

Preface

This consumer guide resulted from a conversation with John and Marion Forsyth while reviewing their experience of commissioning the design and construction of a house. It became obvious, that a guide helping prepare people for the experience of buying or building housing would assist prospective home owners. This book is the result of John and Marian's encouragement.

Others over the years have contributed advice and opportunities which have tempered the architectural viewpoint with the client's perspective. They include:

- Robert Gutman, Professor of Sociology at Rutgers University, in the United States of America who, by accepting an architect into a Graduate Department of Sociology, provided an opportunity for learning the skill necessary to 'really' listen to clients;
- Ken Woolley, who was kind enough to let me loose on the Pettit and Sevitt project housing clientele;
- Ron Sevitt, who generously produced hundreds of project home customers from which I could learn;
- Tony Vinson, who introduced me to the usefulness of sociology, and guided me to Rutgers University;
- A host of clients, ranging from those wanting private houses, to government departments and agencies who wanted to understand more about the housing needs of Australians. In particular, Angela Sands, formerly of the National Capital Development Commission, who provided an opportunity to study the needs of medium density housing residents; Gillian McFec and Jim Atteridge, formerly of Willoughby and Warringah Councils respectively; and Julie Alston, David Ryan and Chris Young of Ku-ring-gai Council, all of whom opened the way for a number of definitive studies on retirement housing and services;
- A number of professional associates or partners including Barbara Adams, Michael Fox, Wendy Sarkissian and Dr Ian Burnley who shared in research projects on the housing needs of Australians.

Such opportunities to work as an architect and social planner

designing housing, representing clients who wanted retirement housing developed, researching the needs of the housing market, working with government and industry on the development of housing policy, and the experience of dealing with 800 of Pettit and Sevitt's project homes customers in the 1960s, have provided a rich and rewarding set of experiences. It is a pleasure to be able to return to the Australian people some of this knowledge in the hope that it may assist all those who seek better housing.

Many people read drafts or sections of the manuscript, offering constructive criticism and encouragement. They have included Tony Peers, Barbara Coddington, Philip Hogan, Sally Cowper, Gordon Parry, Marilyn McGrath, Matthew Kelly, Vanessa McGrath, Pat Hopkins, Mavis Dalton, James Linton, Pam Dunlop, Neville Moses, and Dr Ian Burnley.

Charles Martin prepared the illustrations.

Glenda Tinson and Luda Nikitin persevered through the typing with wonderful charm.

The author, of course, remains responsible for the views and opinions expressed, but hopes that they will be helpful to all Australians who desire and deserve to live in the best housing we know how to design and build.

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