

## **Capsule Overview**

### **What is the problem?**

*Construction makes fortunes but does not pay its own way. Urban environments have exceeded the earth's regenerative and ecological carrying capacity. Development replaces public space with private citadels and ecosystems with inanimate caricatures. Consequently, most urban environments feel like mausoleums with 'bling'. Our contemporary 'solutions' (recycling, restoration, adaptation, regeneration, and resilience) are not, in themselves, sustainable. While steadily improving, many regenerative buildings merely tweak unsustainable building templates, and only aim to 'do no harm'. Some seem more like space capsules that appear to reject the earth than 'living' buildings. They neither give back to nature nor provide net public benefits.*

### **Why are net benefits necessary?**

*Contemporary 'sustainable' development has a huge opportunity cost. It merely benefits stakeholders when over 50% of biodiversity has been lost and the population has doubled in 50 years. Instead of replacing nature with cheap imitations while transferring wealth from poor to rich, buildings could increase many natural and social life support systems. Sufficient eco-technologies and natural systems (arguably) exist that enable buildings to provide clean energy, water, soil, air, and food, and undo some past environmental damage. However, truly sustainable buildings would offset their portion of total development impacts, including material and energy flows, not just offset their added damage.*

### **What does Positive Development provide?**

*Positive development aims to close the gap between existing conditions and sustainability, rather than making incremental improvements over best practices. It is a paradigm shift from reductionist decision-making to design-based reasoning. It shows that, by redesigning physical and institutional systems on net-positive principles, it is possible to increase the 'ecological base' (ecological carrying capacity, etc.) beyond pre-settlement conditions, and to improve regional social conditions or the 'public estate' (equity, life quality, etc.). It does so by 'reversing' sustainable development analyses, goals, methods, benchmarks, and metrics. Positive Development provides new theory, strategies, processes, and a computer app to enable net-positive development.*