

# Green Buildings Are Not Sustainable, says Janis Birkeland

MELBOURNE, Australia, July 1, 2020 (SEND2PRESS NEWSWIRE) – According to Dr Janis Birkeland, the originator of net-positive design, while sustainable ‘green’ buildings are making great strides, they still do more damage than no building at all.



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“Each green building increases the problem,” she says. “Even though there are numerous sustainable building initiatives and processes that purport to contribute to sustainability, the industry is still analyzing and assessing all the wrong things in the wrong ways. For example, there are dozens of things fundamentally wrong with green building rating tools.”

However, Birkeland also says that construction, which causes so much environmental destruction, could actually save nature and deliver social and environmental justice.

“True sustainability is possible and affordable, but not if we use the same strategies.”

Dr Birkeland’s new book, “Net-Positive Design and Sustainable Urban

Development” (ISBN 9780367258566), explains why current theories and practices are not effective. It systematically dissects these failings and reverses their underlying concepts.

The book builds on this critique to show how urban development can give back more than it takes over its lifecycle. It provides examples to show that development can increase – rather than just repair, restore or regenerate – overall social, ecological and economic sustainability.

“Technically speaking, in a net-positive city, nature’s ‘positive’ ecological footprint would exceed humanity’s ‘negative’ ecological footprint, relative to pre-urban conditions.

“Positive Development theory has led to new methods, strategies and tools that enable professionals and students to design (and assess) net-positive buildings and environments that increase the natural and social life support systems,” said Dr Birkeland.

Net-Positive Design presents game-changing sustainable planning analyses, a collaborative design process and a free STARfish computer app. The STARfish enables designers to go beyond zero (or recycling systems) to create designs that yield net-positive environments. It defines new criteria and benchmarks based on fixed, objective biophysical conditions, rather than relative to conventional (unsustainable) buildings or current conditions.

“The new approach not only up-ends building assessment tools, it integrates assessment and measurement with design. It synthesises the ‘hard’ technical and ‘soft’ creative dimensions in planning, decision making and design.”

Creating and measuring ‘beyond zero’ cumulative impacts is no easy task but, thanks to Dr Birkeland’s insights and dedication to sustainable development, it has now been done and is available around the world for educators and professionals alike.

Learn more: <https://netpositivedesign.org/>

#### **Authoritative comments about Net-Positive Design:**

“From the author who developed Positive Development theory comes another tour de force – a delightful guide for those of us disappointed with the direction of conventional approaches to wicked problems.” – Mirek Dymitrow, Lund University and University of Gothenburg, Sweden.

“By re-engineering our approach to urban development, Birkeland reveals how cities could become our most powerful resource in reversing the trends associated with climate change...Essential reading for all decision makers.” – Dr Kathi Holt, architect and strategic urban designer.

#### **Book availability & links:**

Routledge Publishers. RRP from \$A37 for eBook:

<https://www.routledge.com/Net-Positive-Design-and-Sustainable-Urban-Developme>

[nt/Birkeland/p/book/9780367258566](#)

Paperback: ISBN 9780367258566

Hardback: ISBN 9780367258559

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Positive\\_Development](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Positive_Development)

Learn more: <https://netpositivedesign.org/>

**About the author:**

Dr Janis Birkeland was an architect, city planner and attorney in San Francisco before entering academia. Dr Birkeland has devoted her working life to sustainable development, originating many increasingly familiar sustainable design concepts. She is presently an Honorary Professorial Fellow at the University of Melbourne, having been a Professor of sustainable architecture in Australia and New Zealand. Her books include Design for Sustainability (2002) and Positive Development (2008).

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\*IMAGE link for media:

<https://www.Send2Press.com/300dpi/20-0701s2p-net-positive-design-300dpi.jpg>