



Pets take pride of place in renters' views

JASON Bouchereau knows full well that when looking for a home, pets can be a hassle, particularly considering he owns two burly mastiff-crosses.

Mr Bouchereau said it took about six weeks to find a rental property willing to accept pets.

Despite the related problems, new research shows being able to keep a pet is now a high priority for renters and unit buyers.

A survey commissioned by myhome.com.au showed 44 per cent of renters and 39 per cent of buyers considered pets as a factor when deciding where to live.

In contrast, finding a home close to the local watering hole – a traditional Australian priority – was the least important factor in the survey, with only 5 per cent rating proximity to a pub as a plus when searching online for property.

Pools did not fare much better with only 12 per cent of buyers and 5 per cent of renters keen to have a home with a pool.

Jason and his partner Shanelle eventually found a home through Elders real estate and both agreed with the survey that pubs were a low priority.

Cairns real estate agents told *Business Week* pets were precious for many people, with one agent saying landlords were often unnecessarily stubborn, as pets were often cleaner than people.

She said there were legal protections for people who allowed pets, as tenants usually signed condition sheets agreeing to return properties in their original condition.



High priority: Jason Bouchereau spent six weeks trying to find a rental property in Cairns that would accept his pet mastiff-crosses Tyson and Darlah. Increasingly pets are now a high priority for renters and unit buyers, according to an online survey. Picture: MICHAEL WATT

Shield St unit rare offering

STRONG interest has been reported in a busy Shields St retail unit that is currently on the market.

The unit, in Calypso Plaza, is home to Dolce and Caffè, which has a new five-year lease on the property.

Selling agent Laura Ots from Penridge Commercial said chances to invest in Shields St were rare.

"There has been enormous interest. It is not a growing street, it is 'the street'," Ms Ots said.

"This truly is a rare opportunity to secure property in this dynamic location."

The amount of pedestrian traffic along the street made it ideal for shopping, she said, and there already had been massive interest in the site.

The unit is 39m/sq with a 7.7m frontage.

Shop 1 Calypso Plaza is being sold by formal offer closing at 4pm on Tuesday, June 5. However the sale could be organised earlier if a price is agreed.

Median house prices top national average

HOUSE price rises in Cairns have topped the national average in the past year with the southern drought and strong northern job market fuelling accommodation demand.

The median cost of housing in Cairns rose by 12 per cent – up to \$339,000 – in the 12-months to February, while Australian Bureau of Statistics figures showed housing to have jumped by 8.6 per cent nationally.

Meanwhile, the median price rise in Cairns was 3 per cent in

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the three months to February compared with a national average of 1.1 per cent in the first quarter of the year.

Research director for Heron Todd White in Cairns, Rick Carr, said drought was helping drive the northern market.

"The market here is still very buoyant," he said.

"We have strong population growth pressuring the real es-

tate market, both people looking to rent or buy and the rental vacancy rate here is at a record low.

"The water situation down south is only going to increase pressure.

"Normally we get a population slowdown post-Christmas and I don't think we got that this year."

The average median house price in Cairns is still above Townsville (\$316,000) but below Mackay, which has exploded on

the back of the mining boom. Most capital cities posted strong gains.

The mining boom propped up Perth prices, with house values rising a further 2.1 per cent in the first three months to be up 32.1 per cent over the year.

While house price growth has slowed, Perth house prices are still growing at the fastest pace in the nation.

Brisbane house prices rose 2.9 per cent over the quarter and 10.2 per cent over the year.

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