



**GEN AUSTRALIA**  
GLOBAL  
ECOVILLAGE  
NETWORK

**June 2026**

Productivity Commission  
Housing Supply Regulation Inquiry

Dear Commissioners,

**Global Ecovillage Network Australia (GEN Australia)**  
**Submission to the Productivity Commission – Housing Supply Regulation Inquiry**

## **1. Introduction**

Global Ecovillage Network Australia (GEN Australia) welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Productivity Commission's Housing Supply Regulation Inquiry.

GEN Australia – is a network of ecovillages, indigenous communities, intentional communities, eco-projects, co-housing communities, transition initiatives, like-minded individuals and value aligned organisations in Australia. Ecovillages weave together the four areas of regeneration – social, culture, ecology and economy, integrating into whole systems design, and pioneer innovative solutions that enable communities, regions and states to fulfil the promise of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Climate Agreements.

GEN builds bridges between policy-makers, governments, NGOs, academics, entrepreneurs, activists, community networks and ecologically minded individuals across the globe to develop strategies for a global transition to resilient communities and cultures. Internationally, the Global Ecovillage Network holds UN consultative status and demonstrates measurable contributions to climate resilience, biodiversity recovery and carbon drawdown, highlighting the broader public value of community-led regenerative settlements.

GEN Australia has contributed to global research on community resilience in collaboration with the Stockholm Resilience Centre and supported the Indigenous Jumbun community by sharing ecovillage design tools and assisting their regenerative transition efforts.

GEN's extensive involvement in research, including:

- [International Ecovillage Research Institute: Transforming Research for a Nature-Centric World](#)
- [Ecovillages as Incubators for Sustainability Transitions \(EVIST\). University of Basel](#)
- [GEN Ecovillage Impact Assessment](#)
- [GEN Resilience Project in collaboration with the Stockholm Resilience Centre](#)
- [GEN Community Resilience Tracker](#)

GEN Australia recognises the need for a national peak body to coordinate knowledge, advocate for reform and support existing and emerging communities. The Australian Eco-Living Organisations Network (AEON) has undertaken substantial work identifying these systemic barriers and is proposing coherent sector-wide solutions. GEN Australia endorses AEON's submission and the reform directions they outline. AEON's analysis aligns closely with the lived experience of communities within our network, and GEN Australia affirms AEON's development as the national peak body needed to enable cooperative and regenerative housing to flourish.

## **2. The Need for Broader Housing Typologies**

Australia's housing challenges cannot be solved by supply alone if the dominant models continue to produce social isolation, ecological degradation, car dependence and infrastructure pressure. We need a broader understanding of housing as social, ecological and civic infrastructure. Cooperative and regenerative housing models can help meet this need by creating neighbourhood-scale solutions that combine homes with shared resources, community governance, land stewardship, local food systems, renewable energy, water-sensitive design and mutual support.

These models provide evidence-based pathways to more resilient, affordable and sustainable housing.

## **3. The Role of a National Peak Body**

A national peak body is essential to coordinate knowledge, support existing and emerging communities, provide a unified voice to government and develop shared governance, planning and financing tools, enabling governments, regulators, planners, financiers and communities to better understand the opportunities, barriers and policy settings required for these models to scale.

AEON has already begun this work, and GEN Australia endorses AEON's development as the national peak body needed to enable cooperative and regenerative housing to flourish.

#### **4. Systemic Barriers Identified Across the Sector**

GEN Australia supports AEON's analysis, which identifies recurring barriers:

- unclear and inconsistent planning pathways
- regulatory categories that do not recognise cooperative or regenerative housing
- infrastructure requirements designed for conventional subdivisions
- finance and tenure systems that do not support collective ownership
- lack of regularisation pathways for long-standing communities
- limited recognition of Indigenous-led cooperative housing models

These barriers restrict innovation and limit the diversity of housing supply.

#### **4. Recommendations for Reform**

GEN Australia supports AEON's recommendations for reform, including:

- recognition of cooperative and regenerative housing as a defined and legitimate housing typology in planning systems;
- clearer and more consistent approval pathways for ecovillages, cohousing, intentional communities and land-sharing models;
- removal of unnecessary regulatory barriers that currently make innovative housing models difficult, slow or costly to deliver;
- infrastructure frameworks that support community-scale energy, water, wastewater, mobility and shared facilities;
- recognition that infrastructure self-sufficiency can expand the availability of suitable land for housing;
- tenure and finance reforms that better support collective, cooperative and community-led ownership models;
- regularisation pathways for existing communities that are providing housing and social value but remain constrained by outdated planning categories;
- a national demonstration program for cooperative and regenerative settlements; and
- strong First Nations leadership in the development of cooperative and regenerative housing policy.

From GEN Australia's perspective, these reforms are practical, timely and aligned with the urgent need to diversify Australia's housing system. The communities in our network demonstrate that people are willing and able to live with a lighter ecological footprint while strengthening social connection, local resilience and shared responsibility. However, many of these models face unnecessary barriers because current planning, infrastructure, tenure and finance systems were not designed with cooperative or regenerative approaches in mind.

#### **6. Conclusion**

Cooperative and regenerative housing is a credible, evidence-based contributor to Australia's housing future. Enabling these models will expand supply while strengthening communities, improving land stewardship and reducing infrastructure pressure.

GEN Australia urges the Commission to engage with AEON, whose emerging peak-body role positions it to coordinate sector-wide reform.

Yours sincerely,

Tanya Mottl  
Ambassador  
Global Ecovillage Network Australia (GEN Australia)  
[www.genaustralia.org.au](http://www.genaustralia.org.au)  
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