## AUSTRALIA and NEW ZEALAND



June 2009 Vol 2 / No. 2

## Household dynamics and affordability: crisis or opportunity?

Understanding the direction of house prices No pain, no gain – the issue of housing stress

Compulsory acquisition of property arising from land use planning

Most probable price: a useful alternative?



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## API NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S REPORT



**David Moore** API National President

The Australian Property Institute is at the crossroads of change – with roads in all directions fuelled by an economy in peril. Do we put the foot on the brake at this stage or press the pedal to the metal? I say slow down on the amber and steer clear of the "no go" avenues with red lights flashing. "Go green" but apply sufficient momentum to leave others in our wake (or risk being shunted from behind), is the call.

National Council has built a finely engineered vehicle to ride the bumpy road through "Economic Street" and has invested in performance enhancing qualities that will clearly get to our destination - faster and more efficiently. Enough of the clichés. This is about the future of the Institute and the future of its members. It's about building a structure to provide members with what they want clearly defining the way forward. The launch last month of the Certified Practising Valuer (CPV) campaign is one example of the Institute investing in the future. The CPV campaign in main stream media will reach over 1 million readers who are being asked to go to www.cpv.org.au for CPV information. This information positions the Certified Practising Valuer at the top of the valuation profession.

Contracts were signed last month for a modern and progressive, integrated business and Contact Management System (CMS) that will, over the next 5 - 8 years, provide a new and improved level of access to information for members. The CMS will provide a platform for new and engaging web access capabilities. National Research is currently being prepared that will collect critical data to help build a platform of service to members and draw the wider property industry towards the Institute. API expects the findings from the study will enable National Council to set priorities and establish a benchmark to measure growth into the future.

The Institute has lodged an application with the Professional Standards Council for a Capped Liability scheme. The scheme, when approved, will potentially lower the cost of Professional Indemnity Insurance premiums which will be linked to Professional Standards. The Capped Liability Scheme will be initially established in NSW before rolling out nationally.

Future Property Professionals program modules will be trialled in South Australia towards the end of this year in the anticipation that further modules will be released in 2010. The program is currently in due-diligence and is designed to bridge the gap between academic knowledge and professional expertise and provide graduates with assistance in transitioning to fully fledged property professionals. The Institute is being pro-active in introducing the program at this particular time. As the global economy rebuilds, the opportunity for graduates to meet new demands resulting from economic change will enable those who complete the course to be professionally ready.

National Council has moved to amend the non-valuer certifications by replacing the three current certifications with six non valuer certifications and a new CPV certification for "Business" – CPV (Bus) has also been established. In total, the Institute now has nine certifications that more accurately meet the professional occupations of the Institute's members. Information about the new Certifications is available from your Division. On 28 May 2009, at the conclusion of the Institute's Annual General Meeting, James Pledge retired as National President. Under James' leadership the Institute has continued to raised the bar for the profession and has set API in a new modernised direction for the API to ensure the Institute remains the peak industry body for professional property. I am using this column to place on record James' professional and personal contribution to the Institute and I consider it an honour to be elected to carry on the good work.

The following members were elected to National Council:

- Nick McDonald-Crowley FAPI (ACT), elected Senior Vice-President
- Phillip Western FAPI (NSW), elected
  Junior Vice-President
- Andrew Cubbin FAPI (Tas)

I would like to thank the outgoing members. These members have each served on National Council for over I 0 years. Their contribution to the growth and development of API is well documented. On behalf of National Council, the Divisions and all members it is, with heart-felt gratitude for services to the Institute, that I thank:

- Marcia Bowden FAPI (ACT), former National President
- Barry Brakey LFAPI (NSW), former National President
- Clyde Estaugh LFAPI (Tas), former National President.

A final note. Perth next year will host the biennial Australian Property Institute and Property Institute of New Zealand joint conference. I encourage all members to put the event in your diary – Perth, 20 to 23 April, 2010. This will be the major property conference and industry forum in 2010 and all members are eligible to attend.

#### David Moore

President Australian Property Institute

## PINZ PRESIDENT'S REPORT



**Chris Stanley** PINZ President

The first half of 2009 has been very challenging both for all those involved in property. Just as the New Zealand economy, and more particularly the property market, has been through significant changes, so has the Property Institute.

Following on from the Special General Meeting in Wellington in December 2008 implementing Professional Communities, a considerable amount of time has been expended on developing By-Laws to ensure the Institute meets the needs of our diverse membership.

Representatives of the Professional Communities: Real Property Valuation, Property and Facilities Management, Plant and Machinery Infrastructure Valuation and Property Advisory, have been working to ensure the By-Laws mirror the intent of the new Rules and allow the communities to grow the membership base while still ensuring high ethical and educational standards are maintained.

In terms of the By-Law the primary focus of the Professional Communities has been on membership, advancement, registration and continued professional development. It is critical that the By-Laws provide a clear pathway from initial membership, advancement and through to registration. Once the Professional Communities have completed the review of the By-Laws these will be released to members for consultation.

It is hoped that draft By-Laws will be released in the near future. Subject to

member input and review it is anticipated they will come into effect post the Annual General Meeting in Auckland on 17 June 2009.

Once the By-Laws are ratified the composition of national committees will be reviewed to ensure each Professional Community is appropriately represented and the committees efficiently deliver services to our membership.

