

REIMAGINING THE BACKYARD

ATINY HOUSE ON WHEELS IN THE SUBURBS

KYLIE BICKLE + VALERIE BARES & RIKKI PIETERS

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CO-AUTHORS

Kylie Bickle

Kylie has over 25 years' experience working in the space where art and design intersect, specifically the design, fabrication and delivery of furniture, lighting and art objects for interior spaces and public realm projects.

Both interest and opportunity led me to initiate a project that would test the integration of a Tiny House on Wheels (THOW) in a residential setting. Being uninspired by narrow, prescriptive and expensive development pathways, THOWs stood out as an innovative and non permanent solution with

many advantages. I set out to connect with likeminded people, confident that this project would stimulate discussion around housing diversification and potentially influence housing policy in Australia.







Valerie Bares & Rikki Pieters

Valerie started her career as an electronics engineer before changing to environmental management.

Rikki has 15 years' experience in the community housing sector and is also an environmental planner.

Valerie and Rikki created their business, ESC Consulting in order to pursue work opportunities that spoke to shared passions; Environment, Sustainability and Community. They have successfully merged all three elements within their business, applying a holistic approach to any project they are involved in.

Since 2016 we have followed another passion project; volunteering our time to provide guidance to Australia's emerging Tiny House Movement.

As Project Lead Kylie has provided:

- Comparative research tiny houses and co-living spaces.
- Conceptualisation a real-world project.
- Facilitation identifying and connecting the people.
- Master planning the site and structures.
- Project execution and management making it happen!
- Visual communication document design.

As Project Collaborators Valerie and Rikki have provided:

- Planning, sustainability and place-making advice and resources.
- Collaborative project management.
- Tiny House policy and practice expertise.
- Editorial guidance and review.
- Friendship and support.

PRECIS | BACKGROUND

At its heart, Reimagining the Backyard - A Tiny House on Wheels in the Suburbs is a project about people, place and living well. Out of the need to find a more suitable home for her retired mum, Kylie with the support of her husband Greg, set out to identify and acquire a property that would allow her family to achieve a number of outcomes.

This Project commenced in 2016 with the purchase of a property in suburban Brisbane.

The existing house has been renovated, a new carport has been constructed, one third of the property has been converted to food production and a Tiny House on Wheels (THOW) now occupies the backyard. Kylie's mum, Barbara, jointly owns the property and lives in the primary residence. Luke and Jess, a young couple, own and live in the THOW.

> At a strategic level, this Project is about housing choice and diversity and explores how a THOW can facilitate this. To this end, the document provides an advocacy platform for this emerging housing typology.

This document is:

- Written from the participants' point of view.
- A story of lived experience that has many layers and continues to evolve.
- A description of the Project from conception to implementation that offers an insight into the available choices and decisions made.
- A reference point for others embarking on their own journey into THOWs and co-living arrangements.

This document is not:

- A research paper to argue the pros and cons of THOWs.
- A guide for building or living in a THOW.
- A definitive solution to the issues impacting THOWs.
- A critique of Australia's housing system or marketplace.

The co-authors recognise that the broader social, economic and planning issues surrounding housing are complex and multifaceted and there is limited capacity to address them all here. Throughout this document, statistics are only provided to contextualise some of the issues pertaining to the subject being discussed or the demographic being profiled.

The keystone of this Project is a THOW.

THOWs are an emerging housing typology that respond to a growing demand for compact, affordable and environmentally responsible housing. THOWs are gaining popularity worldwide, however they are yet to be fully acknowledged as a legitimate form of housing by policy makers in Australia.

This Project demonstrates a co-housing model based on the integration of a THOW into an underutilised suburban backyard. It offers one possibility for reimagining the backyard by making it a productive, shared space that can sustainably return financial and social benefits to the landowner, household members and broader community.

This Project is assessed from three perspectives.

The first analyses the achievement of the Project's broad Objectives against the key Themes of densification, affordability, ageing well, living well with less, sustainability and flexibility. The second identifies the challenges presented by THOWs within the current planning and building regulatory environment and suggests an alternative assessment framework. The third is the consideration of risk associated with tenancy agreements and insurance.

SYNOPSIS

A THOW is a moveable dwelling that:

- Is 50m² or less:
- Is built on a trailer;
- Is not fixed to the land (mobile unit); and
- Has the character and functionality of a conventional house.

Project Objectives are:

- Preserving the Backyard while addressing housing pressure.
 [1]
- Contributing to Sustainable Communities.^[2]
- Enhancing Social Connection, particularly for older people.[3]

Project Goals are to:

- Provide an example of co-living that responds to the diversity of contemporary Australian households.
- Suggest another option for those who are unwilling or unable to 'buy' into the conventional housing market.
- Propose a community based and grass-roots alternative to increasing density within our suburbs that is economically efficient and user-centric.
- Optimise site productivity and increase household selfsufficiency through activities such as micro farming.

Key Findings of the Project

The broad strategic Objectives have been achieved.

In general, local laws imposing time limitations on siting a temporary home in a residential setting severely constrain the ability to live in a THOW on a more permanent basis. There is no time limitation in the jurisdiction where this Project is located.

A THOW can easily be sited on a property to comply with typical planning scheme requirements for a secondary dwelling.

The construction of a THOW can generally meet the requirements of the National Construction Code (NCC). Typical design features such as lofts and staircases (and environmental performance) are challenging. As there are no regulations currently in place, THOW builders do not always set out to meet the NCC.

Tenancy agreements can be put in place and Queensland legislation includes short and long-term tenancy of moveable dwellings.

A small number of insurance companies will provide insurance to land owners hosting a THOW (household) and THOW owners (caravan / trailer) providing property, liability and injury cover.

Definitions for 'household' and 'dwelling' are limiting the recognition of THOWs as a legitimate housing option.

FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1

THOWs be legitimised in planning schemes from a land use perspective and assessed as a new dwelling category. Alternatively, a local government regulation enforced under State legislation sets out the provisions for siting and living in a THOW elsewhere than in caravan parks or relocatable home parks.

Recommendation 2

The Australian Building Codes Board (ABCB) develop a guideline document specific to THOWs to enable State or local governments to mandate a construction standard to achieve a minimum level of safety and comfort.

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PREFACE | BY RIKKI PIETERS

Tiny Houses have intrigued me from a design and planning perspective for many years. I would follow blogs and social media posts with fascination - enamoured by the compact and innovative architecture and drawn to the connotation of a more selfsufficient and simplistic lifestyle.

When I heard about a Tiny House on Wheels (THOW) situated in a Brisbane backvard in 2016. I wanted to see first-hand how it really stacked up. I wanted to meet the people who lived in it ... assess for myself whether there was substance to the hype, whether a THOW could genuinely offer a quality housing alternative.

I was not disappointed. The design and build of that particular THOW was exceptional. It was beautiful, functional, low impact and generous. Its seamless integration within a typical inner-city suburban block excited my imagination and opened the doorway to possibilities. Possibilities to increase density without diminishing amenity. Possibilities to share resources without impinging on privacy or individual autonomy. Possibilities to utilise land adaptively and affordably.

I came away with an appreciation of how THOWs can be part of the solution to increase housing choice and diversity. I realised 'tiny' doesn't have to be reductive...if done well it can be expansive.



CONT

I also discovered that in the main, living in a THOW on private property is not considered a legitimate, long term or secure housing option under our current planning and development frameworks. Not because there is a lack of interest or appetite or that the typology itself lacks merit, but simply that our systems of interpretation and assessment are slow to change. THOWs are still relatively new to the Australian scene - they sit outside the known construct, challenging the established paradigm. Mainstream acceptance is constrained by limited definitions of habitation and land use.

The pragmatic planner in me says ... understandable. The systems we've evolved to guide and shape development provide structure, safety and amenity to our built environment and the communities in which we live. The insurgent planner in me says ... unacceptable. Our systems should never stifle good ideas, innovation or individuality - they should continue to evolve to embrace adaptation. More than ever, these are the times to think outside the square, to encourage the germination of good ideas and provide them with the platform to flourish.

From this premise, Valerie and I have worked collaboratively with others to open dialogue, encourage curiosity and interest and demystify the risks, uncertainty and confusion associated with this emerging typology. We have and will continue to advocate for a formalised regulatory framework to ensure THOW development is safely and appropriately embedded within the broader planning strategy.

When Kylie first approached us with her backyard vision, we had no idea where it would lead or how it would unfold. Excited about mapping the project from beginning to end we jumped on board. It was the perfect scenario to test the 'value add' we considered to be missing from the housing mix. Personally, it's been so much more than a feel good project. Not only have I witnessed the productive transformation of a typical suburban backyard, I've also witnessed the enriching transformation it has made to the lives of the people involved – it's a win-win situation on so many levels.

Good examples of living well should not need to fly under the radar. They should be celebrated. I hope this living demonstration awakens the 'Yes' response and provides a catalyst for change.

Enjoy!

REIMAGINING THE BACKYARD

ATINY HOUSE ON WHEELS IN THE SUBURBS

THE PROJECT



DESCRIPTION

At its heart, this Project is about people, place and living well. It is about a lived experience that is open-ended ... and continues to evolve.

Practically, this Project is about housing choice and diversity. The intention is to work within current planning and regulatory frameworks in order to identify challenges and benchmark success.

Specifically, this Project sets out to:

- Use the experience to demonstrate a progressive co-housing model based on the integration of a Tiny House on Wheels (THOW) into an underutilised suburban backyard.
- Provide an example of co-living that responds to the diversity of contemporary Australian households.
- Suggest another option for those who are unwilling or unable to 'buy' into the conventional housing market.
- Propose a community based and grass-roots alternative to increasing density within our suburbs that is economically efficient and user-centric
- Optimise site productivity and increase household self sufficiency through activities such as micro farming.



OBJECTIVES

This Project places value on the preservation of the backyard.

A backyard is traditionally reserved for the utility and recreational use of a household. But as the value of floor area outcompetes a desire for grass and gardens, this ubiquitous feature of Australian suburbs is progressively shrinking.

This Project offers one possibility for reimagining the backyard by making it a productive, shared space. It reframes the backyard as a flexible asset that can sustainably return financial and social benefits to the landowner, household members and broader community.

The Project sets out to respond to the following Objectives:

- **Preserving the Backyard** while addressing housing pressure. [1]
- Contributing to Sustainable Communities. [2]
- Enhancing Social Connection, particularly for older people. [3]



KEYSTONE

A THOW is the keystone of this Project.

THOWs are an emerging housing typology that respond to a growing demand for compact, affordable and environmentally responsible housing. THOWs are gaining in popularity worldwide, however they are yet to be fully acknowledged as a legitimate form of housing by policy makers in Australia.

A THOW is a moveable dwelling that:

- Is 50m² or less:
- Is built on a trailer;
- Is not fixed to the land (mobile unit); and
- Has the character and functionality of a conventional house.

THOWs are often compared to a large caravan or recreational vehicle (RV) but read as a piece of architecture as opposed to a mass produced vehicle.

In this Project a THOW is integrated into the backyard and visually fits with the character of the surrounding neighbourhood.



PARTICIPANTS

The people that have brought this Project to life are introduced here.

Barbara, Greg and Kylie

Barbara (Kylie's Mum) enjoyed the village atmosphere of townhouse living for 20 years, but at age 74, she decided it was time to find a home that could better accommodate her needs. At the same time Kylie and her husband Greg were thinking about investing in a property with a view to downsizing in the future; a site that could support a simple and self sufficient lifestyle. It made sense to combine their resources and find a property that delivered for both.

Barbara jointly owns the property featured in this Project with Kylie and Greg. Barbara lives in the primary residence.

Luke and Jess

With no prior experience, Luke and Jess built their dream THOW at 25 years of age, then transported it from regional Victoria to Brisbane. Luke and Jess are striving to live with less. Less stuff. Less space. Less debt. Less worries. Less environmental footprint.

Luke and Jess own and live in the THOW featured in this Project.

