



HIGHWAY ROBBERY

Big digger gone in brazen theft

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Tourism again in the picture

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Patients and dedication: 50 years nursing

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Selling point

New data: Home prices surge, property booming

By DAVID BUTLER

LAST year was the year of accomplishment here in Goulburn, and the trickle down effects on the local economy are starting to be felt.

With the dams full, the Highland Source Pipeline complete, and big retail chains like Target, Bunnings and Big W all moving in, real estate investors from across the country are looking this way and snapping up bargains.

New data has shown the local real estate sales market is booming, with the median house price up 20.5 per cent over the last three years to \$265,000, and up 8pc in the last 12 months.

Demand from out-of-town investors and local buyers has been generating strong sales in the region, and is slowly driving up the median price, local real estate agents have said.

Both Angella Storrier Real Estate and First National Real Estate – two of Goulburn's biggest residential sellers – stayed open between the Christmas Eve and New Year period to keep up with sales demand from investors and owner/occupiers alike.

Mrs Storrier and First National principal Barry McEntee said there was demand for properties "right across the board," from one-bedroom units up to three and four bedroom houses and small acreages.

"We've just been inundated. We've put on two more staff to keep up with the demand," Mrs Storrier said.

"Our location here is still a huge thing (for buyers), and getting out of Sydney and getting something affordable is very attractive," she said.

December was the busiest month of the year at First National for sales, the first time this holiday month has topped the list in seven years of trading.

Mr McEntee puts part of the demand down to the fact that stamp duty concession for first home buyers expired on December 31, and the subsequent rush to snap up properties before the expiry date.

"We actually opened between Christmas and New Year, which is not something we've done in the past, but we felt the demand was there," Mr McEntee said.

Mrs Storrier said the mix of buyers was roughly one third Sydney, one third Canberra and one third local, while Mr McEntee felt the amount of Canberra buyers was starting to drop off.

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ALL IN A DAY'S WORK: Angella Storrier outside a recently-sold home in Crestwood. Local real estate agents are enjoying a sales boom at the moment and say 2012 is likely to be just as busy as 2011. Inset: First National Real Estate's Barry McEntee says Goulburn's affordability is its key asset.

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