

# Living and Sustainability: An Environmental Critique of Design and Building Practices, Locally and Globally

## 1. Paper / Proposal Title:

Sustainability, masterplanning and the third age: Exploring older residents' contribution to sustainable communities in the Sydney metropolitan area

## 2. Format:

Written paper

## 3. Author(s) Name:

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## 5. Abstract (300 words):

A number of scholars have started to call for more attention to be paid to notions of 'productive' or 'active' ageing in relation to social policy formation (Hank 2011; Walker and Maltby 2012). Out of this, researchers are starting to look at the potential contribution older citizens (or citizens in their 'third' age of life) can make to civil society at the community level (e.g. WISERD Civil Society's ongoing ESRC-funded '[Social and Cultural Capital in later life](#)' work package). At the same time, there is a burgeoning literature concerned with sustainable living practices at the household scale (Lane and

Gorman-Murray 2011; Gibson et al. 2013) and specifically with the ways that children and young people's live with 'sustainable architectures' at the planned neighbourhood scale (Hadfield-Hill 2013; Horton et al. 2015). There is a lack, however, of empirical case studies exploring the ways that older residents engage with such architectures and the civil society initiatives they are involved with that may help foster (directly or indirectly) sustainable communities.

Drawing on qualitative (interview, focus group and observation) data, this paper seeks to partially address this gap in the literature by exploring the role of older residents of masterplanned neighbourhoods in instituting, encouraging, practising and making the case for community activities and initiatives that have a bearing on sustainable living. This data was collected in two recently delivered masterplanned developments in the Sydney metropolitan area, one in inner- and one in outer-Sydney, and one of which comprises dedicated housing provision for older people. Notwithstanding similarities and contrasts between the contributions of older residents to fostering sustainable communities in these two settings, which will be explored, the paper argues that promoting multi-generational occupancy of residential areas may have positive impacts for effective and lasting sustainability-related behaviour change.

#### **6. Author(s) Biography (200 words each):**

Alasdair Jones is an Assistant Professor in Qualitative Research Methodology at the LSE's Department of Methodology and an Associate at LSE Cities. He is a qualitative researcher with a background in urban sociology. Prior to LSE, Alasdair worked in research positions at the University of Hertfordshire ('Centre for Sustainable Communities'), the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine ('Transport and Health' group) and the Royal Society for the Arts ('Connected Communities' programme). He has also held a Visiting Fellowship at the City Futures Research Centre, UNSW, and a Fulbright Visiting Scholarship at the Center for Ethnographic Research, UC Berkeley.

Alasdair's research interests broadly concern the relationship between built form and social practices in cities, and his research to date has centered on public space, public transport, urban citizenship and sustainable living practices. This includes an ethnographic monograph on the socio-spatial production of urban public space on London's 'South Bank' during the ongoing physical transformation of that area. Alasdair's most recent research concerns the ways that residents use and perceive environmentally sustainable design interventions in masterplanned developments. This research draws on fieldwork conducted in two masterplanned developments in the Sydney metropolitan area.