



press clip

More families happy to raise children in units Burbs lose bubs to inner-city life

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PROPERTY EDITOR

RAISING a family in the suburbs with a big backyard could become a thing of the past as housing affordability continues to be eroded and younger generations choose living closer to the city over a big house.

Property investment consultant Ayda Shabanzadeh says the "great Australian dream" of owning a home is moving further from reality for a lot of younger people.

She said many were content to raise a family in an apartment or townhouse, particularly if it meant they could live close to the city and facilities.

"While a large three or four bedroom home with a backyard and swimming pool in the suburbs may be out of their reach financially, the next generation would rather be located closer to amenities, their workplace and public transport anyway," Ms Shabanzadeh said.

She said many were comfortable in a townhouse or unit as long as it was close to communal recreation

areas, parks and employment hubs.

Anna and Matt Wilkie are raising their eight-month-old daughter Sophie in a unit at northside Woolloowin. The couple has just moved in after relocating from Sydney where they also lived in an apartment.

"It was the location (which made us decide on the unit)," she said.

"That was the important factor for us, we wanted to be comfortable coming up to Brisbane and having a newborn I did not want to waste time travelling to work."

With Mr Wilkie staying home to care for Sophie, unit living means less time spent on looking after a yard and home maintenance.

"He can prioritise his time more for our daughter," Mrs Wilkie said.

Australian Bureau of Statistics Census data shows a steady increase in the number of children under 15 living in inner Brisbane suburbs where units are prevalent.

In 1996, there were 6042, by 2001 there were 6748 and by 2006 there

were 7784.

That data also shows that in 2006 there were 1445 couples with children living in either semi-detached homes, townhouses or units in inner Brisbane.

Resolution Research managing director Diana Howes has seen a definite trend toward more families living in units in inner city suburbs.

Her organisation runs focus groups solely on people living in units and said in the past three years she had noticed a 30 per cent increase in the number of participants who had young children.

"It has been very noticeable, around a 30 per cent increase is a significant shift," she said.

The group interviews between 250 and 300 people a year.

Ms Howes said with developers delivering a lot of one-bedroom homes to the market, she believed there would be a growing need for larger units in the future.



LESS UPKEEP: Living in a unit means Matt and Anna Wilkie have more time for Sophie.

Picture: Jodie Richter