The transitional Professional Community Committees will remain in place until the first Annual General Meeting of each of the Professional Communities, which will occur in 2010.

The Institute has also been active reviewing new legislation and a working group is currently making submissions on the Unit Titles Bill on behalf of the membership. We are also making further submissions on the Financial Advisors Act to the Commerce Commission relative to the competencies of financial advisors.

We are also developing a Disclosure Statement template for members to utilise if they provide financial advice relative in relation to property and therefore fall under the requirements of the Financial Advisors Act.

Representatives of the Board and our CEO have recently met with the National President, National Director and representatives of the API to discuss the strategic alliance between the two countries. We currently work closely in relation to valuation and property standards and publish a joint journal however both countries recognise the potential that exists to work more closely on issues such as education, international relations and marketing.

The Board is also committed to increasing the number of educational courses

available on line. This is a cost efficient mechanism to deliver targeted education to our members and as such the Board has made a commitment to upgrade our on-line learning facility by investing in a "Webex" platform. This will enhance the learning experience.

A major focus is the Annual Conference to be held at the Sky City Convention Centre on the 18th and 19th June. The Annual Conference is one of our flagship events bringing together our diverse membership from all parts of the country. Members are urged to attend the conference which will provide a very interesting programme ranging from specialised workshops for our members to major issues such as the impact of the global credit crunch on our economy, planning and preparation for the 2011 World Cup green buildings.

My term as President will end at the AGM in June therefore this is my last report to members.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank all those who have assisted me over the last two years and in particular the Board of Directors, our CEO and our national committees. It has been my experience that the majority of our members are very supportive of the Institute and most give willingly of their time to ensure the success of our profession. I have appreciated all the support and advice offered by members. It has been a privilege to serve as your President.

Chris Stanley

President Property Institute of New Zealand

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Household dynamics and housing affordability: a more human approach to understanding the direction of house prices

## Abstract

Two changes in the dynamics of the household are examined for their impacts on house prices. The obvious fact that adding extra income to the household would cause price rises is applied to explain the capital growth that hit the residential property market in the early 1970s. The equally obvious fact that higher debt leverage would do the same is applied to the nexus between increasing household debt and capital growth through the past decade and a half. The implications of what happens once households cannot work more jobs or borrow more money are laid out as the best predictors of where house prices are likely to trend in the future.

## Introduction

The current US experience with real estate investment is a reminder that although financing can distort property markets, the fundamentals are inescapable. Speculative bubbles are always easier to spot using hindsight. Economists are currently divided in their opinion regarding the future of house prices with many following the optimism of Braddick and Montalti (2008) of the ANZ expecting house prices to grow due to underlying demand, while others are more circumspect and agree with Shane Oliver's (2008) conclusion that house prices are still perhaps as much as 20% over-priced. The two schools of opinion are based on conventional though different analytical approaches.

This study aims to demonstrate that there are factors that both approaches have failed to grasp that have been major influences on property prices, and may have sent them beyond the reaches of rational market theory. It will argue that only by grasping the actual dynamics of the human processes that underlie the markets will it be possible to reasonably forecast future trends. The focus of the data is the Sydney household, partly in order to respond to the literature, partly to avoid distortions in the Australia-wide averages due to the impacts of resource incomes on some cities and partly due to the difficulty of encompassing the whole of Australia/New Zealand in one study. The approach suggested in this work may be profitably applied to other markets in separate studies.

## The theoretical puzzle

Abelson and Chung (2005) drew attention away from conventional forecasting methods when they examined Sydney house prices since 1970 and found that they had left their traditional connection with adult wages. They concluded that this constituted a form of inter-generational inequity, and in so doing they implied the importance of intergenerational social trends in the analysis of property markets. Their work led to the more interesting question of why this should have occurred and if it was likely to reverse.

If house prices continue at a level that is proportionally greater with respect



### **Dr Garrick Small**

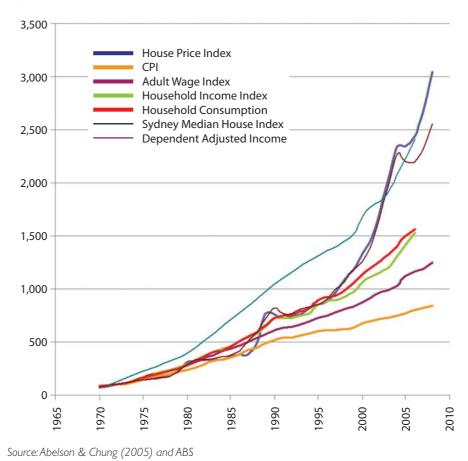
Garrick Small PhD (UTS), M.Comm. (UNSW), B. Surv. (UNSW), JP, FAPI is the Director of Consulting responsible for research quality at Hill PDA, a consultancy specialising in property economics, urban planning and real estate valuation. He has been a recipient of the Australian Property Institute (NSW) S. F. Whittington Award (2007) and the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors Thought Leadership Award (2003). He also has 20 years' experience as an academic at the University of Technology, Sydney in various roles including Associate Head of the School of the Built Environment.



to wages than previously, it means that it requires either a greater proportion of a householder's income, or a greater number of incomes to purchase each house. It means that the capital gain in the housing market is actually at the expense of burdening future home occupiers with being forced to pay a greater proportion of their income on housing. Conversely, it means that occupiers will have less to spend on other commodities – they will have the same house but less of everything else.