'Family of 5's Modern Tiny House Packed With Clever Ideas' | A THOW in a backyard in Hawkes Bay| Image: Living Big in a Tiny House

FOUNDATION

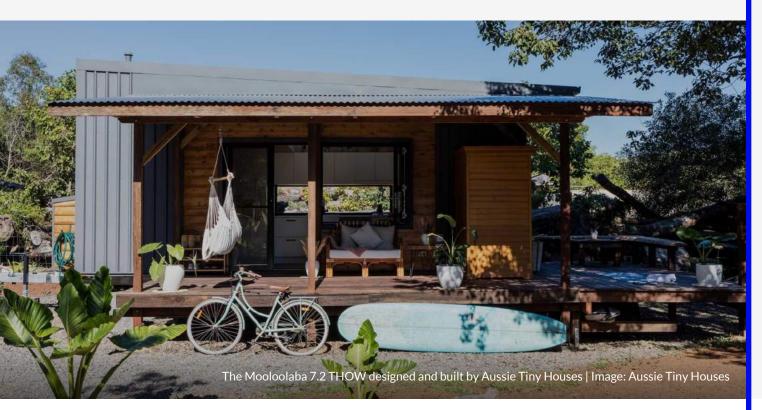
The foundation for this Project was laid with the acquisition of a suitable residential property.

Primarily it needed to accommodate Barbara's requirements:

- To be close to family / support persons / networks.
- To be in the vicinity of her previous home and familiar surrounds.
- To be within walking distance of reliable public transport.
- To be near to shops, amenities and government services.
- To contain an existing single level dwelling.

A secondary set of characteristics were established around Kylie and Greg's interests and aspirations:

- A location that would broadly appeal to THOW occupants.
- A site condusive to urban food production.



PARAMETERS

The parameters for this Project were established around the considerations of:

- Cost minimisation
- Flexibility
- Sustainability

The landowners made the following improvements to the property without over-capitalisation and in such a way as to allow for different uses in the future:

- The renovation of existing structures and re-use of salvaged materials where possible.
- The creation of a secondary, independent living area.
- The transition of one third of the property to food production.
- The construction of a multi-use covered area.

When evaluating the potential land use options the landowners determined that a THOW best fit the Project parameters because it:

- Allowed for a low impact, non-permanent change to the Site.
- Added a secondary, independent living area at no cost.
- Was off grid and required no fixed connection to services and utilities.



RESOURCE STRUCTURE

The Project is captured in detail in the following sections:

- THE RIGHT REASONS the broad drivers for the project.
- THE RIGHT PLACE the locality analysis (urban context).
- THE RIGHT SITE the site analysis and master planning.
- THE RIGHT PEOPLE THOW occupant profiling.
- THE RIGHT FIT compatibility and relationships.

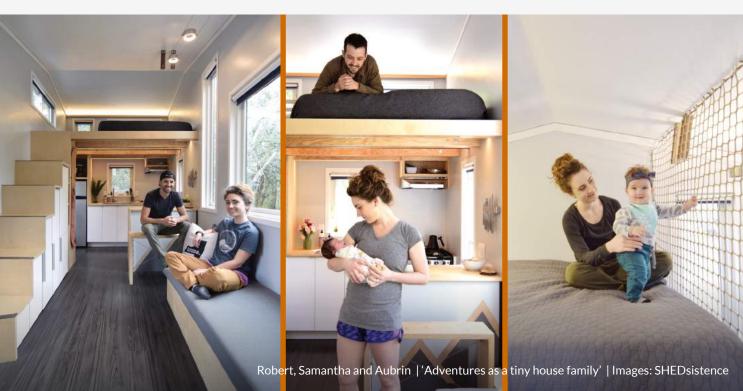
The resource concludes with an Assessment and provides Key Findings and Recommendations.

A Timeline is included as an appendix which chronicles specific events and accomplishments from the starting point in 2016 until now.

This resource is the record of the very considered process by the co-authors who wish to state that:

- The word 'right' is used within the context of this Project only.
- The commentary throughout the document is intended to provide both personal and professional perspectives.
- The intent is to encourage discussion around new models of co-living and influence decision makers in regard to land use policy that promotes resilient and inclusive communities.

THE RIGHT REASONS



RATIONALE

As people's circumstances, needs and values change, THOWs represent a desirable housing option for many.

The following Themes are often raised by Tiny House enthusiasts as significant and are being explored through this Project:

- Densification
- Affordability
- Ageing Well
- Living Well With Less
- Sustainability
- Flexibility



THEME DENSIFICATION

Kylie:

The majority of residential dwellings in Brisbane are detached homes, typically designed to suit a nuclear family. But population growth is putting pressure on our urban fabric and more broadly the natural environment.

I am interested in exploring flexible types of housing that complement and not compromise Brisbane's green streets and backyards.

Valerie and Rikki:

To date, the main housing forms used to create urban density are the apartment tower and the townhouse unit. But there are alternative ways of delivering densification without dramatically transforming the architectural character of our cities. Good design appropriate to the locality and suited to people's different needs is what is missing.

THOWs are an alternative infill option in appropriate zones to increase development density in a sustainable and low impact manner. They are adaptive and by design integrate well with existing residential configurations.



THEME AFFORDABILITY

Kylie:

Rising property prices and the widening income to property value ratio means fewer people will achieve home ownership in their lifetime; particularly younger generations. And alarmingly, the fastest growing cohort of homeless Australians are women aged 55 years and over.^[4]

I think small, adaptable housing such as THOWs could be integrated into our suburbs to provide more affordable housing alternatives.

Valerie and Rikki:

Generally planning schemes in Queensland require occupants of a secondary dwelling or 'granny flat' [5] to be members of the primary 'household'. [6] The definition of household imposes occupancy restrictions that do not easily accommodate a modern co-living arrangement that many seek today. In some other States granny flats can be let to non-household members.

Hosting a THOW can provide supplementary income for a landowner as well as support this affordable housing option for others. It is a cost effective way to add a dwelling to a lot with minimal financial risk.



THEME AGEING WELL

Kylie:

How do you want to live as an older person and what will your options be in years to come? Retirement complexes are not for everyone and apartments, while compact and comparatively affordable, are rarely designed with accessibility and community in mind

I believe we need more options for older people to live healthy, independent and connected lives within their community for as long as possible.

Valerie and Rikki:

Ageing in place is now recognised as the preferred option for most older people. However over time some may struggle to maintain their property, lose mobility or become lonely and isolated. A person living in a THOW in the backyard could provide company or care, alleviating the need for an older person to move from their home into an aged care facility. Some agreement options might include:

- The THOW occupant provides general household support or property maintenance assistance to the older resident.
- The THOW occupant is a dedicated carer to provide constant on-site living support to the older resident.
- The older resident moves into a fit-for-purpose THOW and the main dwelling is rented out, generating income.



THEME LIVING WELL WITH LESS

Kylie:

THOWs are exemplars of purposeful design and creative use of space that require occupants to evaluate almost everything they use and produce. Superficially, a mass produced caravan has similar characteristics, but THOWs are structurally and aesthetically comparable to a conventional house. They are bespoke and highly individual.

I am incredibly impressed by the build quality and appeal of these innovative and compact dwellings.

Valerie and Rikki:

There are benefits to living small which are not immediately apparent. For example, a THOW has limited storage for recreational and entertainment items (e.g. large screen TV, book shelves) so occupants are more likely to make use of community resources and engage in public events and activities. The simple act of keeping clutter to a minimum has multiple and positive flow on effects:

- Less time spent cleaning and maintaining the home.
- More time to enjoy life rather than be occupied with chores.
- The tendency to 'go out' more often to reconnect with nature and utilise local amenities (e.g. social clubs, libraries).



THEME SUSTAINABILITY

Kylie:

Most of us are relatively ignorant about the volume of waste we produce. When we flick a switch the convenience of a grid connection is taken for granted. Climate change and its impacts will inevitably force us to curb our excesses and change our ways.

I think that those opting to 'live with less' are leading by example. In many respects THOWs provide the literal and conceptual framework for living sustainably.

Valerie and Rikki:

THOWs are the epitome of sustainable housing if designed well. Their small footprint means:

- Less materials used in construction equating to reduced pressure on the material supply chain.
- Smaller spaces to heat / cool and easy to insulate.
- Easy to kit out with off grid systems for renewable energy, composting toilets and rainwater tanks.
- Little to no impact on the existing infrastructure of our cities.
- Little to no construction impact to our neighbourhoods.



THEME FLEXIBILITY

Kylie:

Societal change and financial pressure means that our residential spaces are accommodating more people living in diverse household structures. As a property owner, I am uninspired by the typical development pathways of upsizing or subdividing. These options are expensive, dramatically reduce valuable green space and limit options into the future.

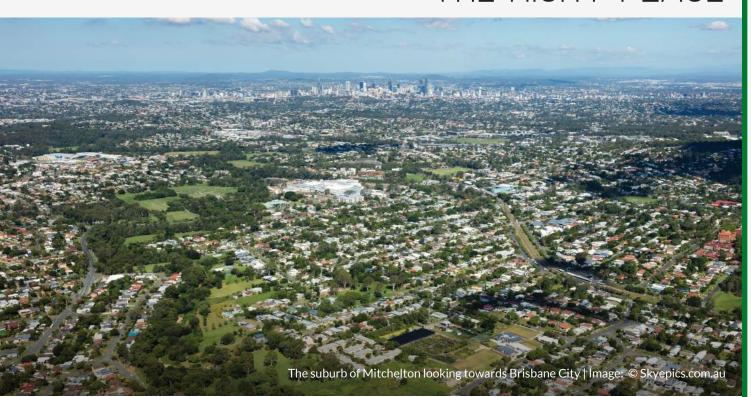
In his book *The Life and Death of the Australian Backyard* ^[7] Tony Hall graphically illustrates the shrinkage of residential open space. I am looking for alternative ways to enhance our property without destroying the very qualities that make it an appealing place to live.

Valerie and Rikki:

An investment in a THOW gives an owner the certainty of a roof over his / her head as well as the freedom to relocate for better work or living opportunities. Regulation of a THOW's construction and its placement on privately owned property is all that is needed to provide certainty to all ... it's not rocket science!

With guidelines in place, councils can be assured that flexible urban environments will be able to adapt to the demands of increasing density or uncertain futures (e.g. climatic / economic / health).

THE RIGHT PLACE | LOCATION



All places are dynamic and adaptive. Suburbs change form and character in response to cycles of growth and decline, new ideas and activities, shifting priorities and cultural imprints.

We often forget what has shaped the places we see today. Brisbane evolved from a penal colony to a State capital and is now recognised as a global city, one of the highest ranked liveable cities in the world.

The search for 'The Right Place' to anchor the Project focused on Brisbane's Inner North, specifically the suburb or Mitchelton located 10kms from Brisbane's CBD. Determining factors for this selection included the physical and social amenity and character of the suburb, budget considerations and locational preference.

Following is a brief history and evolving profile of the suburb.

Disclaimer: The diagrams presented in this section are conceptualised from mapping sourced from Brisbane City Council's interactive mapping system and are not detail accurate. The information presented is current at time of publication.



HISTORY PRE - 1857

- The First Nations People of the region harvested food and modified the environment either by fire or by planting.

