

Sustainable architecture competition comes to communal utopia at Maitland | PHOTOS

By EMMA SWAIN

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SPECTACULAR: Archicamp organiser Jiri Loew and participant Clare Kennedy say there is nothing like it in Australia. Picture by PERRY DUFFIN

It's touted as the communal utopia of the Hunter and now the rural village concept known as Shepherds Ground has been hailed as the spark in an architectural revolution.

More than 60 student architects, artists and craftsmen converged on the Butterwick property during the long weekend for Archicamp 2015 – a cutting-edge event designed to share ideas based on sustainable practices.

“This is spectacular and I think we should start an architectural revolution right now. This is one of the most upbeat things I have ever seen,” Clare Kennedy, participant of Archicamp 2015, said.

“I think we all need to be a bit more Australian with our building techniques and define our own identity and Shepherds Ground is a wonderful example of this.”

The brainchild of Duns Creek woman Lucie Bruvel, Shepherds Ground is neither a hippie commune nor suburban sprawl, but instead represents a culture of intergenerational living, shared duties, sustainable living and organic farming.



Shepherds Ground

“There is nothing like this in Australia. It’s all about looking after each other and the Earth,” Ms Bruvel said.

Under the co-operative model, the rural village – planned under the provisions of the State Environmental Planning Policy with a view to build 29 dwellings on 112 hectares – will create lower cost living arrangements that cultivate a strong sense of community.

“Shepherds Ground is particularly relevant in terms of sustainability and development,” camp organiser Jiri Loew said.

“This development is all about working with the community for the community and that’s great for the students to see.”