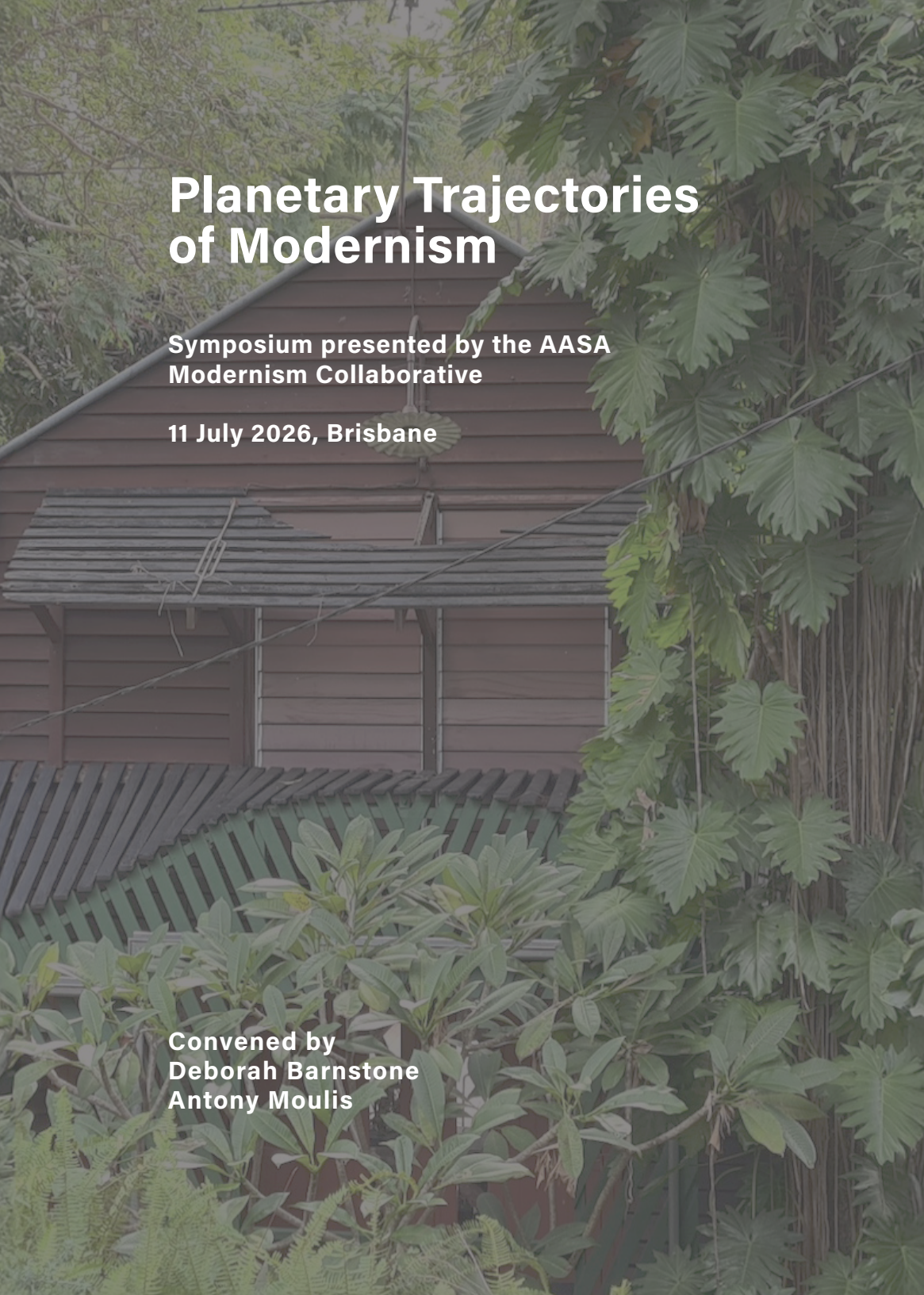

Planetary Trajectories of Modernism

Symposium presented by the AASA Modernism Collaborative

11 July 2026, Brisbane

Convened by
Deborah Barnstone
Antony Moulis

Planetary Trajectories of Modernism

July 2026

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Introduction

Deborah Barnstone and Antony Moulis
AASA Modernism Collaborative

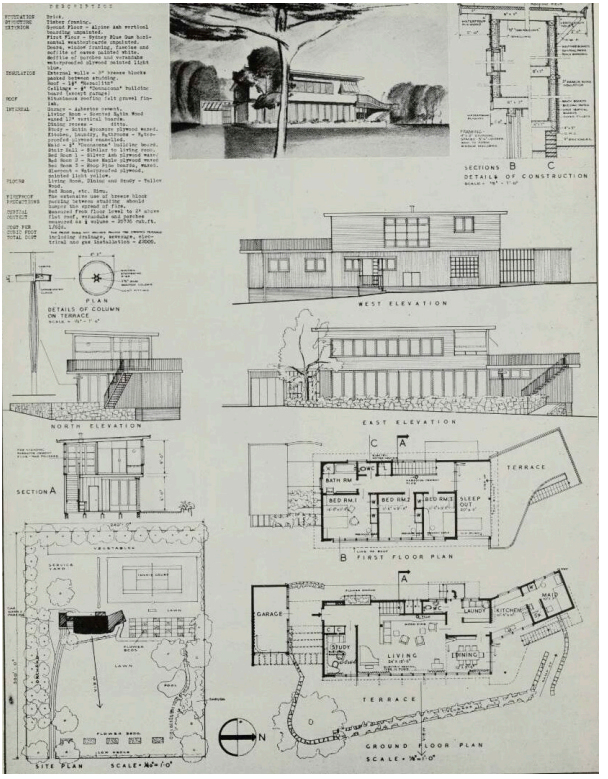
Modernism in Australia and New Zealand has too often been portrayed as peripheral to practice elsewhere because of our remote location in the world. Yet the world has been well connected for centuries rendering the idea of centre and periphery, as well as one-directional flows of ideas, not only outdated, but incorrect. Recent historical scholarship led by figures such as anthropologist Arjun Apparadurai that explores transnational exchange has clearly demonstrated that most cultural concepts result from a dynamic exchange of ideas across national and international boundaries. New concepts arise because of this dialogue so that unsurprisingly, ideas are often probed in many different locations worldwide simultaneously. In recent scholarship, Karen Burns, Philip Goad, Julie Willis, and Katti Williams, to name just a few, have demonstrated the relevance of transnational cultural exchange to the Antipodean context. The third symposium hosted by the Modernism Collaborative seeks to explore planetary trajectories of modernism expressed in architectural projects in Australia and New Zealand whose innovations reflected aspects of universal ecological ideals.

Not only have Indigenous peoples in Australia and New Zealand had a highly developed ecologically sensitive approach to design for thousands of years, but the ecological turn in Australia and New Zealand predates 1960s and 1970s alternative architecture movements by decades. Colonists soon learned that they needed to adapt their architectural designs to local climate in order to ensure that their buildings would withstand the weather, to improve indoor comfort, and to take advantage of the specific conditions they encountered. The wrap-around verandah and sleep-out are two examples of such early design adaptations. Already by the 1920s, architects like William Hardy Wilson were convinced that building performance had to be tied to sensitive design responses to local climate and geography. Leslie Wilkinson's promotion of Mediterranean design features as ideal for Australia followed similar logics. House forms like the Queenslander clearly responded to the heat and humidity while work by architects like Nell McCredie