

# The Benefits of Co-operative Housing in Australia



***“The benefits of the housing co-operative model can be profound, with the unique requirement for active participation amongst their tenant-members driving positive outcomes, including long-term housing stability, a strong sense of home and community, and the development of skills that we found to be directly connected to employment and educational outcomes<sup>1</sup>.”***

Professor Louise Crabtree-Hayes

## Key Points<sup>2</sup>

### Costs and Return on Investment:

- Delivery costs of co-operative housing are on par with other forms of community housing.
- Co-operative housing delivery costs are less than other forms community housing when there are higher levels of co-operative participation in tenancy and property activities.
- Active participation by co-operatives equates directly to a number of additional benefits for tenant members (many not seen in other forms of community housing) which in turn means a greater social return on investment.

### Social benefit for tenant members:

- The benefits of living in a co-operative can be profound and life changing.
- The most prominent benefit for tenants living in a co-operative was the **high levels of social capital they experience**. this level of social capital is not seen in tenants in other forms of rental housing (social and private).
- Tenant-members gain the following benefits from living and participating in rental housing co-operatives:
  - Skills development
    - Employment and educational outcomes, as a result of skills development
    - Satisfaction with housing stability, quality, and security
    - Greater social capital and networks of reciprocity, mutuality, and trust
    - Sense of health and wellbeing, including that of children
    - Sense of agency, empowerment, and voice

<sup>1</sup> [First national study reveals housing co-operatives could be part of the solution to Australia's rental crisis | Western Sydney University](#)

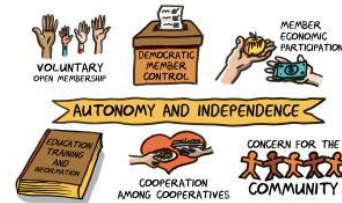
<sup>2</sup> Crabtree-Hayes, L., Ayres, L., Perry, N., Veeroja, P., Power, E. R., Grimstad, S., Stone, W., Niass, J. & Guity, N. (2024). *The Value of Housing Co-operatives in Australia. Project Report*. Sydney: Institute for Culture and Society. <https://doi.org/10.26183/0xpp-g320>

## Benefits of the Principles of Co-operation

- Unique to co-operative housing is the requirement for active participation amongst their tenant-members. The more that a tenant-member engages and participates in the running of their own co-operative, the more benefits they report.
- The more closely a co-operative aligns and commits to the 7 principles of co-operation, the greater the social benefits/return on investment the co-operative members experience.



## Co-operative Housing



## Intentional Communities and Co-location

- Co-operative housing is a beneficial option for marginalised and/or vulnerable communities.
- Social capital, voice and empowerment and a sense of belonging increase when co-operative form around an additional purpose then just housing. I.e. to address the needs of a specific target group.
- Social capital and a sense of neighbourhood and belonging increase when a co-operative is co-located.



## Choice Control Co-operation



## Benefits of Adaptability and Diversity

- Co-ops respond to a range of social and cultural needs, values and aspirations of their tenants, therefore supporting a diversity of co-op housing delivery practices is highly valuable and contributes to the positive social outcomes of co-operatives as a whole.
- There is no one 'right way' to do co-operative housing. Co-operatives work best when there is an enabling environment and when they are supported to develop and exist in a form that best suits their specific needs and goals.