Economists often ignore these more social aspects. Bill Evans (2008) recently assessed the future of housing affordability and merely considered a line of best fit in the affordability trend over the past 40 years to conclude that whereas in 1965 25% of household income was devoted to servicing housing costs, today it should be 45%. He was silent on how or why a community should allow the price of one good to grow to the detriment of its ability to purchase

Figure 1: House Price Growth and Other Economic Factors



as much of other goods, when all are common components of the accepted standard of living. While his conclusion may be factually true, his method is no more than a trend projection. He may as well continue his trend to conclude that by 2100 households will spend 90% of their income on housing. The absurdity here illustrates the shortcoming of much economic analysis – it is dangerous projecting a trend if you do not know what is causing it. Property economics must explore the causal mechanisms that give rise to property values. Households are complex human units and it is likely that economic outcomes such as prices are better explained in terms of human behaviour and social changes than by mere trend analysis.

This complexity is evident in the economic behaviour of the household

unit. A review of most goods that make up the regular expenditure of western people reveals that most have actually become cheaper relative to wages (Warren and Tyagi 2004). Competition and market forces are supposed to cause prices to fall over time as the economy is prodded into greater efficiency. It has not worked for housing. Figure I presents Abelson and Chung's data on Sydney house prices augmented by Australian house price index, some other pertinent data and brought up to the present.

## Household dynamics and house prices

Three epochs can be seen in the data between 1970 and today. The first ended in 1988 when house price growth moved beyond that of adult wages. Up until this

time a person buying a house would commit a similar proportion of wages to the purchase as someone in 1970. Hence, even though house prices exceeded inflation, each successive owner paid a similar portion of the breadwinner's wage. The second epoch ended in 1996 when house prices left growth parity with household incomes. The period 1988-1996 marked the recognition that double-income families had become the necessary domestic economic unit, at least so far as housing costs were concerned. This transition to doubleincome households can be seen in the female labour force participation trends through the family formation age groups as shown in Figure 2. Female labour force participation rose rapidly between 1960 and 1990, but has been relatively stable since, at a level comparable to the



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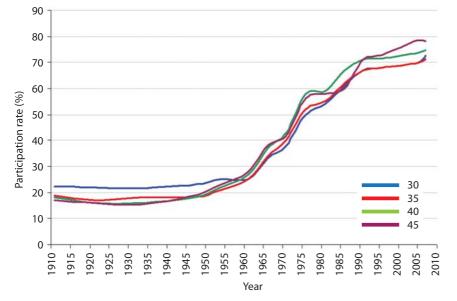
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#### Figure 2: Australian Female Labour Force Participation for Selected Ages

Source: Abelson, P. and D. Chung (2005) and ABS

male participation rate. This suggests that house price growth over this period may be largely explained by female labour force growth. Few would deny that the double-income family has now become a necessity in most households and this is reflected in the data. From this, it should be noted that house price has not simply been the result of market forces or cyclic movements, but at least partially the result of a major social change. The household economics of 1990 is fundamentally different to that of 1960.

The social change that underpins female labour force growth is a fall in the fertility rate. This is shown in Figure 3. This shows four epochs in fertility. Fertility first fell through the last quarter of the 19th century following the perfection of most forms of contraceptive until the mid 1930s, following the adoption of contraception by most religious groups in 1930 and the Great Depression. Fertility then rebuilt to the pre-World War I rate to peak at 3.55 in 1961 in what is now known as the baby boom. The third epoch followed the introduction of the contraceptive pill and the secularisation of the Australian community that combined

to cause the most rapid fertility fall in the period from 1962 to 1975. From 1976 to the present fertility has been the most stable of any period over the preceding century, but at a level below natural replacement.

The significance of the fertility rate for property cannot be underestimated. A fertility rate of less than 2.1 children per woman means that all else equal, the population will not replace itself. This will tend to mean reduced direct demand for residential property in the long term. A falling population will also have indirect impacts on property as businesses contract, resulting in reduced demand for income producing property. Improvements in longevity negate losses in fertility, but only as long as longevity is increasing substantially. Likewise, immigration will correct for natural replacement losses but requires an active immigration commitment, adequate sources of immigrants and raises the possibility that immigration will change the local cultural balance.

The release of women into the workforce between 1960 and 1990 provided a massive economic boost to households and was responsible for part of the economic growth during that period.The capacity of households to spend on real estate was also boosted indirectly by the secondary effect of the lower fertility rate: reduced household size and number of dependents per household income. Figure 3 shows the household dependency ratio falling into the early 1990s.