demonstrate the synthesis of British styles like Georgian Revival with local conditions. Furthermore, a national housing shortage and poor-quality housing with substandard sanitary provision, had already been topics of concern. By the interwar period, many recognised the importance of good housing, access to healthcare, and educational attainment to social wellbeing and social cohesion. In architectural terms, concern for social good translated into projects for public transport, hospitals, schools, and affordable housing estates. After the Second World War, heightened sensitivity to the importance of place brought these issues back to the forefront in works by well-studied architects like Ruth and Bill Lucas in

New South Wales, Karl Langer, Edwin Hayes and Campbell Scott in Queensland, and Ian Athfield and Graeme North in New Zealand. Today, ecologically sensitive design and design that considers Indigenous perspectives are considered best practice. From the beginning, modern architects were concerned with a series of issues they perceived to be universally important – design for social good, design for climate and place, design for resource economy – which found productive points of intersection with prevailing conditions and building traditions of Australasia and the Pacific region.

As a collection, the symposium papers present nuanced readings of the circumstances of cultural transfer and encounter revealed through case studies in the making of architecture across Australia and New Zealand. Their significance is to show how the lessons of history might usefully point to issues and ideals in ecological thinking today and the productive yet surprising continuity of past ambitions with agendas of the present moment.

Deborah Barnstone
University of Sydney



Arthur Baldwinson's Timber Homes Competition first-prize winning entry for the 2,000-pound house. Image: Building, September 24, 1938.

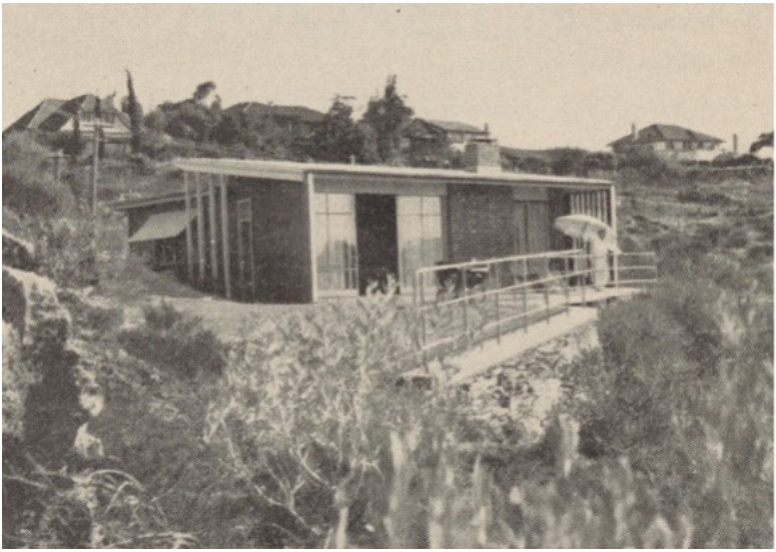
Deborah Ascher Barnstone is professor and head of architecture at The University of Sydney. She is a licensed architect as well as an historian. Barnstone's primary research interests are in interrogating the origins of modernism and exploring the relationships between art, architecture, and culture more broadly. Her monographs include: *The Color of Modernism: Paints, Pigments and the Transformation of Modern Architecture in 1920s Germany* (Bloomsbury Academic: 2022). Her most recent book, together with Donna West Brett, is *Modernist Aesthetics in Transition: Visual Culture of the Weimar Republic and Nazi Germany* (Bloomsbury Academic: 2025).