 Descendants of the region's first peoples continue to live in the area, maintaining their cultural ties with the land.
- The first recorded contact with Europeans was with three sailors shipwrecked on Moreton Island in 1823. These individuals and the following groups to arrive in Moreton Bay noted the densely populated settlements and substantial dwellings of the original inhabitants.
- The Kedron Brook Catchment Area was covered with forest and became a source of timber for the penal colony established on the banks of the Brisbane River in 1825.
- German missionaries established Zion Hill (Nundah area)
 Mission for the Aborigines in 1838 and named Kedron Brook.
 Initial contact was successful as some Aborigines had learnt
 basic English through contact with the penal colony. The
 mission ultimately failed to convince the Aborigines of the
 superiority of a settled life over a nomadic life. [8]
- Occupation along Kedron Brook commenced after the former penal colony opened to free settlers in 1842.
- The area is described for the crown land auction in 1857as: ... plain lands timbered with gum, mahogany, oak and bloodwood trees and richly grassed, extending from a creek of crystal pure water in the north, to a low mountain range in the south. To the west a steep wooded slope. In a camp on the banks of the creek a tribe of aborigines. [9]

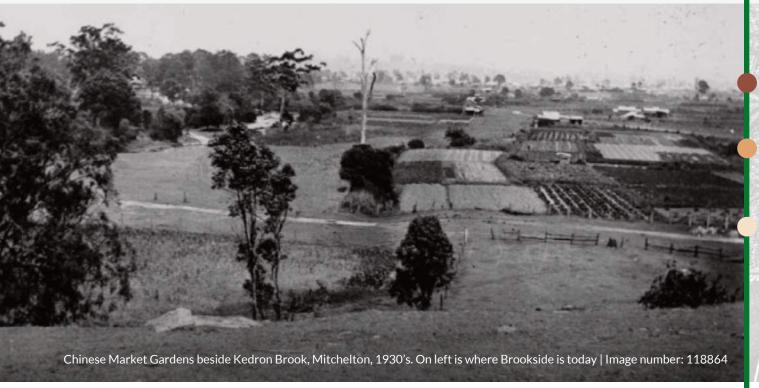


HISTORY EARLY DEVELOPMENT

- The Mitchelton area was opened up to settlement in 1857.
- The suburb is named after the Mitchell family who arrived in the 1850s. Nicholas Mitchell acquired 75 acres in 1857.
- The alluvial floodplains adjacent to Kedron Brook supported market farms producing maize, fruit, vegetables and viticulture:
 - Pickering's Vineyard Enoggera 1880s eponym Pickering St.
 - Glen Retreat Winery late 1800s eponym Glen Retreat Rd.
 - Nicholson's Grovely Farm and Winery late 1800s eponym Nicholson St and Grovely Tce.
 - Taylor's winery and vineyard 1915 eponym Taylors Rd (left).
 - Hurdcott Vineyard and Winery eponym Hurdcott St.
 - Surrenden Winery operated by the Lade family.
 - Auburn Winery.
- Chinese market gardens site of present Brookside Shopping Centre - 1930s (pictured on the following page).
- Arthur Blackwood developed the Oxford Park Estate in 1914 (diagram on following page) - eponym Blackwood St.
- The railway to Mitchelton Station was opened 2nd March, 1918.

On Portion 36, much higher, and more convenient than portion 37, recently sold, seven houses have been built during the past five years. No one but a new chum or a fool, would build on that portion of number 37... I went over most of it: one half is low, ti-tree country, and the other broken by gullies and creek.^[10]

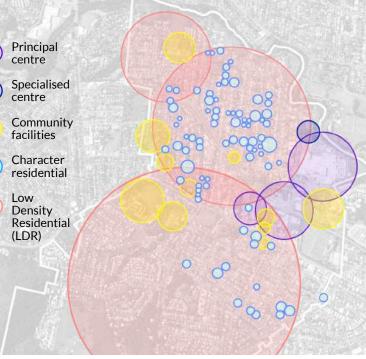
HISTORY FIRST SUBDIVISIONS





TODAY CHARACTER





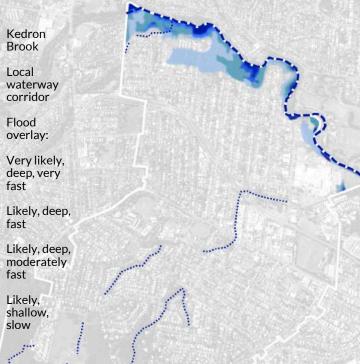
TODAY GREEN SPACE





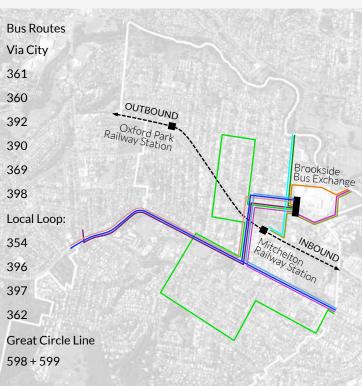
TODAY FLOOD & WATERWAYS





QueenslandRail Blackwood Street level crossing | Image: Kylie Bickle

TODAY TRANSPORT



Marquee Mitchelton Markets, Blackwood Street | Image: Kylie Bickle

TODAY AMENITIES



THE RIGHT SITE



INSPIRATION

An allotment is a small parcel of land traditionally leased to individuals for the purpose of growing food. It was measured in poles (rods or perches) a measurement dating back to Anglo-Saxon times. 10 poles or approximately 250m² is the typical size of an allotment.

Allotment gardens are found in many European cities and provide precious green space within heavily urbanised environments. On these plots, simple and often personalised gardening sheds are ubiquitous. Built to store tools and garden implements, they may also be kitted out with furniture, wood stoves and basic cooking facilities. They often act as temporary dwellings for gardeners.

In this Project, inspiration for the design of the Backyard has been drawn from the archetypal allotment garden.



ANALYSIS PHYSICAL

The Basics

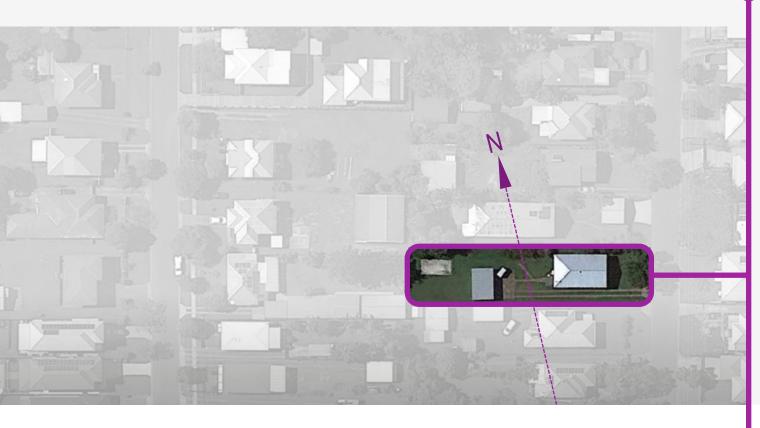
The property featured in this Project (the Site) has an area of $809 m^2$ and is bound by residential allotments on three sides. Preexisting vegetation comprised lawn and a few small trees and shrubs along the northern boundary.

Existing Structures

Prior to project commencement the Site supported a small dwelling of 96m², setback 6m from the east facing front boundary with single car access from the street. A carport and adjacent concrete slab were situated in the middle of the Site. Another concrete slab intended for caravan parking was positioned near the north-west corner.

Topography

The land is generally level which allows easy access and manoeuvring of vehicles around the Site. These characteristics enable the positioning of transportable dwellings such as caravans and THOWs.



ANALYSIS PLANNING

Zoning and Overlays

The Site is zoned Low Density Residential (LDR). Under the *Brisbane City Plan 2014* the narrow frontage precludes subdivision.

The Site is clear of any overlay that prevents a secondary dwelling.

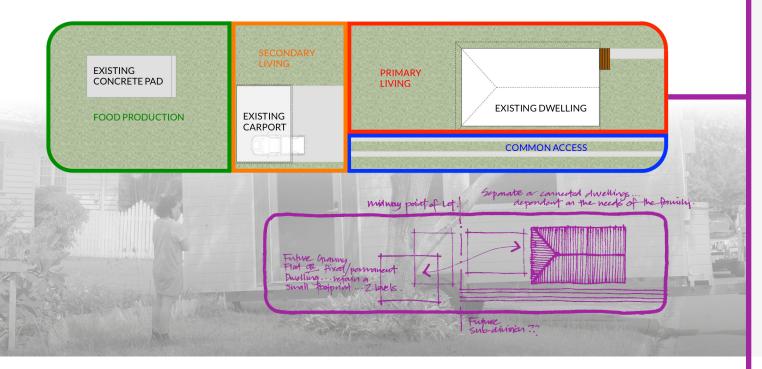
Neighbourhood Plan

The Site falls within the Mitchelton Centre Neighbourhood Plan. No provisions impact the Site, but of particular interest are items:

- 2.9 Development demonstrates environmentally sustainable, climate responsive, functional and adaptable design, based on subtropical design principles and incorporating energy and water efficiency measures.
- 2.10 A variety of different housing types and sizes are encouraged to accommodate the different life stages of the Mitchelton community.

Land Use

When on private property, we consider THOWs to be comparable with a secondary dwelling, which is permitted without a development application if compliant with the Acceptable Outcomes of the Dwelling house code or Dwelling house (small lot) code.



ANALYSIS OBJECTIVES

Brisbane City Council does not prevent the siting and occupation of a caravan on private property for an undefined period of time provided occupants have access to toilet amenities and refuse disposal facilities. The only stipulation is that public nuisance due to siting, noise or other disturbances is not created. A caravan fits the definition of a moveable dwelling [11], as does a THOW.

The linear nature of the Site lends itself well to the creation of four distinct areas of use, as shown in the adjacent site plan.

The Site re-development objectives are to:

- Abide by and enhance the permitted use for LDR sites.
- Optimise land use and increase number of residents on the Site.
- Upgrade, re-purpose and re-use the existing built structures.
- Retain single story heights and preserve building character.
- Ensure any new structures are flexible, adaptive or relocatable.
- Create dual living zones and improve privacy.
- Improve aesthetics and enhance liveability for residents.
- Allocate a substantial area to new plantings and food production.
- Minimise impact on neighbours.

Disclaimer: the Planning Constraints discussed in the following sections have been generalised as they vary from council to council.



DESCRIPTION COMMON ACCESS

Design Intent

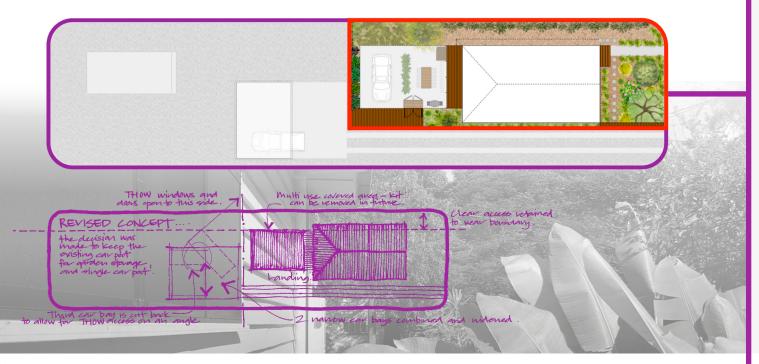
The use of this area is shared equally between the occupants of the primary and secondary living areas. The condition of the existing driveway is poor and will be replaced in the future.

Considerations

- Widen the concrete treads on the driveway to better accommodate larger vehicles.
- Shift driveway toward south boundary and away from windows.
- Apply a cost-effective finish that also dampens noise.
- Fill low spots and improve drainage.

Planning Constraints

As the THOW is set up as a secondary dwelling, the driveway does not require an easement. Besides the provision of appropriate car parking there are no additional requirements pertaining to access.



DESCRIPTION PRIMARY LIVING

Design Intent

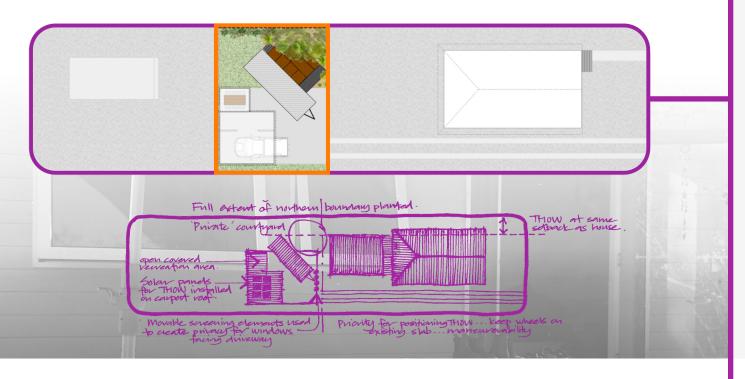
The use of this area is reserved exclusively for the occupants of the existing dwelling. The structure retains its original footprint and the interior is updated to a modern standard. A multi-use covered area has been installed directly behind the existing residence.

Considerations

- Reconfigure internal spaces to improve circulation.
- Widen doorways to accommodate mobility aides.
- Improve natural air flow and security.
- Enhance privacy through plantings along boundary and front cottage garden.
- Connect car park area with house.
- Provide weather protection and flexible outdoor space.
- Capacity to easily remove structural additions in the future.

Planning Constraints

Building height and boundary setback are the main constraints in most planning schemes.