The peculiarity of that period is illustrated by the behaviour of inflation. Up to 1970 high inflation, say above 5%, was only

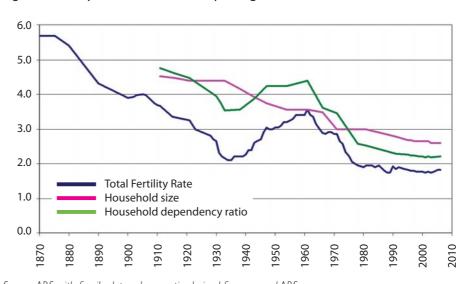


Figure 3: Fertility, Household Size and Spending Power

Source: ABS with family dependency ratio derived from several ABS sources.



experienced for relatively short periods following major economic disruptions, notably the two world wars. Economic theory suggests that high interest rates should result in low inflation, but the period 1970-75 saw interest rates rise and inflation take an even greater hike as shown in Figure 4. Indeed, the entire period 1970-90 saw inflation consistently at record levels indifferent to interest rates running at historical highs. By contrast, over most of the past decade, interest rises of fractions of a percent were sufficient to sober the economy. The enigma of sustained high interest and inflation can only be explained by the exogenous impact of elevated household economic resilience afforded by access to a robust second income, and to the falling dependency ratio.

## The borrowing binge

The connection to household dynamics at this point was masked by the general recession of the early 1990s which did stall house prices and usher in a new economic era of lower interest rates and manageable inflation. The early 1990s saw interest rates lower than they had been in almost 20 years, which led commentators with short memories to describe them as "historically low". The reality was some-what different – they were still historically high, just lower than the previous 20 years, as shown in Figure 4. This only plots interest rates back to 1915, but data from the Bank of New South Wales back to 1852 indicate that mortgage interest rates were never above 6.5% and generally less than 6%. What were not typical were the rates from 1970-1990.

The recession was partly induced by the imposition of extreme interest rates that shook the economy, but that does not explain why the community should have been indifferent to interest rates before 1990, but very sensitive to them afterwards. The answer lies in the fact that after 1990 female labour force participation no longer had capacity to expand in the face of financial pressures.

Household size was also a factor. With fewer dependents per income, it is likely that households can afford to devote a greater proportion of their incomes to housing costs. Figure 1 includes a preliminary adjustment of household incomes by the dependency ratio. This suggests that the amount of household income potentially available to fund housing could be considerably greater than that indicated by a constant proportion of incomes as is presently assumed for affordability measures. The trace for adjusted household income suggests that current Australian house prices may be proportionate to household circumstances, and not unduly unaffordable as is commonly believed. The actual economic behaviour of households is complex and varied, however some general trends can be identified that resonate with popular experience.

The extra dependent adjusted income constituted a funding capacity that from 1970 to 1990 supported the exceptional interest rates and inflation burdens of that era. From the early 1990s it can be seen in the twin trends of consumption growth riding above household incomes and the renewed popularity of debt funded property investment. However, housing costs are now closing on the additional effective household income. Household debt also appears to have reached capacity.

This result supports Evans' conclusion, but for very different reasons. Whereas Evans considered only the 40-year trend, which would suggest housing will consume 65% of household income by 2048 or an absurd 90% by century's end, analysis of household circumstances suggests that the change is simply an unrepeatable step that was the result of social changes. More work remains to be done to assess the methodology behind adjusting incomes in this way, but these results add considerable credibility to current prices and go some distance to explaining why they exist without significant economic backlash.

The growth in house prices from the early 1990s adds more weight to the economic importance of the falling dependency rate. With fewer dependents per income, households have been able to support greater amounts of debt and a large proportion of this has been directed towards residential property investment. The Reserve Bank of Australia first drew attention to the matter of household debt in its March 2002 newsletter. At that point household debt was about 110% of household income and international experience suggested that household debt ratios of 130%-140% could trigger recession. Figure 4 shows how household debt had been relatively stable until 1991, but following the substantial drop in interest rates in the preceding couple of years households had begun to indulge in a borrowing spree that appears to have continued up to early 2007. It now appears to be hovering at 160% of household income and its impact on Australia's current economic insecurity is yet to play out.

The investment logic that the community had learned in the period 1970-90 was "the more you borrowed the more you made", especially riding on the back of negative leveraging strategies. Once interest rates fell, that logic was applied to residential investments, especially in the larger cities, and stimulated a largescale residential development boom. Behind that residential boom was another artefact of the social changes of the 1970s: smaller households and the DINK (double income no kids) lifestyle. For the first time in Australian history apartment construction overtook cottages to sate the demand for households who had dual incomes, little time and seldom more than one child if any. For these households a backyard was a burden and optimum location was near the city centre, or at least well placed to transport links. These households can afford the higher rents and purchase costs, though it is at the cost of some limits on other consumption.

The confluence of the debt-driven supply funded by negatively leveraged investors and lifestyle-driven demand for well placed low maintenance rental apartments carried the trend in house prices well past the rational limits of affordability implied in Figure I. 2007 offered some consolidation, with advertised rents rising more than 24% (Residex) in Sydney and comparable increases in other cities, but more recent trends threaten their ability to sustain prices. If prices do stabilise, it will mean the adoption of a new benchmark in housing affordability that will leave less of the household budget available for other expenditure than at any point in living memory. This possibility promises to rein in the excess economic capacity brought about by the advent of smaller dual income households, leaving house purchase a major challenge for many households and less in the household budget available for other consumption. This reality appears to be currently impacting on the retailing industry which appears to be poorly prepared for it.