Outside Living the Australian Way: Arthur Baldwinson's 1938 Timber Home Designs

Arthur Baldwinson's 1938 winning entries for the Timber Homes Competition epitomized 150 years of Australian romance with climate and environment, especially his considered integration of outside areas as extensions of interior domestic space. William Hardy Wilson was one of the first Australian architects to articulate a kind of climate determinism in the early 20th century. Like his close friend Heidelberg School painter, Arthur Streeton, Wilson believed in the importance of Australia's unique landscape and light quality to its art forms. In Old Colonial Architecture he wrote, that the "sovereign guide, or influence, in the development of architecture in a country is Geography, with which climate may be included." He therefore encouraged Australian architects to look to architecture in similar climes for design inspiration – Wilson had parts of the Orient and Mediterranean in mind. He was reacting to what he perceived as the failure of British architectural design methods in Australia; instead of copying the British, whose architecture was a response to a cold and wet climate, it was critical to design houses that made sense in a sun-filled land where it is possible to enjoy outside living year round. These qualities were arguably visible very early on in the sleep outs and wrap-around verandas of colonial Australian houses. By the 1930s, inside-outside living was axiomatic -- to be found in most house designs in the sunroom, veranda, sleep out, terrace, sundeck, or outside living room along with carefully integrated pergolas and garden areas.

Baldwinson's entries for the 1938 competition are different in scale and intent but share one thing – strong connection to the outside. Arranged by the Timber Development Association and the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects, the competition aimed to educate a broad audience about timber's suitability for Australian climatic conditions as well as its cost effectiveness and sustainability. Baldwinson took home first prize in each of the three competition categories: but it was the largest house that demonstrated the true potential of indoor-outdoor living. It combines generous room-sized terraces on both levels, floor-to-ceiling glass on the ground floor making it a sunroom that can open out for a seamless connection to the front terrace, a flower window, and a sleep out. The surrounding landscape includes an orchard, flower beds, a vegetable garden, and a pool. Although inside-outside living was central to international modernism, Australia's climate made living between the two realms possible year-round and in spaces of a scale not practical in colder, wetter climes. By the 1930s, Australia's architecture and lay press had begun to feature special issues on designs for living with the sun and living out of doors; by the 1950s, the "outdoor living room" had arrived for good.

Andrew Murray
University of Melbourne



Leach House, Mosman Park, 1947. Architect: Eric Leach. Photographer: Eric Leach. Source: *The Architect: Journal of the Architects of Western Australia* 3, no. 19 (March 1950): 10.

Andrew Murray is a research fellow in architectural history at the Australian Centre for Architectural History, Urban and Cultural Heritage (ACAHUCH), at the University of Melbourne. He completed his doctorate in Architectural History in 2023 at the University of Melbourne. Upon completion of his PhD, he worked as a caseworker for the Twentieth Century Society in London and is the current vice-president of DOCOMOMO Australia. He has lectured nationally and internationally on Australian architectural history, and his work has been published in *Fabrications, The Journal of Architecture and Historic Environments.*

The Pioneering Environmental Nature of the Leach House

In 1947 the young Western Australian architect Eric Leach built his family house on an isolated street overlooking the Swan River. It was a small one-bedroom home designed for Leach, wife Victoria, and daughter Jane and built to an extremely tight budget on a difficult site, during a period of material shortages. Although small, it was a sensation. It would go on to have what historian Duncan Richards has described as a 'mythic after life.' Only ever partially published, the house was described by local critic John White as the 'first truly modern building in Western Australia' and was the only Western Australian house that Boyd featured in Australia's Home, albeit incorrectly attributed to 'Vernon Leach.' Richards would later describe it as a 'progenitor of a regional or local response to housing' and it became a site of pilgrimage and major significance for local students.

Leach was a modest architect, but an outspoken and ardent critic. He was particularly concerned with designing for the local climate and regional character, and he would openly criticise other architects who failed to design in accordance with the local environment. His own home was thus a built manifesto for how to build a modern house that appropriately and sensitively responded to the particularities of the Western Australian condition. This paper investigates the Leach House, presenting newly discovered drawings and photographs along with family archival sources to unravel this 'mythic' house and its position as a pioneering work of local, environmentally responsive architecture.

Kate Hislop

University of Western Australia

Wandana Flats north-east view from Coghlan Road. K. Hislop 2026

Kate Hislop research interests trace the cultural and visual histories that sit beneath the built environment — nineteenth-century imagery, postcolonial readings of place, the evolving character of Australian suburbs. In the classroom, she is known for bringing these threads to life, helping students understand architecture not only as a technical pursuit but as a cultural and ethical one. Beyond the university, Hislop has been a visible and respected figure in the profession: advising the Architects Accreditation Council of Australia, examining candidates for registration, contributing to the Australian Institute of Architects, and serving as the first woman to edit The Architect in Western Australia. Her appointment to the Board of the Art Gallery of Western Australia reflects the breadth of her cultural engagement and the trust placed in her judgment.

Wandana Flats: an ecological approach to affordable housing at scale

This year marks the completion seventy years ago of the first high rise public housing scheme in Western Australia and one of national significance. Housing 242 flats, Wandana State Housing Complex (or Wandana Flats as it was also known) is a landmark modernist project driven by an ambitious attempt to address the then considerable shortage of affordable housing. For this and other reasons, the project provides key lessons today.