DESCRIPTION SECONDARY LIVING

Design Intent

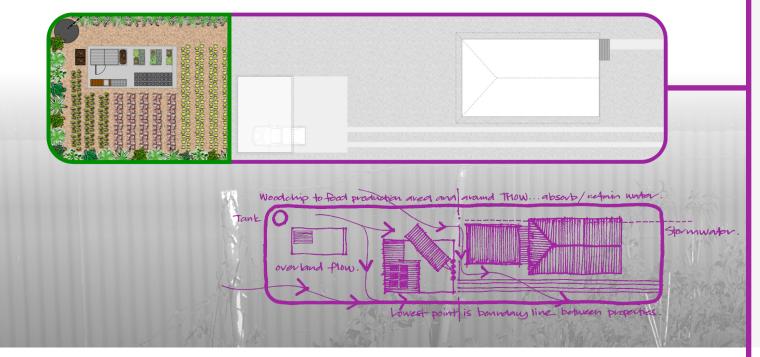
Use of this area is reserved for occupants of the THOW with access to the food production area. The original footprint and structure of the existing carport are retained with minor adjustments.

Considerations

- Room to manoeuvre and position a THOW.
- Separate exterior / garden space.
- Privacy from the primary residence and neighbours.
- Car parking for one vehicle.
- Lockable storage and a covered work area.

Planning Constraints

Most councils tend to prescribe the distance from the primary dwelling, boundary setbacks, floor area and who can live in the secondary dwelling.



DESCRIPTION FOOD PRODUCTION

Design Intent

This area is reserved for food production^[12] and access is shared equally between the occupants of the existing dwelling and the THOW.

Considerations

- Rapid transition of lawn to deep mulched substrate.
- Quick growing perimeter plantings for screening.
- Access is separate from secondary living area.
- Re-purpose concrete pad previously used for caravan parking by installing raised garden beds.

Planning Constraints

This is a grey area. At what point would a council become concerned about urban food production at a semi-commercial scale? It will depend on the intensity of the operations (the amount of traffic, number of workers on site, etc.). Brisbane City Council has an Intensive food production code to assess a material change of use which focuses on minimising negative impacts on neighbouring properties and the environment and covers such items as composting, bees, aquaculture, noise and odour and the use of pesticides and herbicides.



MASTERPLAN

Kylie:

This Project was already well progressed when I read David Holmgren's book *Retrosuburbia – The Downshifters Guide To A Resilient Future.* [13] It is jam packed with information, diagrams and examples of people 'retrofitting' their homes and properties in order to live more sustainable and connected lives. It validated the decision to shift our thinking to an alternative paradigm.

I think this Project has great potential to be a living example of retro-suburban transformation in a sub-tropical Brisbane setting.

Valerie and Rikki:

'Innovation' is the new mantra, but what does it mean? It's a new idea, a new way of doing things that implies a positive change; something that adds value or transforms what already exists. The resilience of our communities hinges on innovative planning and design ... but how often does it play out? How often does innovation truly have space to breathe?

The same principles we value in a well-designed city, suburb or neighbourhood equally apply to a residential allotment. This Project speaks to the ideas of resilience, flexibility, permeability and inclusivity through the activation of a typical single-use low density residential allotment in a new and inventive way.

THE RIGHT PEOPLE



ATTRIBUTES

Kylie:

Every person and their circumstances are unique. Every site and situation is different. Therefore it is important to carefully consider the living arrangement and relationship dynamics when establishing a co-living agreement.

The primary attributes for selecting 'The Right People' for this Project were:

- Owner of a THOW;
- A willingness to participate in the Project;
- A keen interest in food production;
- The energy and capacity to physically contribute; and
- A positive attitude and friendly disposition.

Valerie and Rikki:

In Australia, recent research has shown that the majority of tiny house advocates are women over 40.[14] Personally we've met people from a range of demographics. Every back story is unique.

Tiny houses are also popular with singles, couples and those with small or younger families.^[15]



SNAPSHOT

The following profiles have been created to provide a snapshot of the type of person determined to be a good 'fit' for this Project based on Barbara's preferences for co-living.

Disclaimer: all profiles in this section are fictitious.

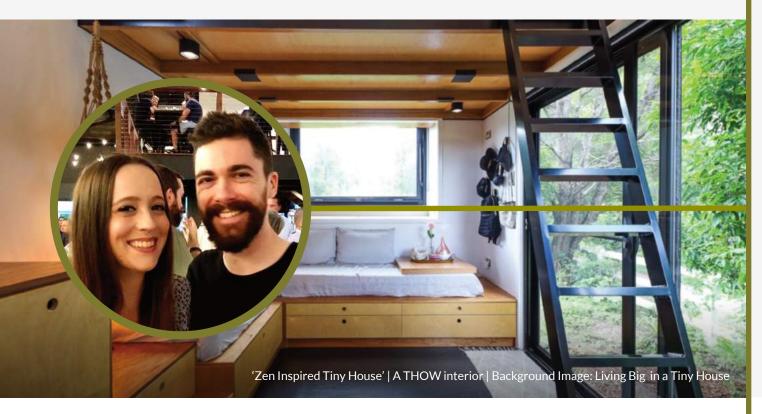
Young Singles | A recent survey of 6,490 rental properties in the Brisbane metropolitan area has shown that a minimum wage earner can afford just 2% of these properties.^[16]

Women Over 55 | Approximately 48% of women aged 45 to 64 have less than \$40,000 in superannuation - or none at all. $^{[17]}$

Care Givers | In 2018, 1.3 million older Australians (aged 65+) living at home needed some assistance with everyday activities.^[18]

Retirees and Downsizers | The most common circumstances leading to downsizing was a desire for lifestyle change or an inability to maintain a large house or garden. $^{[19]}$

First Home Buyers | Median dwelling prices have increased from around 4 times median incomes in the early 1990s to more than 7 times today and more than 8 times in Sydney.^[20]



PROFILE BEN & KATE | FIRST HOME

What Home Means to Us:

Must be: Cosy / Minimalist / Practical / Self-owned

Must have: Independence / Green space / Community connection

Don't want: Stress / Debt / Excess

What We Are Doing Now:

Ben - Landscape Architect Kate - Midwifery Student

Studying and having fun before we settle down

Why a Tiny House on Wheels?

After years of renting we realised we could achieve financial independence within a few years and freely choose where and how we lived by going 'tiny'. We dreamt of living a sustainable and minimalist lifestyle and were excited by the challenge of building our own home with the support of family and friends. A Tiny House on Wheels just made sense for us.

What's Next?

We want to continue our life adventure by living sustainably, growing our own food and becoming part of a like-minded community.



PROFILE TINA | INDEPENDENT

What Home Means to Me:

Must be: Affordable / Safe / Stable

Must have: Privacy / Character / Easy access Don't want: Debt / Dependency / To be remote

What I Am Doing Now:

Mobile hairdresser Artist Volunteer

Why a Tiny House on Wheels?

I want to live life on my own terms. My Tiny House on Wheels means I can own my home more easily. I'm not burdened with a huge debt. I'm mobile, but I have a base. It gives me security and flexibility. It's perfect for me and my pup, Pepe right now!

What's Next?

I'm only 28 so I'm not ready to settle down yet. But in a couple of years I'd like to buy a house on the Sunny Coast where I can set up a home salon and gallery, so I'm saving for that. I met someone six months ago and it feels like we're moving in that direction. It's great to have choices.



PROFILE JEN | STARTING OVER

What Home Means to Me:

Must be: Affordable / Comfortable / Peaceful / Secure Must have: Privacy / Safety / Social connection Don't want: Hassle / Instability / Limited choices

What I Am Doing Now:

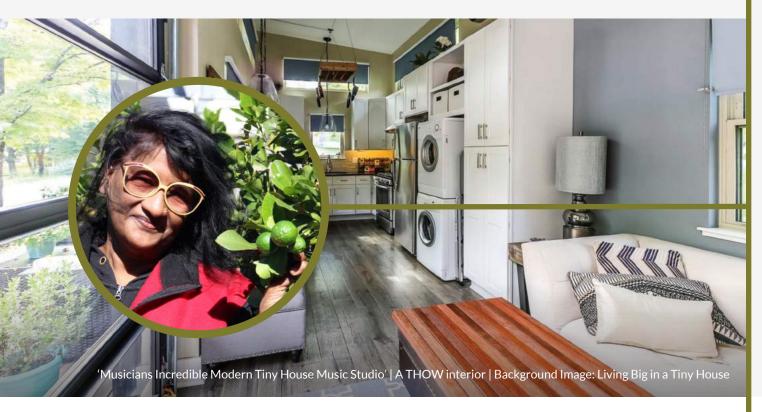
Employment consultant Entrepreneur Living life to the full

Why a Tiny House on Wheels?

After my divorce, I found myself having to start again. I needed a place to call home that didn't cost the earth. I had some savings, but couldn't get a mortgage by myself. I didn't want to rent so I invested in a Tiny House on Wheels. It really works for me – I feel settled but also have freedom.

What's Next?

My dream is to be fully self-employed in the next five years, so I'm focused on growing my business in a way that fits in with my other priorities. Community is also important to me, so it suits me to live with others as long as I have my own space.



PROFILE TANU | CARER

What Home Means to Me:

Must be: Separate / Clean / Comfortable

Must have: Privacy / Safety & Security / Community Don't want: Stress / Debt / The burden of accumulated 'stuff'

What I Am Doing Now:

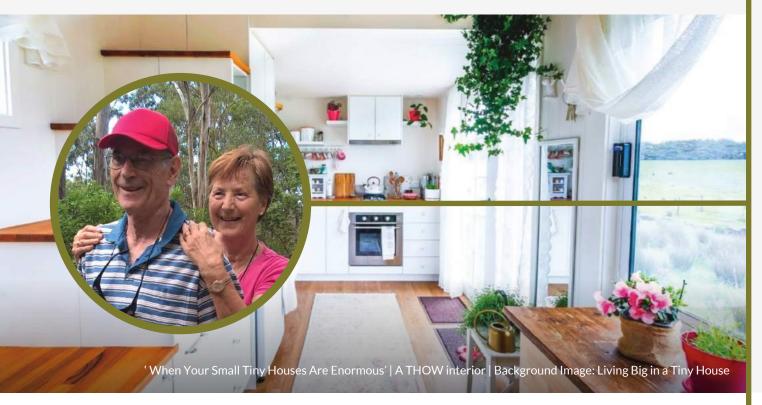
Employed part time at a local nursery Gardening is my hobby Preparing for my retirement

Why a Tiny House on Wheels?

I was the live-in caregiver to my elderly Mum until she passed. I no longer want the responsibility of maintaining the old family home and am ready to let go of the things I don't need. I have a nursing qualification and still need to work part time - but I don't want to return to a stressful environment. A private agreement to care for an older person in their home will suit me well. A Tiny House on Wheels provides privacy and a comfortable space of my own without any need for permanent changes to my client's property.

What's Next?

When I retire I hope to take my Tiny House to a property near the beach!



PROFILE TOM & LIZA | DOWNSIZERS

What Home Means to Us:

Must be: Close to family / Secure / Easy to maintain Must have: Privacy / Own open space / Accessibility Don't want: Debt / To be institutionalised / Isolation

What We Are Doing Now:

Gardening Travelling Minding our grandchild

Why a Tiny House on Wheels?

We were living in a 4-bedroom house an hour away from our daughter and only granddaughter. We were spending all our time just cleaning rooms we hardly ever used and we wanted to be closer to family. So a Tiny House on Wheels was the quickest and cheapest way for moving in with them. And it takes no time at all to clean! More time for the outdoors where we like to be!

What's Next?

As long as we remain healthy this is where we will stay until our last days. We are looking after each other. This is the best way to retire.

THE RIGHT FIT



COMPATIBILITY

Community is created when people are respectful to others and have a general willingness to get along. It is therefore worthwhile for both landowners and THOW occupants to interview each other and determine if there are shared values on which to build a harmonious co-living arrangement.

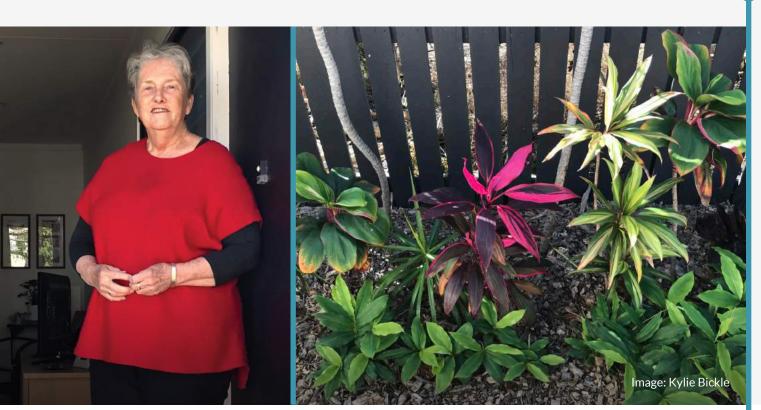
Ideally the 'Right Fit' means there is compatibility in regard to:

- Personality including communication style.
- Perspective reasons for making this lifestyle choice.
- Privacy establishing and respecting boundaries.
- Payment determining value and method of exchange.

