

## **FAMILIES AND THE LOSS OF THE 'GREAT AUSTRALIAN DREAM'**

A Submission to the Productivity Commission Inquiry on First Home Ownership

Submission by Name withheld

In all the hype over property over the past 4 years. It is glaringly obvious that the term 'first home owners' fails to adequately embrace the concept of 'families' who have a much harder task in achieving their first home.

In 2000, the Australian government introduced the 'first home owners grant' to assist with the purchase of property. As a family seeking our 'first home', we were faced with some significant issues that have been overlooked by government.

Our situation:

- We are a family of 4 (2 adults, 2 children)
- We are not eligible for the grant because I had once owned a property with a past defacto partner over 10 years ago (1993). This property was subsequently sold 3 years later (1996), after the cessation of the relationship. The eligibility criteria of the scheme determined/s that I was/am not eligible for the grant, despite the fact that I have not owned or have had interest in any property for over 8 years.
- More significantly, my now husband (who has never owned a property) is disadvantaged purely by association - he also lost/looses access to the 'first home owners' grant purely based on the fact that his wife once owned a house.
- In the souring property market we were further disadvantaged as other families or couples that did qualify for the grant, were \$14,000 (then \$7,000) ahead of us in their finances. The 'first home owners grant' helped to feed the property market, which has now escalated so far in price that it has effectively shut us out of the property market.

In your exploration of first home ownership, please here the plight of the family and our access to affordable housing and government grants/schemes.

Suggestions:

- Any government assistance could include a time frame on past home ownership, for example eligibility could be extended to those who have not owned a home for the duration of the housing boom e.g. since 2000.
- At the very least, where one partner has never owned a property, eligibility for a grant (or at least half of it) should still be available.