Designed by the reputable Perth architectural office of Krantz & Sheldon, the project incorporates three buildings of variable heights and mass. Ranging from three to ten storeys, they respond to the scale of surrounding streets and are organised around internal gardens. Rectilinear form and monolithic use of warm red brickwork both nod to International Modernist precedents and attend to local material and industry contexts.

The scheme aligns with the ecological interests of the Symposium in three main ways. Firstly, championed by Minister for Housing, Herb Graham, this was an initiative designed to deliver social good: in addition to the affordability objectives, it prioritised community diversity (accommodating a range of household types) and family living (even incorporating a creche). Secondly, as with the majority of the Krantz & Sheldon housing schemes delivered across many decades in metropolitan Perth, the buildings were designed to stringently optimise material efficiency: resource economy was a key lever utilised by the architects to achieve affordability while realising quality urban spaces. Remarkably, the building was delivered in 1956 almost 20% below budget. Thirdly, the complex features generous courtyards and gardens designed by Public Works Department landscape architect, John Oldham. With a focus on amenity for residents, this was an early and innovative integration of native plant species within an urban garden of such scale, and became a prominent feature of Oldham's approach on many significant WA landscape projects in subsequent decades. Seventy years on, this complex endures, after an upgrade in recent years, as a model of integrated social, material and ecological thinking.

Christoph Schnoor & Min Hall

Unitec

Parade of Homes at Wainuiomata. :Photographic negatives and prints of the *Evening Post* newspaper. Ref: EP/1958/0530-F. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand.

Christoph Schnoor is a New Zealand–based architectural historian whose work bridges European modernism and its translation into the cultural landscapes of Aotearoa. A professor in the School of Architecture at Unitec, he is known for his deep scholarship on Le Corbusier and on the émigré architect Ernst Plischke, two figures whose ideas shaped his long-standing interest in how modernism adapts across geographies and political contexts. Across his teaching, writing, and public lectures, Schnoor has become a respected voice in the region's architectural discourse — someone who brings historical precision, cultural sensitivity, and a clear narrative thread to the study of modern architecture.

Min Hall is a New Zealand architect and academic known for her pioneering contributions to sustainable building and architectural education. The first woman to graduate in architecture from Victoria University of Wellington, she went on to build a distinguished career in practice — from working with Peter Beaven to founding Arthouse Architects in Nelson — before transitioning into academia. Her work has long centred on environmentally responsive design, particularly the use of earth and straw-bale construction, a focus she deepened through her Master of Architecture research.

Soil cement and modernism in Wainuiomata: almost a collaboration

There is a moment in postwar New Zealand in which ecological concerns and modernist plans stood side by side: this is in Wainuiomata, in southern Lower Hutt, a part of wider Wellington. In 1958, the Wainuiomata Parade of Homes showed 19 newly designed houses, all as models for sale – and within it, a house developed by the three brothers John, Peter and Chris Anker, and another one designed by Austrian émigré Erwin Winkler and Fritz Eisenhofer.

Anker Construction's 77 sqm 2-bedroom house was soil-cement built, and demonstrated ecological awareness, but was conservative in appearance to appeal to their potential clients. Winkler and Eisenhofer's design for a nearly 100 sqm house with three bedrooms was modernist throughout – almost entirely eliminating any hallways and providing large areas of wall-to-ceiling windows. But their building material was asbestos cement with an aluminium roof.

How might these two houses in dialogue demonstrate the ecological turn in New Zealand?

The choice of the houses is not coincidental: There is – at least anecdotal – evidence that Fritz Eisenhofer was involved in the design of John Anker's own house, also in Wainuiomata, of the mid-50s. And that Eisenhofer designed another house ten years later for John Anker, which was later bought by a night club owner.

Therefore, for this paper, the interest of the encounter between Anker and Eisenhofer lies in the 'almost': Anker and Eisenhofer did not develop one house together, but their two shared model homes may help explore what the relationship between modernism and ecological innovation during the postwar period could mean. What does 'modernity' really mean in this context? Is it the sleek modernist lines or is it the material that is ecologically sound and forward-looking.

Ann Cleary
University of Canberra

Former ACMA Conference Centre, Enrico Taglietti, 1966. Image: A. Cleary 2026

Ann Cleary is an architect and senior lecturer in architecture at the University of Canberra. Ann's experience in architectural and urban design work includes periods in Sweden and the US, with AKOS Arkitektkontor in Göteborg and Mitchell/Giurgola in New York. Her work with MGT Architects and Aldo Giurgola in Australia included many years on the Australian Parliament House project as well as large scale project and competition work in Singapore. Shared insights with Enrico Taglietti extend from her first student years through to professional interfaces and later studio explorations. Ann is a Fellow of the AIA and a recipient of the AIA ACT Chapter Clem Cummings Medal for outstanding contribution to architecture and the built environment. Her research and teaching draws out an understanding of enduring value, explored in studio projects of urban cultural transformation, to bring forward propositions for the city's future thinking and creative dialogues.

Landscape, Form and Profile: Enrico Taglietti's Associated Chamber of Manufacturing Australia Building

Within the idiom of organic modernism, architect Enrico Taglietti conceived a pavilion chamber set in to the earth to express an innate interchange of form and profile, within and of, the natural setting.