Even the best of relationships can be tested, so talking through concerns and acknowledging the potential for unforeseen circumstances to arise is important. Capturing conversations in writing can provide the foundations of an agreement and will also help avert misunderstandings.

The participants in the Project met many times prior to commencing their co-living arrangement to ensure there was an alignment in disposition and expectations. After key points were agreed upon they chose to formally document their agreement.

Barbara, Luke and Jess share their story over the following pages.



INTERVIEW BARBARA

Barbara is relieved to have settled into her new home following a couple of stressful years. "I had three moves in 18 months," she explains. "I just thought when is this going to end? It went on ... and on," she reflects with a good-natured sigh. "I was looking forward to knowing I had somewhere nice to come and live – I just couldn't wait for it to happen."

Since moving in, Barbara has enjoyed getting to know her new neighbourhood. "I just find it so convenient in every way really, close to the shops, flat ground, lovely walks and friendly neighbours, which is a top priority if you want a comfortable life."

The garden is another plus for Barbara. "I always said to Kylie, I've got to have a garden," she affirms. "See, I had all these pots and every time I moved, the kids would groan 'Oh Mum'," she chuckles. "I always used to say, you'll appreciate them one day when I finally settle and we can plant them!"

Content to let the Project unfold around her, Barbara is no stranger to the spirit of community. "I grew up on a farm, so I understand the importance of growing vegies and sharing with community. I mean that's what you did on a farm, if you had more of one thing you shared it with your neighbours," she says matter-of-factly. "I think the long, flat block is ideal for this concept. I look after the front and the rest is for the Project."



INTERVIEW BARBARA

"I just want to point out that many people are turning to growing their own vegies because of the COVID situation," Barbara adds. "I mean, it's not everybody's cup of tea, but if you've got the land to do it, I really don't see what objections there would be for people to grow vegetables...and if they grow enough to give to other people, fair enough!"

Barbara is also a fan of having a THOW in the backyard and says that while she doesn't mind being on her own she enjoys the company of having Luke and Jess living nearby. "They're such lovely people. We don't bother each other, but if we need anything, we ask each other. It's just nice. If I make a cake, I take some over and if Jess makes something she brings me a slice."

Barbara pauses for a moment to reflect. "We've tried to be very conscious of people and not tread on anybody's toes," she says sincerely. "I appreciate that not everyone would like the concept of somebody else living on their land, but to me it's taking advantage of the situation. I mean living on my own, I couldn't look after a big plot of land and grow vegetables, so having someone there who is taking an interest in it and helps to look after it, just makes sense. It's a really lovely feeling! It's like a community. It's great", she beams.



Aspiring to get off the debt treadmill, Luke and Jess saw a THOW as their ticket to personal freedom. "We were renting a small apartment in Melbourne and were finding that it was frustrating giving our money to someone else every month instead of it going to our own home," shares Jess. Add the 'cuteness' factor and a desire to live more sustainably, Jess says it all seemed to stack up for her.

Luke nods in agreement. "The financial thing was good for my logical brain," adds Luke. "I'd been saving and I thought what am I saving this for?" Luke and Jess calculated they could recoup their investment within 3 years based on the rent they were paying. "There was no reason to not do it – everything was pointing to it being a really good decision for us," says Jess. "We didn't require a mortgage. Between us the money was there. We probably would have had to save another 10 years to be able to afford a house in Melbourne"

Committing to a DIY build, Luke and Jess completed their project in under 5 months using Luke's parents backyard in Kyabram as a construction site. They commuted the two and a half hour return journey every weekend from Melbourne for the first 3 months, then moved to Luke's parents place when their lease came to an end. "We built full time for the last 6 weeks as Jess got into UQ to do her honours and we needed to get to Queensland," says Luke.





"It was like...wake up every morning around 6:30, get out there and build until about 10 or 11 some nights. Smashed out some big days!" recalls Luke energetically. "Yeah, in 45 degree heat," Jess adds wryly.

Luke and Jess say both their families supported their decision to go 'tiny'. "Dad had a fair few tools and knows a lot about building so helped us out a lot. Mum and Dad have even started to build their own THOW," Luke grins. "My parents were just sad that they lived 6 hours away from Kyabram and couldn't help us more often," rues Jess. "But they still came 3 or 4 times. Dad pretty much built our stairs, got some windows in and sustained some injuries on-site...so lots of memories," she says ironically. "I think both sets of parents miss us and are kinda hoping that we'll bring the THOW back, but we're enjoying life up here a bit too much to be thinking about that just yet."

According to Luke and Jess, finding a place to put their THOW caused the most doubt. "The designing, buying, building...it was all easy. But when it came to land, we were dependent on the generosity and interest of other people," says Jess. Finding a Council that allowed a THOW set-up was also a determining factor. Before heading north, Luke and Jess tried various ways to connect with a compatible host – Facebook, Gumtree, Community Notice Boards. In the end their letterbox drop led them to their first site at Brookfield.





For Luke and Jess the relationship with their host has become more important over time. "We found there was a big variance in what people were offering in terms of properties and how much they wanted in return," says Luke. "Having spent a year in Brookfield getting good at living in a Tiny has made us more confident with the recent move."

They are adamant that it's not just a business transaction, it's about compatibility. "We need to be on the same level," says Luke. "And have mutual benefit," adds Jess. "We were stoked with meeting Kylie and Greg (this time on Facebook). They like the same things as us, have the same ideas and goals with the property and gardening, which is awesome. At the start, we didn't care, we just wanted somewhere to live, but coming into the second round, we came from a position of experience and strength," continues Luke.

So where to next for Luke and Jess for Less? "We want to buy some property within 5 years and that would see us potentially using our tiny house as a tool in that process while we renovate or build," says Luke. "This is a good stepping stone to learn about the kind of set-up that we want," says Jess. "For me, I've got at least 2 more years of study and it makes sense to be living in a tiny house and not be stressed financially. We have both started new jobs that are based in Brisbane so we have even more reason to stay awhile."



It's clear that living 'tiny' works right now for Luke and Jess. On all accounts it's been an empowering endeavour backed by the support of family and friends. Their THOW has provided them with a stable and secure base to make a home whilst giving them the freedom to follow their dreams. "It has everything we need," affirms Jess.

When asked if anything was missing along the way, Luke and Jess are quick to reply that a clear set of guidelines and regulations would have helped them feel more settled in their choice to go 'tiny'. "It's the only disappointment," says Jess. "It's hard to figure out and feel confident." Luke mirrors this view and points out that in most areas people take a considered risk when setting up their THOW. "I think having some sort of centralised piece of information that says if you satisfy these requirements, then you are safe to stay is what's missing."

Luke and Jess hope their cooperative arrangement with Kylie, Greg and Barbara will showcase a positive demonstration of THOW living in a typical suburban backyard. Perhaps even providing the impetus for the introduction of a fit-for-purpose regulatory framework that supports THOW living as a viable housing option within urban and regional locations across Australia.

THE ASSESSMENT



STRATEGIC

Having a vision is great ... but at the end of the day how does THOW living on a low density residential block really stack up? To answer this question we have reviewed the Project from Strategic, Regulatory and Risk frames of reference.

The methodology used for the Strategic Assessment is qualitative and gauges the Project's level of success by addressing the following Objectives:

Preserving the Backyard while addressing housing pressure. [1]

Contributing to Sustainable Communities. [2]

Enhancing Social Connection, particularly for older people. [3]

... with reference to the Themes:

- Densification
- Affordability
- Ageing Well
- Living Well With Less
- Sustainability
- Flexibility

The Objectives align with contemporary policy statements at the local or state level from documents outlined on the following pages.

DENSIFICATION



Typical redevelopment in the area includes demolishing older houses to construct larger dwellings with minimal backyards or multiple dwelling typologies. The THOW is a non-permanent densification of the lot which retains the backyard (as per *Brisbane's Future Blueprint*) and provides the flexibility for landowners to continue or discontinue the shared use. This is organic densification - done by residents, low scale, future proofed.

AFFORDABILITY

Luke and Jess own their own dwelling without the much larger outlay of purchasing land. The Project has provided them with access to land they could not otherwise afford. Barbara has the ability to retain her backyard without bearing the increasing costs to maintain it when she can no longer do it herself.

AGEING WELL

Barbara enjoys looking after her cottage garden out front and appreciates the supplementary produce Luke and Jess give her from their productive vegetable garden out the back. The backyard 'patch' remains a safe and familiar space Barbara can enjoy without the worry of it becoming a physical or psychological burden.

LIVING WELL WITH LESS

The existing dwelling was renovated to suit Barbara's needs without increasing its footprint. This means the backyard area has been entirely preserved. No earthworks or additional infrastructure were required to accommodate the THOW (width 2.5m | length 7.2m | trailer length 8.7m) on the Site. The investment of time and energy by Luke and Jess enhances the appeal of the backyard for everyone's enjoyment.

STRATEGIC

OBJECTIVE 1: PRESERVING THE BACKYARD

Source document: *Brisbane's Future Blueprint* [1] Principle 4 - Protect the Brisbane backyard and our unique character:

The 4 actions identified are:

- **01** Stop townhouses and apartments being built in areas for single homes.
- **02** Ensure that suburban development fits in with its surroundings.
- **03** Preserve the space between homes by ensuring minimum setbacks on property boundaries.
- 04 Protect our character and heritage by demanding greater enforcement powers and penalties from the Queensland Government.

STRATEGIC

AFFORDABILITY

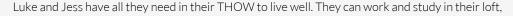
By locating their THOW on private land close to employment, Luke and Jess can now save for their future.

They often utilise public and active transport options and spend time at local shops and cafes.

With Luke and Jess living on the Site, Barbara has the support she needs to maintain the Backyard without having to pay for outside help.

She also shops locally and utilises the services located within the suburb.

LIVING WELL WITH LESS



entertain friends and family and have time to enjoy their permaculture and cooking hobbies - all within 20m².

Barbara has downsized from a 3-bedroom townhouse to a much smaller 2-bedroom cottage.

This is the perfect amount of space for her needs now and into the future.

SUSTAINABILITY

Besides requiring less materials due to its size, the THOW has integrated many recycled elements such as beautiful timber pieces. It has offgrid systems for power and waste water, a waterless composting toilet and will later collect its own rainwater. Connections to main services have only required a water hose and an outdoor extension power lead. Siting made use of the existing concrete hardstand.

The THOW has added a 1-bedroom / 1-bathroom dwelling to the property with minimal environmental impacts.

 $This household structure \ actively \ contributes \ to \ making \ it \ an \ inclusive \ and \ multi-generational \ community.$

OBJECTIVE 2: SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

Source document: Working Together For Better Housing and Sustainable Communities Discussion Paper^[2]
Theme 1 Sustainable Communities:

A more holistic approach to housing is needed; one which considers the impacts of housing on productivity and economic growth, health, wellbeing and social inclusion and the environment. This approach also needs to take into account the cost of living in and travelling from that home to employment and services. By considering the cost of living we can better meet the needs of future Queenslanders through creating sustainable communities that are great places to live.

STRATEGIC

DENSIFICATION

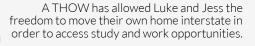
The Project increases potential for incidental and purposeful interactions between Barbara, Luke and Jess. In general there are more opportunities for social connection via the Site's shared spaces compared to typical developments.

Backyard vs Balcony - Connection vs Isolation

AGEING WELL

Barbara has the safety, security and comfort in knowing that two young adults are close by. The developing relationship also creates companionship and friendship. By staying in her own home, she is assured of remaining close to family members and can also maintain engagement with friends and community groups.

FLEXIBILITY



Barbara, Kylie and Greg are happy in the knowledge that they are not locked into expensive or irreversible changes to the Site should circumstances change for Barbara.

