



## *Whole of Life: Whole of Use – Student Design Competition*

This exhibition looks at submissions for a student national design competition that aimed to provide new solutions for affordable housing for people living with disabilities, incorporating the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) reforms.

Sponsored by the National Affordable Housing Consortium (NAHC), the competition was open to architecture students with entries received from four universities: Bond University, Griffith University, the University of New South Wales and the University of Melbourne.

Seven competition judges, from diverse disciplines, generously donated their time. Leading the judging panel was Professor George Earl, NAHC Board of Directors Chair. He was joined by Kevin McMahon the Director of Marketing and Regulation of NDIA, Eloise Atkinson Director of Deicke Richards Architects, Craig McHardy Director of WT Partnership, Amelia Starr Executive Director of Livable Housing Australia, Dr Tom Alves Senior Adviser at the Office of the Victorian Government Architect and Alan Tupicoff the Executive Director for GPM: Asia Pacific.

Dr Andrew Martel from the University of Melbourne, says *“The students were presented with a real design issue, one that most of them were largely unaware of, that provided a challenge and an opportunity to think critically about their profession. The extensive industry engagement from government, developers, designers and the not-for-profit sector was important in extending but also grounding their design focus. It was great for the students”*.

The aim of the *Whole of Life: Whole of Use* was to bring saleable cost-effective design to the market. Entrants were encouraged to be open and creative, but at the same time practical and rational, when designing liveable space suitable for disabled and fully abled people, promoting independent living as well as social inclusion.

The awarded teams followed the brief very carefully and demonstrated sophisticated thinking and clarity behind the design. With functionality as a key to good design, all homes in the winning submissions provide a very high level of accessibility. The concept of sustainable living, rather than sustainable housing is the focus of the winning designs. Thought has been given to replicability, deliverability, flexibility and usability.

One of the participating student groups interpreted the brief as *“not to design housing for the disabled, but to explore how intelligent and thoughtful design can increase the housing choices of people who over the course of their life have, or may acquire, a physical or mental disability”*.

Due to the overwhelming success and quality of the entries, NAHC is considering an annual competition event, to build on the research and findings of *Whole of Life: Whole of Use*.

*Whole of Life: Whole of Use* will be exhibited until the end of May at the State Library of Queensland’s Asia Pacific Design Library.

Winner – *Harmonio Us & SuburbaNext* University of New South Wales  
Highly Commended & Sustainability Prize – *Propagating Habitats* Griffith University