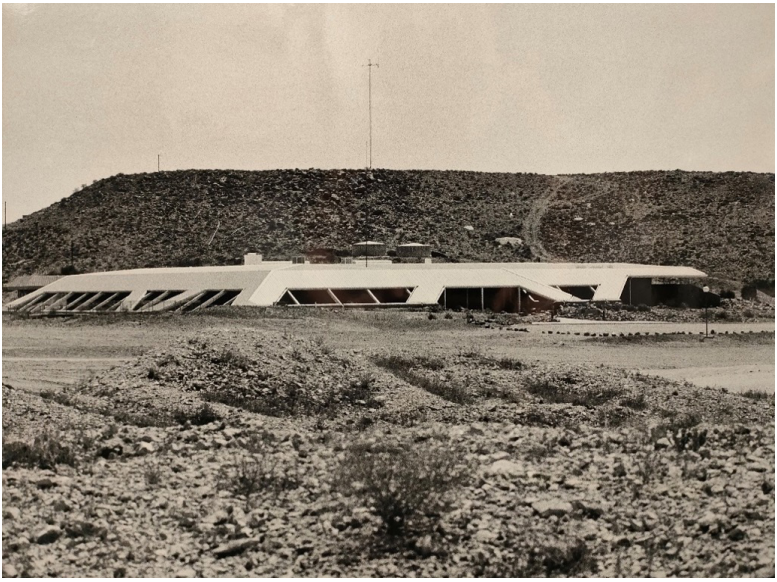
The ACMA Conference Centre Barton, is one of Taglietti's earliest architectural commissions in Canberra, completed in 1966 in the first years after his move from Milan, Italy. The Associated Chambers of Manufacturers Australia approached Taglietti to design a space for conferences and events adjacent to the existing Industry House and within the park-like setting. Taglietti's response was to embed the meeting chamber into the earth as a sculpted form set in to the landscape, to try to achieve a 'total communion between the building, the patrons and the outside environmen.'[1]

The architectural profile of the structure sits as a layering of horizontal platform roofs and water terrace. The poetics and compositional balance of the sculpted profile hovering over the landscape is counterpoised with the partly embedded chamber beneath, where natural light is drawn in thoughtfully around the profiled edges reducing glare and allowing focus for the conference participants.

Taglietti was highly cognisant of environmental concerns and was able to attune the functional, technical and material resolution of the project into an integrated, aesthetically coherent response, correlated to the natural environment of its setting. It represents an exemplar that continues to endure.

[1] Enrico Taglietti, Ed. Ettore, Tadi , *Enrico Taglietti: architect in Australia* p20 printed in Italy by LODIGRAF S.p.A Milano Italy, Feb 1979

Julie Collins
Adelaide University



Berry Polomka Riches and Gilbert, Coober Pedy Hospital. Image: RAIA collection, S127/2/1, Architecture Museum, Adelaide University.

Julie Collins is senior research fellow and director/curator at the Architecture Museum at Adelaide University, where she is responsible for a research collection of architectural drawings, photographs, artefacts, and ephemera. Collins' research is focussed on Australian building and landscape histories. She has published on health-related buildings and landscapes, post-war housing, and the historical significance of architectural records.

Earth sheltered: Coober Pedy Hospital

On the edge of the Great Victoria Desert, some 900 kilometres northwest of Adelaide is the underground town of Coober Pedy. By the 1980s the opal mining town had grown into an administrative and commercial centre serving the surrounding region. With increasing outback tourism, in 1980 the South Australian Government commissioned a new 20 bed hospital to serve the region.[1] Coober Pedy Hospital was designed by Adelaide based architects Berry Polomka Riches and Gilbert Pty Ltd., with landscape architects Ray Holliday and Associates playing an important role in the design development.

During this period, Australian architects became increasingly aware of the need to design for climatic and natural landscape conditions. To provide comfortable and low-energy buildings in this harsh environment, ecologically oriented principles were employed throughout with a landscaped courtyard 'oasis' at the building's centre, stormwater harvesting, integrated sun shading, thermal insulation, and the sealing of the interior against dust. The architects recalled that due to its remoteness, construction needed to be of durable materials which could be transported from Adelaide and erected using techniques compatible with outback building traditions. Aside from fulfilling the functional design parameters requisite for a hospital, the building form also needed to address its unique site context. The resulting form is dominated by the sheltering roof sweeping down towards the earth and anchored into embankments, taking cues from the underground architecture of the town and deflecting wind and dust away from the building.

[1]'Coober Pedy Hospital', *Architecture Australia,* March 1985, p. 49-54.

Philip Goldswain
The University of Western Australia

Bush Court, 1976, Murdoch University. Ferguson and Associates, Architect Image: Fritz Kos

Philip Goldswain is chair of the architecture discipline in the School of Design at the University of Western Australia and teaches design, the history of architecture and photography. Philip holds PhD in architectural history from the University of Melbourne (2020) and his research focusses on the relationship between the built environment and its visual and textual representations. Philip's research has been supported by fellowships at the Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (2017) and State Library of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia (2016).

It Takes a Village: RJ Ferguson and Van den Broek and Bakema's 'Het Dorp'

The March 1970 issue of The Architect WA included four articles authored by RJ Ferguson (1931-2024). These included a New York travelogue, a photo-essay on Dubrovnik, the architect's Broadway Terrace Houses (winner of the 1968 Midland Brick Prize) and Ferguson's report on the overseas travel that the award funded. The report describes the aspirations, formal relations and spatial outcomes of Van den Broek and Bakema's housing complex 'Het Dorp' (The Netherlands, 1963-65), styled as one of the 'first' self-contained residential communities built solely for people with disabilities. While Ferguson was a prolific writer, publishing twenty articles in The Architect between 1960 and 1970, the report on 'Het Dorp' was only the second article that focussed on a contemporary building.

