

GREEN POINT DESIGN

Sustainable • Architecture

Rural Living

Many visitors to Central Victoria decide that the odd weekend get-away isn't enough and choose to make living in the bush a full-time reality. As well as enjoying the benefits of rural living, many unexpected surprises may be lurking for the unaware.

Before buying a rural block, visit the shire's Planning Department to determine if any regulations would make building difficult or even impossible. A Building Surveyor can assess the site's bush fire risk, and areas of high and extreme risk require the use of specific materials and detailing which can be expensive.

Many of the services that we take for granted in cities are either not available, or expensive to connect to a rural block. In one instance, after receiving a Powercor quote of \$90,000 to connect electricity, a family chose to invest in a stand alone solar power system to generate their own electricity. Telephone will need to be connected. Water, natural gas, and sewer will probably not be available at all.

Most people utilise tanks, dam or bore for water supply. A septic system (or one of the many alternatives like composting toilets, aerating treatment plants, or worm tanks) will need to be installed to the local council's requirements. Bottled LPG is an alternative to natural gas, but it is more expensive.

With all the space, a rural house design is often very different from a city or suburban house. Firstly, there is often no obvious "front" and "back", even though we still need to think about a place for car parking, sheds, firewood, tanks, and all those goodies that you just bought at the clearing sale!

Many people greet their guests out at the car and bring them straight into the kitchen rather than through a formal entrance hall. Consider a mud room near the kitchen/laundry area where wet coats and boots can be removed and hung to dry before going in. If you are planning a vegetable garden, the kitchen needs to be well placed for that dash out for fresh herbs, as well as to a convenient composting area.

Many homes have a fenced garden around the house. It may be easier to maintain and keep rabbit free than stepping straight out into the rolling acreage. It is also good for keeping young children away from farm dams and other hazards.

As well as the many site and building issues there are to think about, it is also important to consider work, schools, healthcare, transport etc.

For those of you who do decide to make the big tree-change, good luck and welcome to the country!

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