## The new equilibrium

A second lesson follows from this line of analysis. If falling fertility is the underlying cause of household changes that have driven housing markets over the past 40 years, then stable fertility rates will result in a new equilibrium. This new equilibrium will mean the end of the capital growth profile that has been characteristic of housing markets over living memory. It will mean that housing affordability is not following an ever upward trend, but merely has been in a state of transition

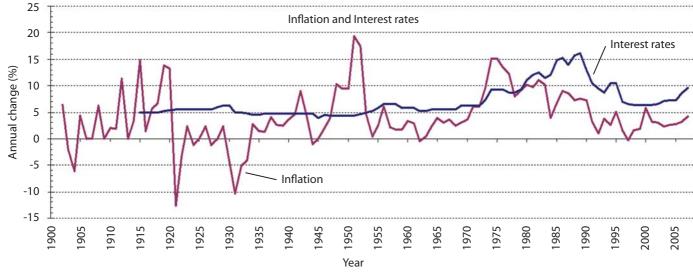


Figure 4: Australian Inflation and Home Mortgage Rates

Source: ABS CPI data and Commonwealth Bank standard variable home mortgage

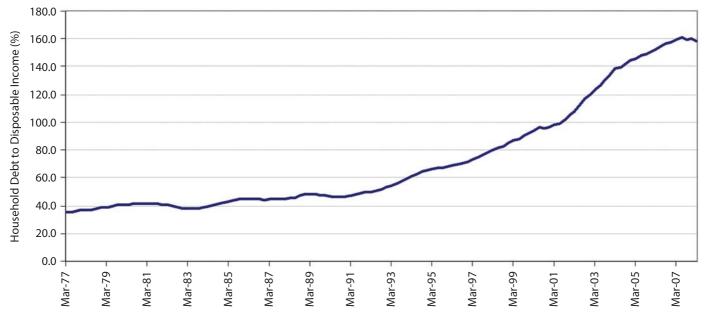


Figure 5: Australian Household Debt to Income Ratio

Source: ABS CPI data and Commonwealth Bank standard variable home mortgage

over the past 40 years from one stable level and another.

This may be also true with household debt levels and a number of other household economic characteristics. It suggests the end of an equivalent era of strong capital growth. It may well mean a return to emphasis on yield for property investment rather than capital gain, as was the case pre-1970. These trends are already becoming evident in the marketplace, though perhaps not with the importance that they deserve. To the extent that the market has probably overshot its stable value, it may also hint at why the current recession may well become more severe than any over the past 40 years.

At the household level, it may suggest that owning a house may again require the sort of commitment that was needed pre-1970 with the sacrifice of other lifestyle expenditures that have become the norm in recent years. However, the new equilibrium will be on the basis of very small households and substantially higher economic risks than in previous generations.

## Conclusion

This paper has focused attention to impact of social changes on Australian residential markets. It is commonly believed today that most households now require double incomes to survive financially. The data suggests that this belief is currently an understatement as house prices have overshot the level suggested by the raw double income effect. The fall in the household dependency ratio could be responsible for much of this apparent excess, suggesting that it is not simply necessary to have a double income, but also fewer dependents as well.

A second and potentially more important conclusion from this line of analysis is that the present situation is not merely a point on a trend line, but rather the end of transitional phase in the history of the Australian household. It suggests that while the present regime of house prices may be more rational than most commentators think, the direction from here may be more sober. It may be a return to residential market dynamics that have not been seen in more than 40 years. This study has sought to use the data to evaluate the impact of commonly recognised connections between the social dynamics of the household to its economic behaviour. If this line of analysis is valid, then it suggests a new direction in property market analysis that could be applied to other social changes and other property markets. The looming challenge of the ageing population can be easily recognised as the continuation of the social changes that have been examined in this study and an obvious direction for further research.

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## No pain, no gain: the issue of housing stress.



#### **Angelo Karantonis**

Associate Professor at the University of Technology. Angelo is an economist with extensive property industry experience and has been a researcher in the areas of housing affordability and property development for many years.

## Abstract

Much has been written regarding the increasing cost of housing in Australia and the so-called, "affordability crisis". The affordability crisis is concerned with the householder's increasing cost for housing requirement in relation to the householder's income. As the housing cost (purchase price or rental cost) increases relative to income, affordability worsens. As income increases relative to cost, affordability eases.

In the past, Australia was recognised as having one of the highest incidences of home ownership in the world. This is deteriorating and now there are commentators suggesting that lifetime renting may well be the position for many householders. The purpose of this paper is not to support the increasing housing price, but to put an alternative strategy for would-be purchasers of dwellings, who may be delaying their purchase in the belief that the affordability crisis will ease.

The paper uses Sydney housing prices and rental costs to demonstrate that the pain (stress) for the purchaser may not necessarily be long term and the pain may well result in long-term gain.

## Introduction

The definition of affordability is used to convey a notion of reasonable costs in relation to income. Gabriel et al (2005) define housing affordability as a "term usually denoting the maximum amount of income which households should be expected to pay for their housing". Similarly, PCA (2007) and Whitehead (1991) point out that housing affordability is expressed by the relationship between housing expenditure (be it rent or mortgage payment) and household income. In one way or another, housing affordability is measured and expressed as a ratio between expenditure on housing and income.

As a general rule property analysts and property industry groups (PCA, HIA, UDIA) use 30 per cent as the benchmark for housing affordability. Yates and Gabriel (2006) in a study for the Australian Housing and Urban Research institute (AHURI) have identified that there are 862,000 households in Australia experiencing housing stress. They defined stress using the "30/40 rule", which identifies the nation's lowest 40 per cent income group that needs more than 30 per cent of their disposable income for housing.

