

Prices set to stay strong

PROPERTY prices in Wangaratta are expected to stay strong for the final months of 2016.

The trend follows on from local real estate agencies' observations from the first half of 2016, which show a high demand for buyers.

It's good news for first time home buyers who can potentially buy into the market for less than median price, according to the Real Estate Institute of Victoria.

According to figures from

Property market ticking along, with 'no boom or bust'



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the latest Victorian Property Sales Report by the Valuer-General, Wangaratta's median house price was below the average country figure, coming in at \$270,800 in the December quarter, down from \$283,000 in the September quarter.

It also shows vacant land typically costs around \$132,000.

The report is prepared quarterly by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) but statistics for the first half of 2016 are not yet available due to some long settlement dates.

Landmark Harcourts Real Estate principal Joe McKenzie said first time buyers in Wangaratta could expect to buy a "good house" for between

\$250,000 and \$300,000.

"In other regions where there is not as much confidence you need more than a 10 per cent deposit to buy," he said.

"But you can still buy in Wangaratta with a 10 per cent deposit and get a good three bedroom house."

Similarly, Garry Nash and Co director of sales, Cameron Meggs, said low interest rates were helping drive a high pool of buyers when Wangaratta had

a smaller number of listings.

"I would certainly say that the demand for buyers is still quite strong even though there's a relative lack of listings at the moment," Mr Meggs said.

"That's not necessarily making (a house) more valuable but for a home that's well presented you can get maximum interest from buyers.

"Interest rates are also at an all-time low so borrowing money has never been easier

or cheaper for people who are trying to get into the market."

Meanwhile, iNSITE Real Estate principal Angelo Pomponio said the rental market was also holding strong from people investing in more than one property.

"We tend to find that people are holding on to their properties and buying another one," he said.

"In general Wangaratta is ticking along nicely - we tend to do that, Wangaratta doesn't really boom or bust."

Beanies to offer a bit of warmth in winter

COMMUNITY goodwill to support Wangaratta Library's 101 Beanies Project will help Carevan Wangaratta offer a bit more warmth this winter.

The project sought public help to knit or crochet beanies and donate them to the library, to be distributed by Carevan Wangaratta.

On Saturday a massive pile of 708 lovingly made beanies were handed over, far exceeding initial expectations.

"The community response to this project has been hugely positive," said Jasen Smith, the library's children's and youth services officer.

"We've had many people now wanting to know what they can do next and we've set up regular knitting and crochet groups to satisfy that need to create and share ideas."

Mr Smith thanked all those who donated a beanie for the project, as well as local businesses, such



BAGS FULL OF BEANIES: Overwhelmed by the community generosity that saw more than 700 beanies made and donated are (from left) volunteer knitter Judith Thomson, Wangaratta Library staff Netti Hanley and Jasen Smith, and Wangaratta Carevan's Peter Vaughan and Michelle Kennedy.

as 'The Mill Shop' which provided the beanie pattern and wool.

Carevan Wangaratta president Michelle Kennedy was delighted to receive the handmade beanies.

"These are fantastic," she said. "We started to share some with other agencies in town, such as Pangerang House and Anglicare."

Ms Kennedy said beanies

will be offered to people who come and enjoy the free hearty meals which Carevan offers three nights a week in Wangaratta.

Carevan operates its meals from 6pm at:

- Bindall Avenue Park each Monday;
- Lowe and Ross Crt rotunda area in West End each Tuesday; and
- Apex Park each Wednesday.

Speed puts driver off road for six months

A DRIVER caught exceeding the 110kph speed limit by 35 kilometres has been put off the road for six months.

Thaer Yaqoo Barkho, 35, appeared at Wangaratta Magistrates' Court on Monday and pleaded guilty to the charge.

Police prosecutor Leading Senior Constable Penny Lawler said Barkho was detected driving his Mercedes van at 145 kph on the Hume Freeway, near Wangaratta at 5pm on March 31.

The court heard Barkho's vehicle was impounded for 30 days.

Magistrate John Murphy disqualified Barkho for the mandatory six months, and convicted and fined him \$500 plus costs of \$79.90.

Barkho was additionally ordered to complete a safe driving program.

Prisoner cops \$500 fine for wall damage

A PRISONER who caused criminal damage to a wall while in custody has been fined \$500.

Harley Maiden, 23, faced Wangaratta Magistrates' Court in custody on Monday, charged with intentionally damaging property.

The court heard he was sentenced to three months' jail on June 21 for burglary and theft matters, and was waiting in custody at Wangaratta with four other prisoners.

The court heard Maiden had gouged 'Harley was here' into the wall with a button from a pair of jeans because "he was bored".

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