Ferguson is well known in Perth for his off-form concrete university buildings and modest holiday cottages on Rottnest Island. Critically and anecdotally, these buildings have been framed as the translation of Mediterranean vernacular forms into climatically appropriate local models, the exploration of formal typologies or deployment of off-form concrete.

The reintroduction of 'Het Dorp' into this established canon of influences and interpretations extends the understanding of Ferguson's work to test a novel series of critical frames. In this paper the formal architectural language of inclusivity and the architect's broader social responsibilities are explored through an analysis of Ferguson's building and spaces for Murdoch University (1975) one of the campus projects completed following his travel to the Netherlands.

Meherzad Shroff
Adelaide University

Julian Worrall
University of Tasmania

Union House (Architect: Dickson and Platten, 1969–1974), seen through the arches of the War Memorial Cloisters (Architect: Woods, Bagot, Jory and Laybourne-Smith, 1927–1930)

Meherzad Shroff is an emerging architectural practitioner, researcher, and educator based in Adelaide, Australia. His PhD, awarded in 2025 by The University of Adelaide, engaged questions of intangible heritage and adaptive reuse through sustained, iterative engagement with a single building: Union House. Meherzad work navigates between praxis and theory, exploring the intersection of architectural history and theory, digital fabrication, design research, construction history, intangible heritage, and material sustainability.

Julian Worrall is an architect, scholar, curator and critic, and Professor of Architecture and Head of School of Architecture and Design at the University of Tasmania. His research and critical writings, which have a sustained focus on Japan while broadly encompassing questions of modernity, publicness and temporality, have been widely published and translated. His books include *21st Century Tokyo (with Erez Golani Solomon*) (Kodansha International, 2010) and *Japan Works (with Aglaia Konrad)* (Roma Publications, 2021). He has contributed to major exhibitions, including at MAK (Vienna), MoMA (New York), and was a Creative Director of the Australia Pavilion at the 2023 Venice Biennale of Architecture with the exhibition Unsettling Queenstown.

Union House, Adelaide: Encounters with Italy in a South Australian ‘Comune’

Designed by Robert Dickson and Newell Platten between 1967 and 1975, Union House at the University of Adelaide is an under-examined work of Australian modernism whose significance lies in the architectural encounters it stages. This paper reads Union House through the symposium’s language of trajectories and intersections, while proposing encounter as a further critical term: between architect and site, user and building, inherited fabric and new intervention, and most significantly between two Adelaide architects whose relationships to modernism were sharply divergent, yet whose sensibilities were shaped by a shared connection to Italy.

The paper focuses on the dialogue between Walter Bagot and Robert Dickson, both profoundly shaped by travel to Italy. Bagot’s earlier buildings on site, inflected by Neo-Georgian and Tuscan references, established an architectural ground against which Dickson’s modernist intervention was developed. Rather than erasing this inheritance, Union House builds over, around and against these structures, producing a layered precinct where old and new are held in gentle tension — complicating the postwar narrative of demolition and replacement, and suggesting a ‘soft brutalism’ of accommodation and respect.

We argue that Union House translates these Italian encounters into a distinctive South Australian architecture of communal identity. Its walkways, operable windows and material palette embraced the Adelaide climate, while its evocation of the Italian comune in hillscape silhouette crystallised the social patterns of campus life in the Whitlam era. The paper reveals the building as a site of active synthesis — where international experience, local inheritance and social idealism met in built form.

Antony Moulis
The University of Queensland

Griffith University's School of Australian Environmental Studies building on the Nathan Campus in 1978. Image: State Library Queensland

Antony Moulis is a professor and deputy head at the School of Architecture, Design and Planning at the University of Queensland, where he teaches and researches across architecture, urbanism and design. He is committed to urban design innovation and adaptation with a current focus on productive cities and retrofitting as drivers of positive community change. He is contributing author to the books House, Precinct, Territory: Design Strategies for the Productive City and John Andrews: Architect of Uncommon Sense. He is co-designer of award-winning built and speculative projects highlighting micro-urban strategies for Asia Pacific cities published and exhibited internationally.

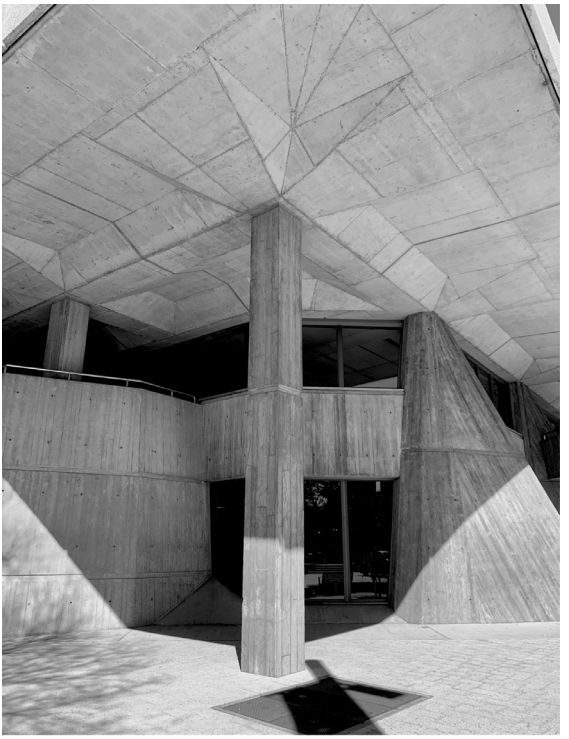
Trans-Pacific networks and interdisciplinary exchange: John Andrews' School of Australian Environmental Studies (AES) (1975-1978)