Yates and Gabriel (2006) further contend that duration of stress extends over time, reducing to 60 per cent after one



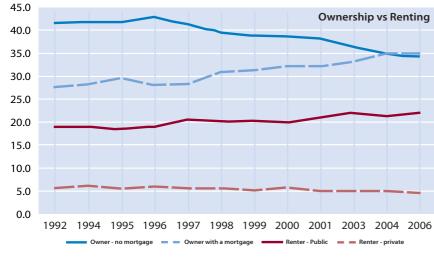


#### Figure 1: Australia and Sydney Housing Affordability Index

Source: HIA Housing Affordability Index Time Series (2008)

year, 49 per cent after two years and reduces to 29 per cent after three years. Unfortunately this study was over the period 2001-2003 and would have been good to extend over time.

Figure 1 shows the HIA housing affordability index for Sydney and Australia from 1984. HIA (2008) measures affordability by deriving an index which measures the ratio of net household income to net qualifying income for an 80 per cent loan of the Sydney and Australian median dwelling prices. The higher the ratio, the more affordable and vice versa, the lower the ratio, the less affordable. As can be noted both indexes move in a similar pattern, having decreased over the period, showing housing is now less affordable in Australia than it was in the 1980s and 1990s. Sydney and Australia were most affordable in 1985 with indexes well over 170, but decreased to their lowest in December 2003; 83.6 for Sydney, and 102.8 for Australia. Since then both have improved towards the end of 2008, due mainly to prices falling across Australia. Subsequent to that, more recently there have been several interest rate cuts which will filter through the next quarterly data onwards. What Figure 1 also shows is



#### Figure 2: Housing Tenure in Australia

Source: ABS (2008) - Table 1 Cat No. 4102.0

that Sydney has consistently been less affordable than the Australian average with the gap between the two widening over the past 15 years or so.

In an international study, Cox and Pavlevich (2007) used a median multiplier ratio to determine housing affordability. The ratio measured "the Median House Price to Median Household Income Multiple", which in essence measures the numbers of years of income it takes to purchase a dwelling. Therefore the higher the multiplier the more years of income it takes to purchase a dwelling and therefore the less affordable. Hargreaves (2002) in a study of the New Zealand residential market, found that due to reduced job security, delayed family formation of new families and more single-person households, there had been a significant increase in the percentage of households renting rather than buying dwellings.

With housing becoming less affordable in Australia, the percentage of ownership has fallen from 69.2 per cent in 1992 to 64.8 per cent in 2006 (ABS, 2008). In addition to the decline in ownership, the number of those now with a mortgage has increased, in fact most owners now have a mortgage. Figure 2 shows the composition of housing tenure in percentage terms and - as can be noted - the "owners with a mortgage" has increased by 16.7 per cent, whilst the level of "owners - no mortgage" has decreased by 21.6 per cent. On the alternative rental side, public renters have decreased from 5.6 per cent to 4.1 per cent, whilst those dependent on private rentals has increased by 22.2 per cent over the same period.

## Data

To undertake the analyses, this paper used the HIA affordability index time

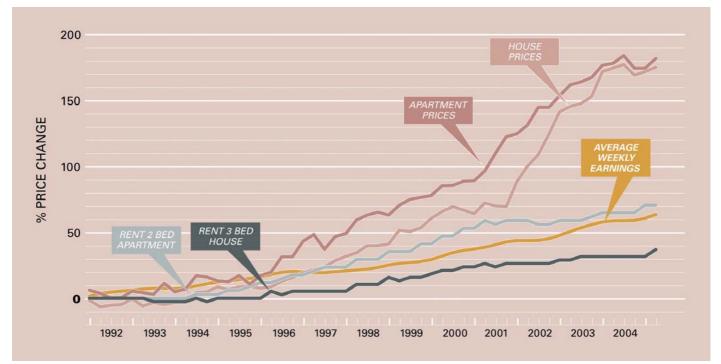


Figure 3: Sydney Dwelling Prices, Rents and Average Weekly Income

Source: Metro Strategy, 2005 (Figure C5)

series for median dwelling price and disposable household income for Australia, Sydney and capital cities. Rental prices were ascertained from the NSW Department of Housing, whilst the vacancy rates were provided by the Real Estate Institute of NSW. All other variables have been derived from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

## The Pain

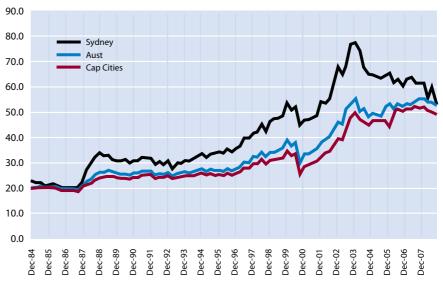
Examining Sydney, Figure 3 shows the Metro Strategy's (2005) percentage change of dwelling prices, rents and average weekly income for the period 1992-2004. As can be noted, it shows the extent of how housing and apartment prices have risen in relation to income in that period. It also shows that house and apartment rents have risen over the period and in particular how the rental of apartments has risen at a greater rate than income.

Using a multiplier similar to the Cox and Pavlevich (2007) study (discussed above), Figure 4 applies the median house price to the household disposable income, for Australia, the capital cities and for Sydney for the period December 1984 to September 2008. The higher the multiplier the worse the position is getting.

