



Wednesday, September 16, 2009

PHONE 4931 0100

CLASSIES 1300 888 005

www.maitlandmercury.com.au

## SEINFELD MIXES IN WITH MORPETH

» SEE BRIONY SNEDDEN'S STORY PAGE 5



## DRAGONS FEEL HEAT

» SPORT

## STORIES OF WOMEN WOVEN TOGETHER IN ART

Time Capture is the stories of 100 women featuring film, images and light. Cultural director of Maitland Regional Art Gallery Joe Eisenburg, artist Lara O'Reilly and steering committee chair Pennie Kearney got together to chat about it yesterday. Read all about it on page 4.



# RENTAL CRISIS

### Accommodation scarce as people vie to pay 33 per cent more in rent

KIRSTEN STOOP

Maitland renters are paying 33 per cent more for the same accommodation than they were three years ago and demand is unlikely to ease as the end of the first home buyer grant grows closer.

Tony Cant Real Estate senior resi-

dential property manager Bernadette Gleeson said figures show the average weekly rent for a four bedroom home in Maitland rose from \$320 a week in 2008 to \$360 in 2009, an increase of 11 per cent in only one year. Ten years ago the cost of renting the same house would have been \$250 per week.

RPData research notes that the national rental rise over three years is 30 per cent.

Ms Gleeson said there was a huge demand for rental properties across all suburbs, but more often in Aberglasslyn, Ashtonfield and Rutherford.

At a recent open home for potential renters in Rutherford, Ms Gleeson received 27 applications.

"I've never seen a demand such as this in 15 years," she said.

"We've got more than 500 owners and we manage 798 residential properties and there is

not enough to go around."

And the dire rental situation looks likely to become worse come October, when the winding back of the Government first home owner's grant makes buying a home less attractive for those keen to get a foothold.

continued page 4

**INSIDE** 8-PAGE **ELIXIR** HEALTH AND LIFESTYLE LIFT-OUT

# Rental fees on the rise

from page 1

"Because many people who are hoping to utilise the first home buyers grant are currently renting, I believe when the grant ends there will be no immediate ease on the already strained rental vacancy rates," Ms Gleeson said.



**RENTAL RISE:**  
Bernadette Gleeson.

"Where possible most young couples have already taken advantage of the first home owners grant subject to bank approval.

"However, those who miss out on the grant will continue renting leaving us in a situation where rental property shortage is continuing to increase.

Ms Gleeson said first home buyers have dominated the market within the past 12 months, leaving investors on the outskirts.

"Investors, when it comes to the residential property market, seem not to be competing for properties for sales," she said. "As there have been minimal investor activity in the market, few new rental listings are coming up only exasperating the current rental crisis."

RPData senior researcher Tim Lawless has predicted that vacancy rates are likely to contract after October, forcing up prices.

"Renters have had some relief for a little while now because first home buyers have used (the grant) to get out of the rental market," he said.

"This year especially we've seen an increase in the number of suburbs where it is actually cheaper to buy than rent. Housing affordability has been back to levels not seen since 2002.

"But the grant is being wound back in October and that is going to have an impact.

Mr Lawless said the news was better for investors, with rental yields steady at 4.6 per cent for houses and 5.4 per cent for units.

Ms Gleeson said her advice to investors was to buy now and invest wisely.

"There is a high demand for rental properties so returns should be good on a well thought out purchase," she said "There should be a little relief, however first home buyers market will decline allowing greater property choice for investors."

## WHAT MOST TENANTS ARE LOOKING FOR



**ABERGLASSLYN \$320 A WEEK**

Most prospective tenants are wanting a 3-4 bedroom brick and tile home with double garaging with all modern conveniences in populated areas close to shops and schools.

Aberglasslyn, Ashtonfield and Rutherford seem to be the most sought after areas.

**TOP:** This Aberglasslyn home rents for \$320 a week. It has three bedrooms, two bathrooms and two garages and is considered a standard rental home.

**MIDDLE:** This Lochinvar home rents for \$630 a week and while it is in the luxury category, there are still a long list of people waiting to rent homes such as this. It has four bedrooms, a study and a pool.

**BOTTOM:** This Rutherford home is rented for \$280 a week. It has three bedrooms, one bathroom and one carport and homes like this are in high demand.



**LOCHINVAR \$630 A WEEK**



**RUTHERFORD \$280 A WEEK**