

How do we make development sustainable?

Banjo Creek flows near where you live and at the moment it is clean and healthy. Approximately 500 metres on either side of the creek is all native vegetation which has never been cleared or farmed. It is rich in biodiversity with many different types of plants, birds, reptiles, insects and mammals. There are very few species of feral plant or animal and it is very peaceful and quiet.

For many years the council has owned the land but at the moment they are desperate for some extra money to help get their new twice-a-week rubbish removal scheme started, so they have decided to sell the land to a developer. Because of the beauty of this creek line, the developer has decided to build 60 luxury houses along the banks with stunning views over looking the creek.

1. What are some of the threats and impacts that the construction of these houses might have on the creek's ecosystem during the building process?

Consider the construction process: land clearance, habitat loss, noise pollution, displacement of native species, sediment-laden runoff, polluted stormwater, chemical use (termite protection), soil disturbance.

2. What are some of the impacts on the creek's ecosystem, which may occur after the houses are built?

General impacts of urbanisation: polluted stormwater, garden plant escapees (environmental weeds), noise, continued habitat loss, extraction of creek water for use in the home, litter, garden chemical use, erosion of creek line.

3. What are some of the threats that the surrounding environment might have on the residents of those houses?

Natural disaster: floods, bushfire, erosion, landslide, insect and bird damage of gardens, snakes, movement in house foundations caused by tree roots.

4. How might the residents of the housing development be able to help reduce their impacts on Banjo Creek?

Protect habitat in the creek through weed control, plant local and non-weed species in their gardens, collect and use rainwater in the home, control access to the creek via designated and fenced pathways, control litter, contain pets which hunt native wildlife.

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5. Do you think the council's spending priorities should lie in a twice-a-week rubbish removal service or conservation of the creek? Give reasons for your answer.

Positives for twice a week rubbish removal: increased residents' satisfaction for council services, less rubbish blowing out of over-filled bins, residents have tidier yards and homes
Reasons for developing the reserve: provide homes to people, provide employment to builders and other tradespeople, council makes money out of extra ratepayers instead of having to pay to manage the reserve.

Negatives: Very expensive to council and its ratepayers, promotes throw away society and less reusing and recycling.

Reasons for keeping the reserve undeveloped: helps to protect water quality for everyone by providing a buffer around the watercourse, provides habitat for local plant and animal species, quiet and peaceful area for people to visit, improves air quality, provides a 'seed bank' from which seeds can be gathered for other restoration projects in the area.

Illustrate what you would like Banjo Creek to look like in the future.