From the Figure we can see that Sydney has the highest multiplier, particularly from



the early 1990s, where the gap between Sydney and both the capital cities and the overall Australian position has significantly increased. For Sydney, the housing cost to income multiplier in the early 1980s was just over twice the household disposable income and in September 2008 had risen to over five for Sydney and the capital



Source: Derived from HIA-Commonwealth Bank Affordability Report (2008)

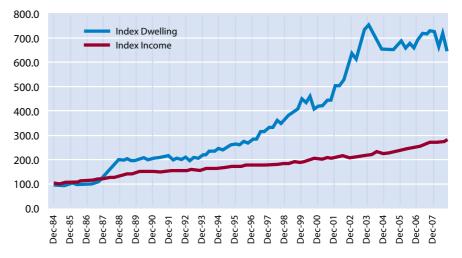


Figure 5: Household Disposable Income and Sydney Dwelling Indexes (1984-2008)

cities, after having reached 7.67, 5.5 and 4.91 in December 2003 for Sydney, Capital Cities and Australia respectively.

Measuring Sydney's increase we see from Figure 5 the indexes for household disposable income and dwelling costs from 1984 to 2008. As shown, the Sydney dwelling cost has been increasing at far greater rate than income, or in simple terms income has not kept pace with dwelling prices.

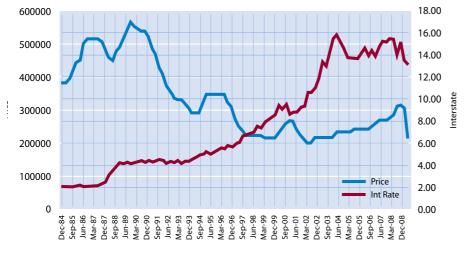
The dwelling index has risen to 645 (after peaking at 735 in December '03) whilst household disposable income index has risen to 276. This means that housing prices in Sydney have risen more than three times faster than household disposable income after having reached a rate of 5.4 in December 2003. The reason for the improvement since December 2003 is the result of the Sydney medium price falling from its peak of \$527,770 in December 2003 to \$451,700 in September 2008 (HIA).

Source: Derived from HIA-Commonwealth Bank Affordability Time Series (2008)

Another important factor in housing affordability is the interest rate. Increasing interest rates, ceteris paribus, means higher mortgage repayments, which in turn means a fall in affordability.

Figure 6 shows the Sydney housing price and interest rate movements from December 1984 to September 2008. Until June 2008, as can be noted, other than a few minor downward movements, the Sydney house price trend has been upward, moving from \$70,000 to \$451,700. However interest rates have fluctuated, commencing at 11.5 per cent, increasing to 17 per cent (September 1989) and falling to 6.05 per cent (December 01), before beginning an upward movement to 9.45 per cent





### Figure 6: Sydney House Price and Housing Interest Rates (1984-2008)

Source: Derived from HIA-Commonwealth Bank Affordability Time Series (2008)

in June 08. Since then, there have been several interest rate cuts due to the global financial crisis, with the rate falling to 6.45% by December 2008.

Thus before the recent interest rate falls, over the past five years or so, notwithstanding the slowing down of prices, higher interest rates have compounded the position of housing stress brought about by the long-term higher house prices.

As discussed in the literature, housing stress is often defined when more than 30 per cent of household income is required to meet the repayments for the loan. Figure 7 shows the percentage of disposable income required to meet housing payments for Sydney median price dwelling from December 1984 to June 2008.

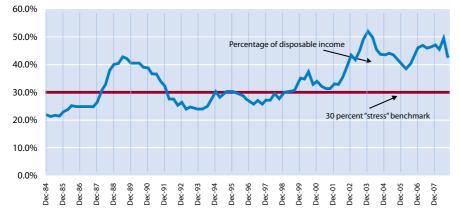
From the Figure, we can note that there are two periods when the ratio has been greater than 30 per cent "stress" benchmark, namely the late 1980s and the period from December 1999 onwards, peaking at 52.3 per cent in December 2003, but still at 42.9 per cent at the end of the period (September 2008).

Allowing for the interest rate cuts to 6.45 per cent in December 2008, the percentage of disposable household income required to meet repayments reduces to 33.8 per cent.

## Renting

As everyone needs to live somewhere, the alternative to buying is renting which, when property prices are unaffordable, increases the demand for rentals. In addition, the growing population in





### Figure 7: Percentage of Disposable Household Income (1984-2008)

Source: Derived from HIA-Commonwealth Bank Affordability Report (2008)

Sydney (Metro Strategy, 2006) without an accommodating new supply (PCA, 2007), is further compounding the increase in demand for rental dwellings, driving the cost of renting upwards. This is evident in Figure 8, which shows the level of rent from September 2001 for one-, two- and three-bedroom dwellings in Sydney. Rents have been increasing in all categories. Over the period, they have increased 29 percent for the one-bedroom dwellings and 23 per cent for two- and three-bedroom dwellings.

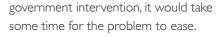
The level of rentals is not expected to fall, as vacancies rates have had a downward trend since March 2001, implying the potential for higher asking rents. Figure 9 shows the vacancy rate for dwelling rentals for Sydney. The downward trend can be noted with the level falling to below 2 per cent for the past 10 quarters and with no end to this trend in sight. This means that supply of rental accommodation is being rapidly absorbed and this has the effect of driving rent levels higher.