OBJECTIVE 3: SOCIAL CONNECTION

Source document: Seniors' Strategy 2012-2017: Delivering a seniors-friendly city^[3] Vision theme 1: Friendly and safe ^[21] Key finding: Growing risk of social isolation

The Strategic priorities identified are:

- 1.1 Outreach to seniors who are at risk.
- 1.2 Stronger local neighbourhood connections.
- **1.3** Safety and support in extreme weather events.
- 1.4 Inclusion of groups such as veterans, culturally and linguistically diverse seniors and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender seniors.
- **1.5** Support for affordable housing.



REGULATORY

The THOW at the centre of this Project is a moveable dwelling registered as a roadworthy vehicle classified under the *Motor Vehicle Standards Act 1989* (Cth). Its ownership is separate to the tenure of the land on which it is sited.

Whilst planning schemes regulate the land use for caravan parks and relocatable home parks, a THOW sited on residential property typically presents a planning conundrum. Moveable dwellings are not legislated under the Queensland *Building Act 1975*, as they do not constitute building works as defined under the Act. As such, they cannot be easily categorised within planning schemes as a permanent dwelling type and typically fall under relevant local laws that apply to temporary homes or camping on private lands.

THOWs, however, are neither temporary (people often choose to live in them permanently) nor are they caravans.^[15]



REGULATORY

The current planning and building regulatory environment for THOW options is highly uncertain and varies significantly from locality to locality and State to State. This presents barriers to THOW owners and occupants who seek long term habitation on residential sites, creates confusion for the market, consumers and regulators and leads to ad hoc outcomes.^[22]

We believe safety and amenity requirements are common sense from both planning and construction perspectives. For the second assessment we have drafted a framework which could be developed further into an established development assessment or permitting tool for THOWs. The Australian Tiny House Association is also actively working in this space and has developed a Tiny House Local Planning Policy Template^[23] as a guidance document to support the legal approval of tiny houses in local areas.

When on private property, we consider THOWs to be comparable with a secondary dwelling. From a planning perspective, it would seem consistent that similar constraints be applied for this land use scenario.

In regard to the construction of a THOW, separate assessment of the trailer, as well as the attached 'house,' is required.

CRITERIA

Typical planning constraints for secondary dwellings generally include a maximum distance from the primary dwelling and a maximum floor area. Assessment criteria could include:

- Ensuring enough space is available within the lot to accommodate the moveable dwelling prescribed to achieve a minimum percentage of open space.
- Allowing reasonable access to daylight and sunlight for neighbouring dwellings and private open space.
- Ensuring that the siting of a moveable dwelling does not negatively impact on the privacy and amenity of adjoining residents.
- Providing sufficient and safe vehicle access and off-street parking for residents.
- Siting the moveable dwelling on a hard standing and welldrained surface.
- Ensuring no adverse stormwater drainage impacts or flooding of upstream, downstream or adjoining land.
- Ensuring that the siting of a moveable dwelling complies with the requirements of any planning scheme overlay affecting the property.

RESPONSE

The THOW has been situated to comply with the standard setback distances within the planning scheme for the Site's zone and built

The THOW occupants have been provided with access to the existing carport for both parking and storage. A new multi-use covered area has been built that provides a second car space for the use of the primary dwelling resident.

The lot is a level block of land. The trailer of the THOW has clearance above ground and is sited on an existing concrete hardstand. No adverse drainage impediments have been added or created.

The THOW has a gutter diversion to the carport roof which discharges onto mulched garden beds away from any dwellings on-site or neighbouring properties. This water will be harvested for use when a tank is installed.

The THOW has been orientated to maximise the privacy of the THOW occupants, primary dwelling resident and adjoining neighbours. Screening using planted and potted vegetation has been added to improve amenity.

The Site is clear of any overlay that prevents a secondary dwelling.

REGULATORY

PLANNING - Siting and Amenity

Siting of the THOW should ensure appropriate setbacks for privacy from the surrounding dwellings and adequate outdoor spaces for the use of the THOW occupants and general amenity for the property.



Like caravans, access to potable water can be provided via a garden hose connected to an outdoor tap. Mains electricity can be supplied via a suitable outdoor extension lead to an outdoor power point.

Sewer and greywater connection is not addressed as THOWs generally have their own self-contained facilities. If a THOW is not constructed with a toilet that meets appropriate standards. separate arrangements will need to be made for the THOW occupant to access the primary dwelling's toilet. Assessment criteria could include:

- Ensure the moveable dwelling has access to potable water.
- Ensure the moveable dwelling has safe access to electricity.
- Ensure the moveable dwelling occupants have access to refuse disposal facilities.
- Ensure the moveable dwelling has the approved systems to treat sewer and waste water to an appropriate standard for
- Ensure all sewage and waste water from a movable dwelling is:
 - discharged to a reticulated sewerage system; or
 - discharged to a septic tank system approved by the council: or
 - collected, removed and disposed of in a manner approved by council and in accordance with relevant state requirements.

RESPONSE

A mains water tap at the rear of the primary dwelling is accessible for the THOW's use

The THOW is self-sufficient for power with solar panels installed on the carport roof and power fed via an appropriate outdoor external lead. In exceptional circumstances an outdoor extension lead can be run from a power point in the fuse box or in the event of a power outage a petrol generator can be used as a back-up.

The THOW has a *Grey Flow* grey water recycling system which discharges via a buried distribution pipe to mulched garden beds at the rear of the lot. The system is certified under the WaterMark Certification of the Australian Building Code Board and has been installed as per the specifications.

In 2019 the Queensland Government updated its Plumbing and Waste Water Code with a specific requirement for waterless composting toilets to meet AS/NZS 1546.2 On-site domestic wastewater treatment units - Waterless composting toilets. The THOW is equipped with a *Nature's Head* composting toilet system that does not meet this standard. The manufacturer's products are however standard installations in caravans, recreational vehicles (RVs) and vessels.

The primary dwelling and THOW share refuse disposal facilities.

REGULATORY

PLANNING - Access to Utilities

THOWs generally incorporate some energy self-sufficiency (e.g. solar panels) however the provision of potable water is not often built-in and requires external access. It is considered that THOWs should be provided with the ability to connect with mains water and electricity should they be required.

CRITERIA

Assessment criteria could include:

- Emergency services have access to all dwellings (fixed and moveable) on the lot. Consideration should include landscaping and fencing not creating barriers.
- The moveable dwelling is fitted with a smoke alarm and a fire extinguisher.
- The moveable dwelling is prevented from overturning or exhibiting excessive movement in high winds.

CRITFRIA

Assessment criteria could include:

- Ensuring the trailer has a compliance plate indicating it meets the requirements of the *Vehicle Standards Bulletin 1*.
- Evidence of the trailer weigh bridge certification showing that it complies with its design parameters.

RESPONSE

The THOW is situated at the end of the driveway with The THOW is situated at the end of a driveway. On-site parking facilities allow unimpeded access for emergency vehicles. Car parking facilities allow vehicles to be parked without impeding access.

A smoke / carbon monoxide alarm is fitted in the kitchen and a fire extinguisher is installed and current.

The THOW is designed for cyclonic wind loads (C2 in accordance with AS 4055-2012 Wind loads for housing) as the vehicle travels on the road (100km/hr winds). Current location is determined as N2 (non-cyclonic wind loads). The THOW is not currently anchored to the ground.

RESPONSE

The trailer was built to the requirements of the *Vehicle Standards Bulletin 1* and Luke and Jess obtained a weigh bridge certificate showing compliance to the trailer's load capacity and overall dimensions.

REGULATORY



PLANNING - Emergency and Safety

Planning schemes include provisions that ensure emergency services have appropriate access to buildings. Siting of a THOW should give consideration to emergency personnel being able to access the occupants.

Like caravans, THOWs might be prone to overturning in high winds and should be appropriately secured. Removable anchoring systems exist that allow a THOW to be tied-down to the ground when parked. These can be removed when the THOW is moved off-site.



CONSTRUCTION - Trailer

Trailers are road registered vehicles regulated under the *Motor Vehicle Standards Act 1989* (Cth) (to be replaced by the *Road Vehicle Standards Act 2018* (Cth) expected to come into full force in July 2021).

The Vehicle Standards Bulletin 1 under the Act specifies the design and manufacturing standards applicable to road trailers with an aggregate trailer mass (ATM) of 4.5 tonnes (4,500kg) or less. The requirements include height, width and weight which are critical parameters for the 'house' component of a THOW.

CRITERIA

Caravans and manufactured homes are constructed against relevant industry standards. In the absence of an equivalent industry code for THOWs, a combination of National Construction Code (NCC) and caravan related standards can be referred to. Assessment criteria could include:

- The moveable dwelling meets the construction standards of the NCC Volume 2 (Construction of residential buildings) and Volume 3 (Plumbing and drainage) for Class 1a buildings. This may be achieved by satisfaction of a combination of Performance Requirements and Deemed-to-satisfy provisions. Note: ancillary structures such as decks may also need to comply with the NCC requirements.
- Electrical wiring for the moveable dwelling shall comply with AS 3000:2018 Wiring rules or AS 3001:2008 Electrical installations transportable structures and vehicles including their site supplies.
- Gas fittings for the moveable dwelling shall comply with AS 5601.2:2013 LP gas installations in caravans and boats for non propulsive purposes and be installed by a Licensed Plumbing Contractor.

RESPONSE

The building of THOWs is currently not regulated. Luke and Jess completed the build themselves, assisted by Luke's father and licenced tradespeople, referencing these standards where possible:

- NCC Volume 2 and Volume 3.
- AS 5601.2:2013 LP gas installations in caravans and boats for non propulsive purposes.
- AS 3000:2018 Wiring rules or AS 3001:2008 Electrical installations -transportable structures and vehicles including their site supplies.

The electrical wiring for the THOW was installed by a licenced electrical contractor and a signed certificate provided.

A retrospective inspection to have a building certificate issued will be difficult as the framing, insulation and plumbing is usually assessed during a milestone inspection before the wall cladding is installed. As yet there is no pathway for formally inspecting a THOW for the purposes of building compliance as it does not fit within the NCC's building classification structure. Luke and Jess have photographed their build in detail to provide evidence of the construction methodology.

REGULATORY

CONSTRUCTION - House

THOWs create a regulatory quandary as they do not fit the definition of a building – they are not a fixed permanent structure. However, except for the trailer that they are typically built on, THOWs are constructed with all the features of a standard house, classified under the National Construction Code (NCC) as a Class 1a building.

The 'house' should be built to NCC Volume 2 (Construction of residential buildings) requirements for a Class 1a building although compliance to some aspects will require a Performance Requirement approach (e.g. energy efficiency, minimum ceiling height, staircases).

The NCC does not apply to moveable dwellings such as caravans and manufactured homes. There are industry standards that have been adopted to ensure that caravans and manufactured homes are built to provide a minimum level of safety and comfort for their occupants. A similar approach could be taken for THOWs.



RISK

Our last assessment considers risk from tenancy and insurance perspectives.

AGREEMENT

If a THOW is to be located on a property with occupants that are unrelated to the residents of the main dwelling, a formal tenancy agreement is highly recommended for the protection of both parties. Tenancy agreement templates are a good starting point to draft a document tailored to each specific situation as they provide prompts for issues to consider that might otherwise be overlooked.

INSURANCE

Insurance is also an important consideration and will differ between sites and circumstances. All parties should have an up front discussion about their insurance status and the level of risk they are prepared to accept before entering into a co-living agreement.

We suggest it is the landowners prerogative to outline the insurance parameters they require when hosting a THOW on residential property. We also believe the best scenario is for both parties to have property and third party liability insurance as in many cases it is unclear who is liable if an event happens.

RISK

RESPONSE

The Queensland Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008 caters for the leasing of a 'moveable dwelling' under both shortterm and long-term leases. This document was used as the template for the agreement put in place for this Project.

Luke and Jess do not pay rent but contribute an agreed number of hours to assist in the continuing improvements to the property including building the new carport, landscaping and working on the food production area.

With an agreement in place, risk is minimised for both parties.

AGREEMENT

The items of an agreement for the land being leased to THOW occupants should stipulate the following:

- Length of the lease.
- Rental amount and method of payment.
- Area being leased exclusively for the THOW.
- Access, siting and orientation of the THOW.
- Privacy and security for all residents (e.g. screening).
- Access to and payment for services (e.g. electricity, water, bins)
- Exclusions or limitations for the use of the land by the THOW occupant (e.g. no pets, no outdoor open fires).
- Public Liability, Building and Contents insurances.
- Exit clause for landowner and THOW occupant.