John Andrews' School of Australian Environmental Studies (AES) (1975-1978) on the bushland campus of Griffith University, Brisbane, represented a concise statement of the architect's environmental approach, linked to nearly two decades of architectural thought and practice in North America after he graduated from the University of Sydney in 1956. There he created a series of major projects, developing environmental principles for architecture in the context of the growing ecological awareness at societal and professional levels. In this respect the AES building was deemed 'state of the art' in terms of its environmental strategies in the global setting. The design's environmental values matched the agenda-setting ideals put forward by the University itself, and particularly those of its environmental program led by Professor Calvin Rose, founding Chairman of AES. Rose previously held a position at the Commonwealth Scientific Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) in Canberra, Australia's main governmental centre for innovation in environmental research, and had prior academic experience in North America, taking visiting professor roles at the University of Guelph, Ontario in 1969 (where Andrews had constructed a major student dormitory complex the previous year) and at the University of California in 1970. From the outset, Rose and his academic colleagues were welcomed into design discussions with John Andrews' office as representatives of the AES 'User Group' and paired their own environmental thinking and ambitions with that of the architects.

Drawing on documentation of Griffith University and interviews with Andrews and his Queensland architectural partner, John Simpson, this paper unpacks the trans-Pacific networks and interdisciplinary approaches that underpinned the building's design achievements. It seeks to how show these opportunities relied not purely on 'imported ideas' but from the circulation of Australian expertise across the Pacific, with lessons for contemporary practices of innovation, collaboration and exchange around environmentalism.

Stuart King
University of Melbourne

Helen Norrie
University of Tasmania



Henty House, Launceston, designed by Peter Partridge, Tasmanian Department of Housing and Construction. Image: David Beynon

Stuart King is a senior lecturer in architectural design and history, and pathway coordinator for the architecture major in the Bachelor of Design, at the University of Melbourne. His research is focused on the history and historiography of Australian architecture spanning the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with a particular interest in Tasmania.

Helen Norrie is a senior lecturer in the School of Architecture & Design at the University of Tasmania. She is is the founder of the Regional Urban Studies Laboratory (RUSL) a collaborative research project that works with councils, government and community to explore civic innovation that supports the development of regional towns and cities.

International Brutalism in Tasmanian Conditions: Henty House, 1980-84

Henty House is one of Tasmania's rare examples of Brutalism, bringing international currents of post-WWII modernism to the historic nineteenth-century fabric of central Launceston. It was designed and built in the early 1980s primarily by Peter Partridge, a British-born and trained architect working in the Tasmanian Government's Department of Housing and Construction, alongside other expatriate British architects. Late in the design process, the Italian-born and trained architect Enrico Taglietti was also engaged on the project, providing advice on the building's form and its relationship with adjoining historic structures, possibly influencing its arrangement of tiered horizontal planes with sloping fascias, battered walls, and layers of greenery, all with a strong geological character.

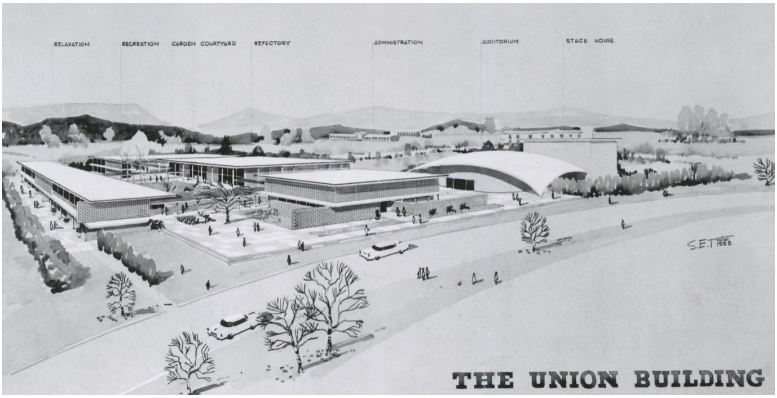
Two years after its construction, Partridge exhibited Henty House — alongside his design for the Hobart Supreme Courts — at an Exhibition of Architecture Overseas, held as part of the Royal Institute of British Architects' Festival of Architecture celebrating the Institute's 150th anniversary, presenting it to a global audience. Yet the building occupies an ambivalent place in the scant history of modernist architecture in Tasmania. The overseas-trained architects of the Department of Housing and Construction were regarded by the broader profession as lacking an understanding of the Tasmanian condition, and their works, including Henty House, have been seen as outliers to the prevailing place-based discourses which emerged in the 1960s and consolidated against a backdrop of rising ecological and environmental activism in the state in the '70s, '80s and '90s.

This presentation discusses the tensions between international and local influences in Henty House. Engaging the symposium's theme of planetary and ecological trajectories, frames the building as a distinctive example of Modernism in Tasmania, as opposed to Tasmanian Modernism.

Paul Sanders & Maycon Sedrez
Deakin University

Giaime Botti
University of Nottingham Ningbo China

Marissa Lindquist
Western Sydney University



IUQ Union, Perspective, 1958. Image Stephen Trotter.

