

Towards Interdependence:

**Rebuilding Connections with People and Place at
Earthsong Eco-Neighbourhood**

Earthsong Eco-Neighbourhood is a 32-house cohousing neighbourhood in Ranui, West Auckland. Earthsong was founded on a deep commitment to address both the isolation and the high resource use arising from conventional settlement patterns by building a neighbourhood that is more socially and environmentally sustainable.

Robust social infrastructure, though less visible than the green architecture, site design and permaculture for which Earthsong is more widely known, continues to underpin the neighbourhood. Alignment to a shared vision, and clear group agreements around communication, decision-making and cooperation have allowed a group of ordinary people to work together to develop a major innovative housing development. The inclusive development process maximized the empowerment and contributions from all, in stark contrast to the sense of powerlessness and disconnection of modern suburban life.

Knowing and cooperating with neighbours builds connections that facilitate a greater sense of responsibility to each other, and ultimately to the global community. A sense of belonging and connection between people and with the natural environment are key elements in learning to live more sustainably. By balancing the need for individual privacy and autonomy with cooperation and commitment to community, and by applying the principles of green architecture and services on a neighbourhood scale, Earthsong demonstrates a multi-layered approach to creating a healthier and more sustainable living environment.