State Rental Housing: The Poor Cousin in Passive Solar Design?”* Paper presented to Passive and Low Energy Architecture Conference, Auckland 1992.

Media Appearances:

Numerous. Please see:

- <https://www.earthsong.org.nz/resources/film-video>
- <https://www.earthsong.org.nz/resources/audio>

PERSONAL PROFILE

Date of Birth: 19th December 1954

Family: Married to Amanda Garland. Two adult sons and two grandsons.

Qualifications:

- B. Architecture from University of Auckland School of Architecture 1986
- Certificate of Permaculture Design 1994
- Zenergy Facilitation Stage II 1994
- Certificate in Building Biology and Ecology 1999
- BRANZ Green Home Assessor 1999
- Transition Town Trainer 2009
- Foundation Year in Psychosynthesis 2010

Memberships and Involvements:

- Director of Walk to Work Eco-Developments Limited, planning eco-commercial premises on the road-frontage of Earthsong.
- Co-founder and Trustee of YIMFY – Yes! In My Front Yard, Centre for Natural Building Technology. (The website at www.yimfy.org.nz is currently under reconstruction).
- Director of Cohousing New Zealand Ltd, Earthsong's development entity, from 1999 to 2014.
- Fellow of the New Zealand Social Entrepreneur Fellowship 2006 - 2012.
- Chairperson of Earthsong Centre Trust, a charitable educational trust focussed on sustainability and community education, 2010 - 2011.
- Trustee of Heart Politics, a community network and biannual gathering that supports and promotes positive social change and sustainability, 2002 - 2009.
- Chairperson of Solar Action, New Zealand Branch of the Australia and New Zealand Solar Energy Society (ANZSES) 1992 – 94.