

# The Great Australian Dream

Probably no other nation has made the family home such a matter of national commitment. It is likely that more Australians own, or are buying, 'the family homo' than any other nationality. At last count 68 per cent of all Australian households could claim to own, or be paying off, the suburban home, townhouse, terrace, home unit or retirement villa.

We are a nation of 'home builders' and take great pride in being so. As individuals, or families, we generally have more private residential space than most other people on the planet. It is one of the privileges of being Australian. Others may live in beautiful 'old world villages', but most Australians can lay claim to having more household space. The extent of our suburbia speaks of our desire for spaciousness around our houses.

But things are changing. Petrol is no longer cheap. Our big cities sprawl tens of kilometres, resulting in longer journeys to work. The cost of land has risen. Councils are setting higher, and more expensive development standards. More Australians are now living in townhouses, home units and retirement villas. The charm of Colonial, Victorian, and Federation styles has been rediscovered.

The Australian Dream of 'owning your own home on a quarter acre' is changing to include these other styles of housing. As a result we have more choice and more freedom to live in a way that best suits our personal lifestyle.

If this Great Australian Dream has given us one of the highest standards of residential space per person in the world, the changes now taking place should let us also achieve the highest standard of well-designed, comfortable and beautiful housing.

Instead of Australians travelling to visit the 'old world charm of towns and villages in England and Europe', let us build our new houses, townhouses, units and retirement villas so the rest of the world comes to Australia to see how to house a nation well.

We have a right to live in the best designed and built housing in the world, but only if we ask for it, expect it, and know it when we see it. Anything less is not worth living with. Our first step is to become informed and determined consumers.