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HD **Neighbours resent Chinese buy-ups**
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IS it racist – or merely realistic – to talk about the influx of **Chinese property** buyers in Australia?

There is no doubt that **Chinese property** buyers are flocking to Adelaide suburbs such as Linden **Park**, Auldana, Toorak Gardens, Kensington, St Peters and Rose **Park**. There is plenty of evidence to show the tree-lined streets, large blocks, older houses and good schools in such areas are a huge drawcard for cashed-up foreigners.

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It's no surprise that the number of foreigners buying established **residential** properties nationally has gone from 647 to 5091 in the last three years. In the last financial year alone foreigners spent \$17 billion on more than 11,000 **residential** dwellings. So why are so many people trying to deny this is happening? And why are those who bring up the race issue being accused of xenophobia or racism?

Surely these days we should be able to talk about race where it's relevant. The wider issue for me is the impact this influx of **Chinese-born purchasers** is having on our suburbs. I worry that our streetscapes are changing in profound ways that will affect not only the amenity or the area, but the ability of our kids to be able to afford to **buy** a house where they grew up.

At the moment many residents in areas with a high concentration of foreign buyers are feeling crowded out, overtaken and somewhat resentful.

No doubt in time there will be acceptance of those who choose to live and raise their children here, which is to be welcomed.

But not all of these **property** buyers want to reside here; for many, our suburbs are little more than investment opportunities, not a place to live.

I live in one of the most affected areas, and I see **Chinese** buyers with unlimited cheque books trumping locals at auctions time after time. What also concerns me is that many of the foreign buyers don't seem to care about neighbourhood character, or protecting the heritage feel of an area.

They want to build, or **buy**, new houses that are as big as the council will allow – and in my area this is substantial. In order to fit so much house on the block, most of the trees are torn down.

It's all very well for some commentators to suggest those who object to such developments are racist. But when you live in streets where all the nice old houses and trees have been ripped out, you have every right to feel aggrieved.

It is against the rules for temporary residents or foreigners to **buy** existing houses that are habitable, knock them down, and build new homes. However, this is what is happening in many suburbs in cities around Australia – including Adelaide.

I spoke to a number of real **estate** agents this week and all confirmed they do not see it as their role to perform checks on foreign **purchasers**. This is fair enough. Surely it's up to the Foreign Investment Review **Board** to ensure compliance with its own rules.

The Federal Government has announced it will review the **board**'s rules. This is clearly long overdue.

I know foreign investment is essential to our economy and creates jobs, but we must make sure this is not at the expense of the cities we love and the suburbs we live in. And I don't think it's racist to say so. DEBATE WITH SUSIE VIA TWITTER, FACEBOOK AND BLOG AT SUSIEOBRIEN.COM.AU

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