

Architects, Sustainability and the Climate Emergency

Living in and with Nature is the single challenge for humanity as climate change rapidly propels us down the path of ecocide and extinction. New visions of ecological sustainability demand that we, literally, build the future in a different way. For this, we need to listen to the voices of intellectual innovation, learn the wisdom of the ancients, and draw energy from those who see, judge, and act as global calamity unfolds. This fascinating book provides vital insights and critiques at the interfaces of architectural theory and practice, in the process elaborating a contemporary policy ecology of the built form. For anyone concerned about the climate emergency, it is essential reading.

Rob White

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Architects, Sustainability and the Climate Emergency: A Political Ecology

BY

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Epigraph

They saw the great fire advancing from the Macumba Maka-Wimpa 'fire track' and they got out quickly, traveling to the south-east still looking for more of their own people.

–Luise Hercus. (2009). Murkarra, a landscape nearly forgotten: The Arabana country of the noxious insects, north and northwest of Lake Eyre. In A. L. Hercus & H. J. Koch (Eds.), *Aboriginal placenames: Naming and re-naming the Australian landscape aboriginal history* (p. 257). Monograph 19. ANU E Press and Aboriginal History Incorporated.

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About the Author

Dr Peter Raisbeck is Associate Professor of Architectural Practice at the Melbourne School of Design University of Melbourne. At MSD he teaches Architectural Practice, Design Activism, and Contemporary Architectural Archives. His research spans the fields of architectural history and the sociology of architectural design and practice. His book, *Architecture as a System: Scavengers, Tribes, Warlords and Megafirms*, (2019) considers architecture as a global system in crisis. His coauthored book with Dr Christine Phillips, *Robin Boyd: Late Works 1960–1971*, (2020) is an extensive survey of the notable Australian architect Robin Boyd's public commissions prior to his death in 1971.

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Foreword

When I began writing this book, megafires were burning on the Australian continent I live on, and as I finished writing parts of this book, the land has been inundated with catastrophic floods. In between these events, there has been a global pandemic. These framings of time suggest a finite beginning, middle, and ending to these catastrophic events. However, what has motivated my writing is the intuition that this climate chaos cannot be so easily framed with a chronological ending. All endings suggest we might look beyond to a better time. But I fear that the climate imaginaries conjured by architects, and described in what follows, presume a definitive end to such things – an end to the climate emergency. These imaginaries dictate an enchanted future Anthropocene where human life can go on as usual. Yet, as the climate emergency unfolds, we begin to sense that there are no more neat endings; chaos begets chaos. As described in this book, the magic of architects is an illusion that is even now contributing to future chaos.

Melbourne, March 2022.

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As remarked in the acknowledgment to my previous book, often, there are pressures nowadays on academics to avoid the longer and solitary forms of scholarship. Without the assistance of the above people, this contribution to that genre would not have been possible.