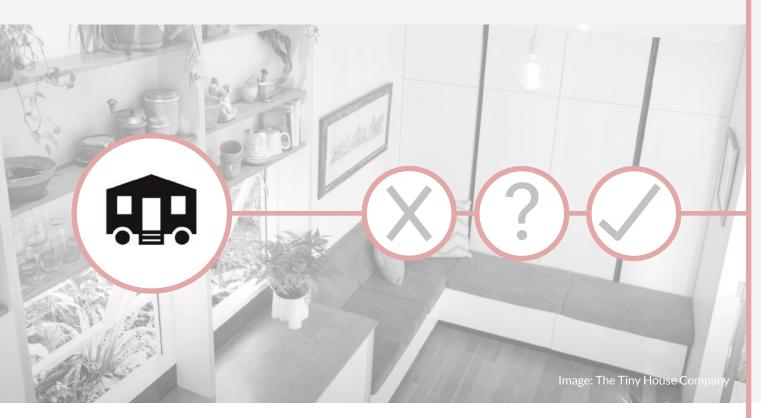
RESPONSE

A small number of insurance companies will provide insurance to land owners hosting a THOW (household) and THOW owners (caravan/trailer) providing a typical level of property, liability and injury cover. The Royal Automobile Club of Queensland (RACQ) assessed this Project finding that two separate insurance products would be offered:

Home Insurance | Owner / occupier of the land / main premises | Status - Currently Insured with no increase to premium | Risk is minimised. Caravan and Trailer Insurance | Owner / occupier of the THOW | Status - Currently not insured | There is risk to both THOW and land owner for litigation around unforeseen events. Refer to Appendix 2 for an expanded outline of the insurance risk assessment.

INSURANCE

At present, insurance providers find THOWs difficult to classify. Most companies do not insure them. Similarly, landowners may question if hosting a THOW changes their risk profile or compromises an existing property insurance policy. As THOW become more commonplace, it is assumed the insurance industry will respond with more certainty and provide affordable products for property and THOW owner / occupiers.



SUMMARY

We have assessed the project under the three frameworks. The results vary but overall we have found that THOW living in a residential setting does stack up. At a strategic level, THOWs tick all the boxes; they are a viable option for permanent and temporary housing in a range of situations. At the Regulatory and Risk levels, there are clear barriers and question marks - THOWs sit in a relatively 'grey' area. They are undefined in planning legislation and unregulated in building legislation - this creates confusion for the market, consumers and regulators and leads to ad hoc outcomes.^[22]

We have proposed two recommendations to enable THOWs to become a supported form of housing. None are beyond the realm of possibility ... they are practical and achievable if there is a willingness to say 'Yes'. We hope these Recommendations become a catalyst to open further dialogue.

The Key Findings and Recommendations follow.

KEY FINDINGS

The broad strategic Objectives of the Project have been achieved.

THOWs are not currently treated as a supported form of housing within most planning schemes. Despite this, the Project has shown that a THOW can be sited on a property to comply with the typical requirements for a secondary dwelling.

Occupancy of secondary dwellings is often restricted to family members. The Project falls within a jurisdiction where up to five unrelated persons can make up a household where a secondary dwelling is involved. As per the household definition the THOW occupants in the Project intend on living at the property long term (at least 12 months) and share common provisions. Their lease payment is a labour exchange to help maintain the property and establish the shared food production area.

THOWs fall under the definition of a 'moveable dwelling' and as a registered vehicle get caught up in local laws that apply to temporary homes or camping on private land. Most councils have time limits on the length of stay under these local laws. This Project falls within a jurisdiction that allows the siting and occupation of a moveable dwelling on private property with no time limit, provided occupants do not create a nuisance and have access to toilet amenities and refuse disposal facilities.

The THOW owners did not set out to meet the requirements of the NCC as there is no regulation for THOWs to be certified. They did however ensure that all works that had a safety implication were carried out by qualified tradespeople.

Tenancy agreements can be put in place and Queensland legislation includes the short and long-term tenancy of moveable dwellings.

An agreement tailored to the Participants has been put in place for the Project.

Whilst typical products such as house insurance and caravan insurance may cover property and personal injury claims the assignment of liability will depend on the event and circumstances. Each insurance provider may also have a different view on the arrangement for siting a THOW on a residential site. For this Project, the landowner has appropriate house insurance to cover property-related claims.

The THOW owners do not currently hold a caravan insurance policy.

STRATEGIC

REGULATORY - PLANNING

REGULATORY - BUILDING

RISK - AGREEMENTS

RISK - INSURANCE

RECOMMENDATIONS

THOWs are not a fixed structure but do provide for permanent habitation. It is therefore suggested that local laws on temporary homes or camping are not applicable to THOWs. To ensure a consistent approach across local jurisdictions, we propose that any change be driven at the State level and embedded in planning law.

The inclusion of THOWs within the planning framework provides certainty to the community, lending institutions and investors and a regulatory foundation to be able to deliver THOWs in appropriate circumstances. [15]

As a THOW is not a 'building' and therefore sits outside building legislation, THOWs are not contemplated in the National Construction Code (NCC). While the construction of a THOW can generally meet the requirements of a Class 1a building under the NCC, typical design features such as lofts and staircases (and environmental performance) can be challenging.

THOWs be legitimised in planning schemes from a land use perspective and assessed as a new dwelling category. Alternatively, a local government regulation could be enforced under State legislation that sets out the provisions for siting and living in a THOW.

The Australian Building Codes Board (ABCB) publish a guideline document specific to THOWs to enable State or Local governments to mandate a construction standard to achieve a minimum level of safety and comfort.

CONCLUSION BY KYLIE BICKLE





Luke and Jess moved into the 'Backyard' in March 2020 ... the same month that COVID-19 began to escalate in Australia. This unforeseen turn of events tested the co-living arrangement, with results that have exceeded expectations.

Luke and Jess made the Site feel like 'home' during a period of uncertainty and separation from family. For Barbara, the small interactions (a daily chat, the offer to help with shopping, the exchange of home baked treats) have helped keep her safe and connected. While each party is fully self-contained and separate, they are certainly functioning as a 'household'.

The neighbours have been positive about the arrival of a THOW and genuinely interested in the transformation of the Site from tired and characterless, to refreshed and productive. Greg and I have greatly appreciated the enthusiasm and energy of Luke and Jess and it is true to say that friendships have developed. Our experience has been overwhelmingly positive and personally rewarding.

By sharing our story, we have set out to present the many things to consider before inviting a THOW and its occupants onto your property. We hope that planners and regulators acknowledge the potential for this type of co-living arrangement and opt to help, not hinder its emergence, particularly in light of the economic and social challenges we are facing into the foreseeable future.





BY VALERIE BARES

The Project has been the real-life experiment that we needed to explore and test all aspects of siting a THOW on private property and doing it the 'right' way. It has allowed us to imagine solutions on how to bring about clarity and certainty on what a THOW is and how to legally and safely live in one.

I have failed to find a negative outcome or a disadvantage to what the Project has achieved. As an environmental and sustainability professional, I consider the concept presented by the Project to be a viable option for increasing density in our suburbs without the permanent impact of subdividing and constructing more buildings.

Tiny House TV shows are incredibly popular. For many, tiny houses are probably just a romantic notion of a simpler life. For others they represent a home ownership dream. But there is a negative perception of THOWs from some local governments and communities, a NIMBY ism attitude that I believe is derived from 'trashy trailer parks'. We need to break down those perceptions and this resource is a means to that end.

THOWs are a comparatively affordable housing typology as they can be independent of land costs. But the uncertainty created by the current regulatory environment is a deterrent for many who would like to access this option. So I would encourage State and Local government bodies to think outside the box and come on the journey to discover what THOW living is really all about.

APPENDIX 1

TIMELINE

August

Barbara, Kylie and Greg purchase a post war house in Mitchelton

The property is tenanted. Kylie expands her research into Tiny Houses and develops the idea for integrating a THOW on the Site.

November

Landmark precedent for Tiny House on Wheels (THOW)

ESC Consulting is engaged by THOW owners to lodge an appeal against an enforcement notice issued by the Brisbane City Council to obtain a building permit. The Building and Development Dispute Resolution Committee 'formed the view that the THOW does not constitute building works as defined under the Building Act and accordingly the Council's enforcement notice should be set aside'.

February

Shifting landscape for the Tiny House on Wheels

Article published in the Owner Builder magazine in its 2017 No. 199 edition, covering the recent appeal in Brisbane.

January

Small is beautiful. Tiny Houses

ESC Consulting provides support to The Tiny House Company in their endeavours to promote tiny homes as an alternative solution to the design of infill developments. Their beautiful tiny home challenges the planning and building concepts that regulate property development in Brisbane. ESC Consulting works with not-for-profit, private and academic partners to explore flexible, affordable and sustainable, compact housing models.

June Tiny House Planning Resource launched!

A collaborative report produced as an aid for Local and State planning regulators and the broader community to explore potential solutions to housing affordability and density that might be delivered through a range of development scenarios and better understand the emerging Tiny House movement within Australia.

TIMELINE

August

Density and Diversity Done Well Queensland's Department for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning (DILGP)

The purpose of the Density and Diversity Done Well competition was to explore what might be called 'the missing middle' and to propose new housing options for Queensland that meet contemporary community, urban and environmental challenges and provoke thought as to possible solutions to these challenges.

ESC Consulting partner with Hardgrave Studios, The Tiny House Company and Plannery Co to enter the competition - 80% of the entries provide design solutions for the 1-3 storeys (low-rise) category and many of these were premised on compact dwelling infill of existing housing stock.

September

Kylie reviews the Density and Diversity Done Well submissions and is drawn to the Tiny House Village entry. It addresses the integration of Tiny Houses on a typical suburban block. The design closely mirrors her concept design for the Mitchelton Site.

Kylie responds to ESC's invitation ...

October Hi Kylie,

Thanks for your email. It sounds like an interesting project with a lot of potential. Mitchelton is a great suburb - a friend of mine used to own a block near Blackwood St that had similar characteristics.

It would be great to find out more about your concept. Would you like to meet informally over a cuppa with Valerie and myself to discuss further?

September

ESC Consulting post about their collaborative entry: Density and Diversity Done Well | The Tiny House Village - A low-rise solution to medium-density growth in South-East Queensland

At last!! We can now reveal the entry that we prepared for the Density and Diversity Done Well competition! The DILGP is hoping for some demonstration projects to be delivered by both the public and private sector. Anyone interested??

October

Hi Rikki and Valerie.

I recently joined the Tiny Houses Brisbane Facebook page and came across your entry in the Density and Diversity Done Well competition.

My husband and I plan to reno a small 50's house in Mitchelton, Brisbane. The property is totally flat with easy access. The existing house with a footprint of 96m2 is located to the front of the block. In my eyes its a perfect site for the addition of a tiny house/s and food gardens.

Your entry looks quite similar to what I have conceptualised for our block. Would our location / scenario be of interest to you re: a demonstration project? If yes it would be great to speak further.

TIMELINE

November

Rikki, Valerie and Kylie meet for the first time

There is a synergy of personalities and ideas. They drive by the Site and all agree there is great potential for a future project integrating a THOW. Kylie informally 'pitches' her vision for a reimagined backyard.

November

The Australian Civic Trust Hugh Stretton Award for Innovation in Residential Development

The Trust is an independent, voluntary association seeking views on civic issues by community representatives, leaders and experts to encourage higher civic standards with a primary focus on the social and environmental issues in urban design. ESC Consulting and collaborative partners for the Tiny House Planning Resource and the Tiny House Village design are recognised for their work in the tiny house space.

January hon Report 4

Tiny House Deep Dive - Workshop Report

In collaboration with Q Shelter, ESC Consulting hosted and facilitated a Deep Dive Session on the role that Tiny Houses might play in the housing system. The Session involved over 40 participants spanning private, government, community and academic sectors.

Fohruami

February

'Planning for Tiny Houses' Article

The regulatory quandary facing Tiny Houses reaches a wide audience when ESC Consulting's article is published in the Fifth Estate, Australia's leading online newspaper for the sustainable built environment.

