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PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Witchcliffe Ecovillage vision is to create a model of a highly sustainable, self-reliant community in a regional village setting. It will incorporate the best of 21st century technology and human settlement design to enable the Ecovillage community to produce as much energy as it consumes; be self-sufficient in water; care for the local environment; generate ongoing economic and social opportunities for the area; be socially diverse; and be self-sufficient in fresh food produce.

Why now?

We are facing a perfect storm.

Social problems such as increasing isolation and loss of community, rising rates of depression and anxiety, homelessness and suicide are a scourge on our society. Economic hazards of uncontrollable debt, housing unaffordability, employment insecurity and homelessness are only some of the impacts facing everyday people. Environmental chaos in the form of climate change, waste pollution, resource scarcity and mass extinctions are having wide-reaching consequences from which no human is immune.

Some say the world is at a tipping point in terms of human impact on our environment. How we live on this earth matters. We need to take responsibility for our actions and strive to do better. We believe that action starts at home, in our communities and our daily lives.

The Witchcliffe Ecovillage strives to lead by example in being socially, environmentally and economically responsible to the highest degree. We hope not only

to encourage and support our future residents to lead sustainable, enjoyable, healthy, well-connected lives but to raise the industry bar of best practice and redefine what it means to create a sustainable human settlement.

While our reach may be small, our impact has the potential to be great.

Our story so far

The Witchcliffe Ecovillage is unreservedly ambitious in its goal to create the most sustainable residential community possible.

Despite this worthy objective, having the knowledge and expertise to deliver and solid financial backing, the project team has been mired in bureaucracy. The unique nature of the project and its boundary-pushing innovations has led to lengthy delays that has drastically prolonged the time estimated to achieve planning approvals and start construction. However, after a decade of uncompromising attention to detail and hard work by

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the development team in guiding the project through the planning and initial design phases, the project is finally underway and in February 2019 started Stage 1 with the construction of two new dams. Marketing began in earnest in late 2019. Civil construction of services, roads and drainage, and sales, is set to begin in early 2020. The project is anticipated to take between six to nine years to completely build out.

Location

The Ecovillage is located in the quirky, historic hamlet of Witchcliffe, 280km south of Perth and just 10 minutes from Margaret River in Western Australia's spectacular South West. The region is a biodiversity hotspot embraced by sea, forest and abundant farmland. It is renowned for its world class premium wine and food, pristine surf beaches, ancient limestone caves and stunning forests and is, unsurprisingly, a tourist mecca.

The Sustainable Settlements project office is located on the Ecovillage site at 10437 Bussell Highway, Witchcliffe WA 6286. The Ecovillage will significantly expand the existing Witchcliffe townsite, which we hope will have many positive physical and social effects on the community. The site runs directly behind the main street retail precinct extending north and south along Bussell Highway.

Site history

The 120ha (300 acre) Ecovillage site was previously occupied by two farms: an organic vineyard to the south and a dairy farm to the north. Prior to that, they were originally group settlement farms, owned and farmed for many years by the Fox family, (hence the Ecovillage's vineyard name, 'Foxcliffe'.)

How is the Ecovillage funded and who owns it?

The developer-led Ecovillage is wholly privately funded through a 50/50 joint venture partnership between Sustainable Settlements Pty Ltd and Perron Group Pty Ltd. Mike Hulme is owner and founder of property development company, Sustainable Settlements, the Witchcliffe Ecovillage project manager. The Ecovillage builds on the close 20-year

working relationship between Mike Hulme and the late Stan Perron. The Perron Group is one of Australia's most successful privately-owned companies and home to a diversified investment and business portfolio built over a lifetime by its founder Stan Perron.



Witchcliffe Ecovillage founders and partners, Mike Hulme and Michelle Sheridan.

When did the project begin?

Mike Hulme had been looking for a site on which to develop his vision of a highly sustainable community since 1994 when he first identified this site as having exceptional potential for an ecovillage. Fast forward to 2010 when the 120ha farmland site was then purchased by Sustainable Settlements and Perron Developments.

Since then, it has taken nine years to receive the planning and other regulatory approvals necessary for the project to achieve viability. In February 2019, the project commenced stage one with the construction of two new dams.

Project team

Sustainable Settlements director, Mike Hulme, leads a senior project delivery team who each manage the portfolios of engineering, architecture and planning, landscape design, community engagement, communications and marketing, and horticulture and permaculture. [Visit our website](#) to learn more.