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Subtropical latitudes of the south: Parallels of modernism in Brazil, Southern Africa, and Australia

Centre–periphery models of architectural modernism dominated its early discourse subsequently acquiescing to a planetary circulation of ideas and the simultaneity of innovation across distant contexts. This paper examines modernism as a product of transnational exchange and parallel development rather than linear influence, foregrounding architectural production along the subtropical latitudes between 20° and 30° south.

Focusing on exemplars from Brazil (Niemeyer, Costa), Southern Africa (Guedes, Forjaz Benjamin, Hallen), and Queensland (Hayes and Scott, Birrell, Trotter), the paper compares how modernist architectural ideas were adapted, transformed, and re transmitted across regions that share comparable climatic, ecological, and environmental conditions.

The paper argues that from the mid twentieth century onward these architectural cultures increasingly entered into lateral exchange along the parallel. Architectural ideas developed in Brazil, initially shaped through the synthesis of European modernism, North American influence, and rigorous climatic experimentation, circulated internationally and resonated strongly across the subtropical south. Linguistic networks facilitated the movement of architects, publications, and design strategies, enabling Brazilian models of environmental adaptation to inform parallel developments in Africa and Australia. Architects across these regions engaged with Brazilian precedents while simultaneously generating their own locally grounded innovations that defined subtropical modernism. The paper demonstrates these dynamics through the single case-study of the Student Union Building at UQ by Stephen Trotter in Brisbane.

By reframing subtropical modernism as a networked, planetary phenomenon shaped by parallel innovation and cross latitude exchange, this paper contributes to a nuanced understanding of global modernism, one grounded in geography, climate, and reciprocal cultural influence.

Sally Farrah & Mike Louw
University of Canberra

North elevation of the Reid Library. Image courtesy of the UWA Archives.

Sally Farrah is a lecturer at the University of Canberra's School of Design and the Built Environment and previously taught at UWA. Her research interests include architectural and urban history, and orthographic projection and representation in the last pre-digital, post-WWII period. She is the Chief Investigator on the ongoing ACT Heritage Grant funded project titled 'Canberra: A city by design' with a forthcoming book publication.

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Tracing Tropical Modernism in Perth: The University of Western Australia (UWA) Campus Buildings and the School of Architecture, c.1960-70

A planetary approach tracing grand travel tours, imperial exchange, study and work experience, and personal networks, is necessary to construct post-World War II histories in Australian architecture. Two figures ground this investigation: Roger Johnson, who worked in Africa (1952-56), then Burma - now Myanmar (1957-60), and was Deputy Director of the AA's School of Tropical Architecture (1956-57), before migrating to Perth in 1962; and Gordon Stephenson, who together established UWA's School of Architecture in 1965. The two would collaborate in practice as Consultant Architect (1961-68) and Planner (1958-64) for the UWA campus, and involved in the following projects: the New Fortune Theatre and Arts Building (Marshall Clifton and Johnson, 1963); the Reid Library (Cameron Chisholm and Nicol, Stephenson, and Johnson, 1964-65); the Economics and Commerce Building (Johnson, 1966); and the Student Guild Building (R J Ferguson, Clifton, and Johnson, 1971) among others. Homing in on the Reid Library, we evidence indoor-outdoor type forms including verandahs, deep overhangs, and bridges, as well as prefabrication. Literature and archival research reveal links between the campus design and Tropical Modernist discourse, and we speculate on its extension into UWA's pedagogy from a sample of the 1967 curriculum - including work of then student Kerry Hill - in a Broome design studio run by Johnson. This study fleshes out Robin Boyd's 1967 proclamation that in WA 'another regional style was in the making,'[1] and begins to forge practical and pedagogical connections between Perth and the colonial Tropical Modernist project.

[1]Robin Boyd, 'The State of Australian Architecture', *Architecture Australia* 56, 3 (June 1967): p463.

Elizabeth Musgrave
Bond University

View of a Newly Constructed Timber House at Doncaster Station near Richmond, Queensland, 1968. n.d. Image: Item 6523 Royal Australian Institute of Architects photographs and plans held by SLQ.

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Modernist houses for Hot Arid Climates in Queensland's 'empty north'

Most of Australia's land mass is arid or semi-arid, yet narratives around Australia's modernist architecture are typically illustrated with work from densely populated coastal areas conditioned by tropical savannah and temperate climates. Narratives of modernism in the arid interior have largely addressed the role that commerce and government played in settlements driven by extractive industries such as mining, agriculture and fishing. Even research work by the Commonwealth Experimental Building Station established in 1944 to investigate and scientifically validate model house solutions, was compromised in arid regions by economics and the logistical problems of vast distances and poor infrastructure. Compromise meant that distinctions between humid and arid categories did not translate into significant differences in the climate responsive model house designs proposed for each. Whereas a line of enquiry adopted by Balwant Singh Saini and reported in his 1962 paper for Ekistics "Housing in the Hot and Arid Tropics" proposed passive solutions from exemplar vernacular traditions in hot dry regions globally. Sadly, Saini's research was dismissed by government departments as not conducive to an Australian way of life. This paper will situate the Stevens House (1968), Doncaster Station by architect Christopher Kringas, located in Richmond northwest Queensland's pastoral heartland, against the background of this research. Whilst an awareness of planetary consequences might not have informed their intentions, researchers such as Saini and architects such as Kringas were seeking solutions that were climatically and ecologically responsible, materially economical and energy efficient. Had they anticipated a future in which planetary mindfulness would be essential?

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