Principles and practices of an affordable housing community land trust model


Abstract

This Research Paper provides an introduction to a form of shared equity housing called a community land trust, which is operational in the United States of America and United Kingdom, and under exploration by various state and community organisations in Australia. Community Land Trusts (CLTs) are not property trusts as defined by Australian Trust law. CLTs are a form of common land ownership where land is usually held by a private non-profit organisation and leased on a long term basis to members of the community or other organisations. Various models of CLTs have succeeded overseas, especially flourishing in the United States of America (US) where there are over 200 CLTs currently in operation. These provide affordable rental housing, cooperative housing and resale-restricted home ownership. More recently, CLTs have begun to develop in the United Kingdom (UK), where the sector is growing rapidly. CLTs may have widespread potential application in Australia to address affordable home ownership concerns, increase the range of housing tenure options available, foster community development and social capital, and maintain a stock of perpetually affordable housing options. This report forms one output of a larger AHURI-funded research project that is specifically examining the suitability and attraction of CLTs to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households and their communities (see Crabtree et al., forthcoming). The central purpose of this Research Paper is to introduce a general readership to the CLT model and to review the main aspects of its utilisation in the US and the UK, as well as to provide background material for the specific research that is concerned with Indigenous housing options and CLTs.
Abstract The community land trust (CLT) is a social invention designed to solve several problems in land ownership, from affordability to preservation. This article traces the history of the CLT from concept to implementation, through a network of theorists and activists, and discusses the present extent of CLTs in the United States. The land trust has stood the test of several housing market recessions, with this most recent one beginning in 2007 posing a special challenge. In this low-income neighborhood, foreclosures have not been uncommon. Swann was part of a prototype land trust in Voluntown, Connecticut, which was the base of operations for a community of peace activists, the Community for Non-Violent Action.