

From: Bellingen Environment Centre [valhalla@midcoast.com.au]
Sent: 16 August 2003 19:24
To: housing@pc.gov.au
Subject: Housing affordability: submission

Productivity Commission Inquiry into housing affordability:

The one topic no one has addressed in the debate over housing affordability is the size of the average modern dwelling.

The statistics indicate that the average family size is decreasing and more and more people are living on their own. Why, then, are we not catering for this market for smaller houses?

What is the cost to society of building monstrous houses with 5 bedrooms and 3 bathrooms for these smaller families, for which the occupants have to spend a life-time paying of a mortgage?

And what happened to the back-yard garden that once sustained the family with fresh fruit and vegetables? Now house are so gross they take up most of the land and often shade the rest of the block and the neighbours yard.

Those back-yard gardens provided outdoor pleasure and opportunities for bonding between members of the family in the shared pursuit of growing the most sustainable food, that grown close to the consumer - in their own back-yard. Food grown at home is a saving to the household budget, too.

Smaller dwellings are also more cost affective when it comes to heating and cooling, thereby a saving on energy and a reduction in green house gas.

Smaller dwellings, more open area, will benefit the absorption of rain water thereby reduce runoff through the stormwater system and increase groundwater.

Natural vegetation grown in the garden will absorb CO2 and will provide a habitat for wildlife.

The First Home Buyer Scheme should take the dwelling size into account and reduce the benefit to homebuyers opting for large dwellings.

Regards

Leif Lemke

valhalla@midcoast.com.au

02 66 558 770