February

ESC Consulting speak at the Brisbane Home Show

Common questions fielded from the audience included:

'Where can you put a Tiny House on Wheels?' and 'Do they need a building permit?'

 $Kylie\ and\ Greg\ attend\ the\ Brisbane\ Home\ Show.\ They\ are\ front\ row\ at\ Rikki\ and\ Valerie's\ presentation!$

March Barbara sells her townhouse

She rents close by to Mitchleton until the tenant's lease is up and the renovations can commence on her future home.

May

Melbourne Knowledge Week

ESC Consulting participates in an exhibition program on Tiny Houses.

November

Australian Tiny House Association (ATHA) - Adelaide

At the first event run by the newly created ATHA, ESC Consulting discusses the planning and regulation barriers for Tiny Houses.

December

Australian Planner - Tiny House special edition

Volume 55 Numbers 3-4 September-December 2018

The Planning Institute of Australia dedicates an entire edition to Tiny Houses, presenting a range of research papers and articles.

March

TIMELINE

Community Housing Industry Association Victoria 2018 Conference – Melbourne

ESC Consulting presents on the potential for Tiny Houses as another housing option for Community Housing Providers.

August

Open Talks present Tiny Houses and Eco Villages event (Doonan)

ESC Consulting presents in front of a 500+ gathering on 'Where Can I (legally) Put My Tiny House?'

Kylie and Greg attend and the idea for a project is revisited with Rikki and Valerie.

November

(PIA) Excellence Awards - Commendation Best Planning Ideas - Small Projects

The collaborators of the Tiny House Planning Resource are recognized by the Planning Institute of Australia; the peak body representing planners in Australia for their contribution to planning.

TIMELINE

January

Tenant moves out of Mitchelton house Kylie and Greg commence renovations to the existing residence.

February

A Place for Tiny Houses: exploring the possibilities

Article published in the Owner Builder magazine in its 2019 No. 211 edition, covering the Tiny House Planning Resource for Australia 2017.

March

Polkadot present Tiny Houses and Eco Villages II (Noosa)

The event is attracting ever increasing crowds as well as international guest speaker Bryce Langston of 'Living Big in a Tiny'.

Kylie and Greg attend and catch up with Rikki and Valerie after their presentation. The timing is right for a collaboration!

April

Café catch up - Kylie, Rikki and Valerie The meeting that launches the Project.

June

Renovations are complete and Barbara moves in

Kylie and Greg shift their focus to the back of the block and begin to prepare the Site for the integration of a THOW.

Planning for Tiny Houses | Heather Shearer et al. | Australian Planner, Volume 55, Numbers 3-4 | September-December 2018 Online article published 26th June 2019.

TIMELINE

January Hi Luke and Jess

2020

We have a property in Mitchelton, Brisbane. My mum lives in the house at the front of the property and my husband and I are just starting the foundations for a future 'food forest' in the back. The grand plan is to find an owner of a TH on wheels to move onto our site this year - very soon would be fine. I am documenting the process...it sounds to me like our motivations to down scale and live with less are very similar. Our block is within walking distance to trains, buses, shops, bike ways and parks. Its a lovely neighbourhood. Would you be interested in finding out more?

January

Kylie and Greg meet Luke and Jess for the first time

The very next day they visit the Site and meet Barbara. All feel there is compatibility. Luke and Jess decide to 'move in' for a year.

January Hi Kylie!

Thanks for reaching out. Definitely sounds like we have similar interests and values! At the moment we are just kind of exploring all options so certainly interested...

March

Tiny House Carnival (Sydney)

A two-day carnival that brings in a record crowd for a Tiny House event in Australia. Bryce Langston is joined by US superstars John Weisbarth and Zac Giffin of Tiny House Nation. ESC Consulting delivers its 'Where Can I (legally) Put My Tiny House?' with a NSW flavour.

Marc

Luke, Jess and their THOW arrive

The Project goes live!

November

Reimagining the Backyard: A tiny house on wheels in the suburbs' is completed and launched!

The Insurance Contracts Act 1984 (Cth) states that there is a Duty of Disclosure applicable to all parties of the insurance contract. In this instance it is reasonable to assume that by having a THOW on a property the owners of the land have a duty to advise the insurance company of this change.

It is difficult to say whether any additional premium will be charged due to the personalisation of each Insurer's pricing methodology and products. Due to the sizable limits in place for liability coverage in a standard Household Policy and the relatively low values associated with a THOW, additional premium charges are unlikely.

It is recommended that a conversation with an insurer company regarding the hosting of a THOW on your property happens before any changes or additions are made.

The definition of a THOW is often not explicitly stated in most industry policies. Some companies might include cover of a THOW in a Motor Vehicle Policy, others in a Caravan or Motorhome Policy and some may even consider it to be part of a Household Policy. At RACQ, at this time, a caravan, mobile, transportable home or tiny house will fall into one of two categories:

Covered by a Household Policy

Mounted on blocks or permanently fixed to foundations, services connected (eg electricity, gas, water), not road registered and used as a primary residence.

Covered by a Caravan and Trailer Policy

Mounted or on wheels, not fixed to foundations, has no services permanently connected, is able to be towed on the road.

RACQ also has a Motor Vehicle Insurance Policy that can include Caravan risks in addition to any other Motor Vehicles an owner may have.

APPENDIX 2 | INSURANCE ASSESSMENT

FOR LANDOWNERS

By hosting a THOW on a property in addition to a main residence, the owners have essentially changed the risk profile of the property. There are no standard insurance industry questions relating to this type of change in risk so be prepared to answer different questions depending on the insurance company you are speaking to.

FOR THOW OWNERS

Your insurance company will ask questions pertinent to their individual premium factors. The information you would need in most circumstances would be:

- When was the THOW constructed?
- What are the overall dimensions?
- What are the main construction methods and materials use?
- What is the carrying capacity of the THOW?
- What is the road registration status?
- Is the THOW secured to permanent foundations?
- Does it have services connected?
- What is the reasonable sum insured?
- Where is the THOW located and how is it sited on the property?

It is important that you provide the insurance company with a detailed and current value of your THOW. This will comprise all the costs likely to be incurred should substantial damage happen to the THOW. Given the individual nature of each THOW design and build, the sum insured may be more than the base purchase price. Include any additional items or customised features.

The more recent your purchase, the more likely items will be benchmarked to current markets rates. Be mindful that age, condition and any modifications made after your initial purchase can impact the sum insured.

Contents can be described differently by insurers so refer to the Product Disclosure Statement (PDS). RACQ defines contents as Household goods located in your THOW. The RACQ Caravan and Trailer Policy has a basic level of contents only and refers to a limit. In order to obtain a more detailed and accurate contents cover you will need to specify the values you require over that limit. This is referred to as an optional benefit and will require an additional premium to be paid.

Common across the industry is the inclusion of Third Party Liability Insurance. Essentially, this cover is for injury or death to visitors to your property be it a caravan, THOW or a mainstream house. The best scenario is for both parties to have property and third party liability insurance as in many cases it is unclear who is liable if an event happens.

INSURANCE ASSESSMENT RACQ

FOR THOW OWNERS

Building costs and contents should be itemised separately when calculating the sum insured.

Example of building costs:

- Design fees
- Trailer costs and engineering
- Material purchases
- Labour costs
- Certification costs
- Internal fixtures and fittings
- Solar panels, battery management systems, storage batteries

Example of contents:

- Unfixed furniture and furnishings
- Electrical appliances
- Domestic goods like pots, plates and glasses
- Clothing
- Personal effects

Insurance companies also provide Third Party Liability Insurance.

APPENDIX 3 | FOOTNOTES & REFERENCES

Brisbane's Future Blueprint | Brisbane City Council | 2018

Seniors' Strategy 2012- 2017: Delivering a seniors-friendly city | Brisbane City Council | 2012

The historical predecessor of the granny flat is the dower house, being a small home built on the property of a large central house. Traditionally a widowed matriarch would move to the dower house, making way for the incoming heir within the main dwelling. These types of homes originated in England, spread through the UK, then Australia and New Zealand. The term 'granny flat' was coined because it is a popular way for families to accommodate ageing parents. In Australia a granny flat is defined as an extension (attached or detached) to an existing dwelling house in a residential zone known as a 'secondary dwelling' and each local government will determine their own development criteria for this dwelling type.

The Life and Death of the Australian Backyard | Tony Hall | CSIRO Publishing | August 2010

Working Together For Better Housing and Sustainable **Communities Discussion Paper** | Queensland Government Department of Housing and Public Works | 2016

Census of Population and Housing: Estimating homelessness, 2016: Key Findings | Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), https:/ /www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/housing/census-populationand-housing-estimating-homelessness/2016 | 2018

The Queensland State planning regulations define a household as 1 or more individuals who live in a dwelling with the intent of living together on a long-term basis, and make common provision for food and other essentials for living. Local governments then apply this definition within their planning scheme to constrain or limit the number of people living in different types of accommodation. (e.g. Brisbane City Council allows up to 5 unrelated adults to form a household).

Mitchy Memories - Local History Sites from the Mitchelton Turns 150 Digital Celebration Project | Funded by Brisbane City Council and The Enoggera Ward Committee | 2007

150 Years: Nundah families, 1838-1988. How Beauteous Are Their Feet: The Story of Zion's Hill, The First Mission Station in Queensland.

Grope, L.B. | Margaret Outridge (ed.) | Watson, Ferguson & Co | 1989

Definitions of **moveable dwellings** can usually be found in tenancy legislation and regulations for caravan parks and can encompass everything from tents to motorhomes. Depending on the wording, THOWs will often meet the definition. Examples include:

From Schedule 2 Dictionary of Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008 (Qld): a moveable dwelling means a caravan or manufactured home where a caravan is a trailer (a) designed principally for residential purposes; and (b) designed to be attached to and towed by a self-propelled vehicle; and (c) that, as originally designed, was capable of being registered under a law of the State about the use of vehicles on public roads.

From NSW Local Government (Manufactured Home Estates, Caravan Parks, Camping Grounds and Moveable Dwellings) Regulation 2005: A Moveable dwelling is (a) any tent, or any caravan or other van or other portable device (whether on wheels or not), used for human habitation, or (b) a manufactured home.

RetroSuburbia - The Downshifter's Guide to a Resilient Future | David Holmgren | Melliodora | February 2018

FOOTNOTES & REFERENCES

Mitchy Memories – Local History Sites from the Mitchelton Turns 150 Digital Celebration Project | Extract from report dated 25th October 1913, Department of Public Instruction Queensland by George Harrap, The Under Secretary, Department of Public Instruction | Funded by Brisbane City Council and The Enoggera Ward Committee | 2007

The Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES) notes the risk of future global food shortages is increasingly likely given the increased severity of harsh weather events and the challenges posed by climate change and that urban development is consuming some of Australia's most fertile and productive agricultural land. Underutilised urban spaces (public and private) are valuable resources that can play a significant part in making communities more self sufficient and resilient into the future.

Interest in Tiny Houses is Growing, So Who wants them and Why? | Heather Shearer | The Conversation | 2017

FOOTNOTES & REFERENCES

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Planning for Tiny Houses | Heather Shearer, Valerie Bares, Rikki Pieters, Beth Winkle and Kate Meathrel | Australian Planner, Volume 55, Numbers 3-4, pp. 147-156 | September-December 2018

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Downsizing Amongst Older Australians, AHURI Final Report No. 214 | Judd, B., Liu, E., Easthope, H., Davy, L. and Bridge, C. | Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute Limited | 2014

The **Seniors' Strategy 2012-2017; Delivering a seniors-friendly city** identifies Brisbane City Council's broad strategic priorities for seniors in relation to the eight themes of the **Living in Brisbane 2026 Vision**.

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Rental Affordability Snapshot: Brisbane Metropolitan Area | Anglicare Southern Queensland | April 2019

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Housing Affordability: Re-imagining the Australian Dream | Daley, J., Coates, B., and Wiltshire, T. | Grattan Institute | 2018

A Place for Tiny Houses: exploring the possibilities; Tiny House Planning Resource for Australia 2017 | Valerie Bares, Rikki Pieters, Lara Nobel, Beth Winkle, Kate Meathrel, Heather Shearer and Fiona Caniglia | Brisbane | 2017

TO BE CONTINUED • . . .

