

Executive Summary

Various media comment daily on the need for more sustainable lifestyles.

Economic, Social, and Environmental sustainability is such a broad topic. It is CRITICAL to focus on measurable, achievable environmental goals.

Census data proves that separate land and building industries have failed to meet the needs and wants of a large section of our community, particularly singles and couples with no children.

Benalla Council can respond to Stakeholders and Ratepayers to improve the sustainability of our housing stock and rate revenue. Dwellings per hectare and Capital Improved Values are related.

Three examples of completed metro Melbourne projects have used design and regulatory changes to reduce risk for the subdivider, participating builders and engage buyers (owner occupiers, builders and investors) in a new market.

The Benalla Planning Scheme can also be used to facilitate better market operation.

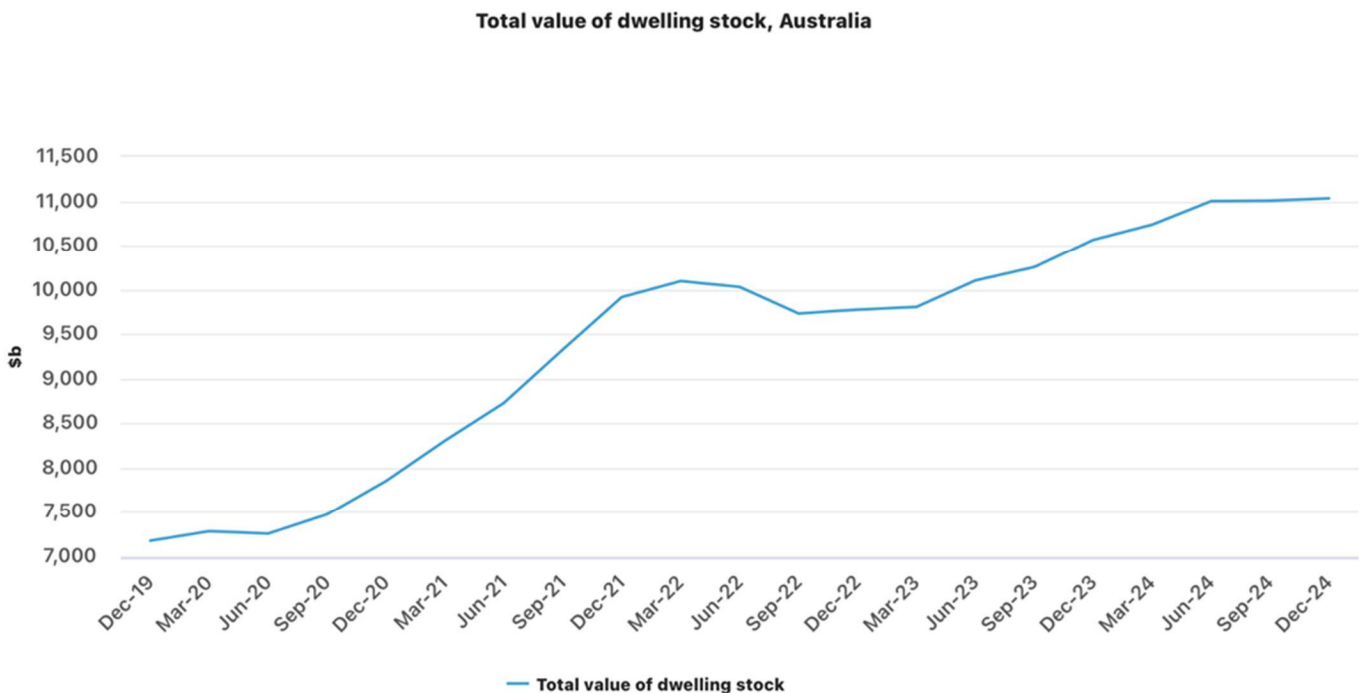
Measurable goals are recommended to:

- give all buyers more housing choices in price, location and design.
- help first homebuyers and pensioners who rent achieve home ownership.
- apply simple design and regulatory changes to Benalla’s subdivisions.

The equity issue

Owners who purchased before 2019 have benefited from a massive increase in house prices documented here.

\$1 Billion = \$1000,000,000



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Total Value of Dwellings December Quarter 2024

Federal policies continue to announce headline grabbing assistance to buyers which further inflates all prices in the absence of local supply side initiatives.

They justify this by blaming others “It’s the States that control land supply and regulates subdivisions”.

Environmental Goals

Each new subdivision can make a measurable difference to:

- orientation of lots and roads.
- orientation of houses.
- locations of windows and secluded private open spaces in relation to winter sun.
- price range of lots.

Implementation

Councils cannot bring unwilling subdividers and builders to the table to explore options.

Subdividing surplus government land in Benalla could catalyze change by demonstration.

Owners of infill sites would be assisted with revised approvals processes.

Subdividers may be encouraged into conversation if a rate holiday for specific lots and buyers was a policy option.

Section 173 of the Planning Act provides for voluntary agreements.

Agreements could define, among other things:

- Building Envelope Approval and Registration.
- approval of building plans by the Subdividers Design Review Panel.
- road reserve widths to make room for canopy trees and water sensitive urban design.
- private landscape funding.
- public landscapes timing.
- contributions in cash or kind to new community facilities.
- rate holidays for qualifying lot buyers

Council resources are stretched due to Rate Cap Legislation and management of a demonstration subdivision is not likely to be a priority now.

A conversation with a group of Regional Councils with a view to outsourcing project management to an expert agency like Development Victoria is suggested.

This submission is the start of a conversation.

Failure to act is not an option when the viability of its towns and the welfare of parts of the community is at risk.

We need to find willing partners to join with the Benalla Sustainable Future Group to refine the opportunities presented here and apply them now.