The falling vacancy rate is the result of an increase in demand for private renting as evident in Figure 2 above, whilst the lack of new supply has been attributed to a combination of economic and regularity factors. The underlying factor of new dwelling supply is land, but as the PCA (2007) have identified, there has been a growing imbalance of demand and supply with an expected shortfall of new land supply for the period 2006-2026.

Therefore, as the alternative to buying is renting, households will also experience stress in renting. So with rising prices and rising rents, housing stress is becoming a new phenomena.

## What is the answer?

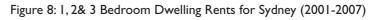
There is no one quick fix to the problem and it could become a permanent one. Supply needs to increase and even with

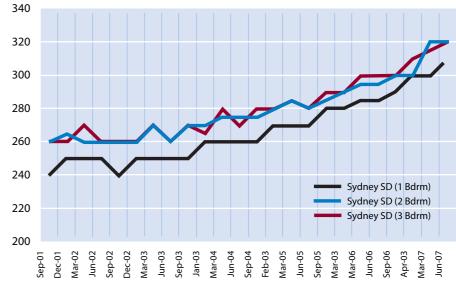


Not a solution, but an alternative view, is "no pain, no gain". The above has highlighted the pain, now let us analyse the gain.

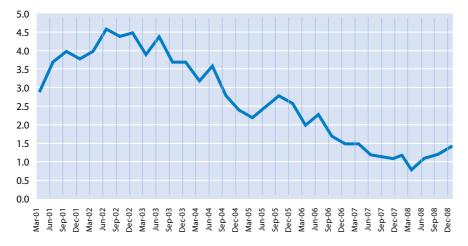
## The Gain

Unfortunately there are many owners that have been driven to mortgagee sales in Sydney as a result of this affordability crisis, in particular in the "outer ring" of Sydney. Supreme Court documents published in The Daily Telegraph (Bissett and Saurine, 2006) showed that the number of "Writs of Possession" had risen to 5363 by 2006. It also noted that a "two-tier" market had been developed with many of these mortgagee sales in the areas classified as the "outer ring" of Sydney. This is where not only are owners finding it difficult to meet the increase mortgage payments due to the increase in interest rates, but the market value of their dwelling has fallen. In many of these cases, owners have negative wealth, that is their mortgage is greater than the value of their dwelling asset. But the housing





Source: NSW Department of Housing (unpublished)



### Figure 9: Residential Vacancy Rate (%) for Sydney (2001 - 2008)

Source: REINSW (Various)

market does not necessarily move in unison and not all areas of Sydney have experienced this downturn.

In sport, it is often said, you must experience pain to gain or put simply "no

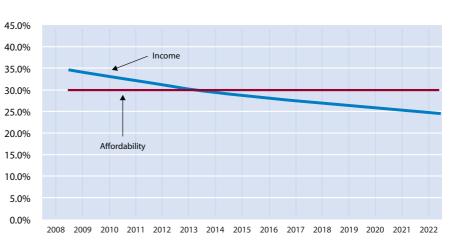
... the household, whilst suffering affordability stress, could be having an increase in wealth ...

pain, no gain". Recognising that pain (in this case housing stress) is a reality, it is also a reality that household income has risen over time. In addition repayments have risen due to the increase in borrowings and can fluctuate with the rise and fall of the rate of interest.

Figure 10 shows the dwelling repayment to income ratio projected to 2022 for the dwelling purchaser in 2008, beginning with the adjusted September ratio of 33.8 per cent. This is the adjusted "repayment to income" ratio for September 08 in Figure 7. Now, when analysing the time series of "disposable income" we derive that income grew by 2.37 per cent over the past 12 months. By assuming the same growth rate for disposable income into the future and applying it to the "repayment to income" ratio, the ratio decreases over time, that is housing stress reduces annually. Figure 10 shows that it takes some five years (2013) before it gets to the 30 per cent acceptable margin, in other words it takes five years of "pain" to get out of the accepted level of housing stress.

However, although one buys a dwelling principally for shelter, the dwelling is an asset and as we have seen over history its value increases. Hence, the household, whilst suffering affordability stress, could be having an increase in wealth, depending on the current property cycle. Hence to get a correct economic position of the householder repaying

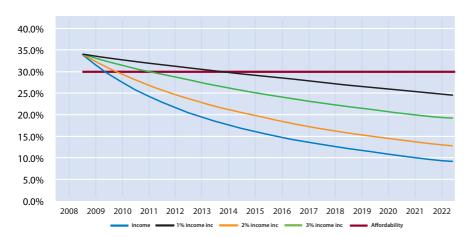
#### Figure 10: Affordability ratio



a loan on the property over time, we should also add the value of the capital gain.

Figure 11 shows the value of that capital gain and added to the household income allowing for a capital gain of 1, 2 and 3 per cent annual respectively to show that whilst the dwelling purchaser is in an affordability stress position in the early years of ownership, the dwelling purchaser is increasing in wealth. Obviously, the higher the capital gain the higher the wealth effect; 1 per cent capital gain means the household has been reduced to the 30 per cent benchmark in about three years, reducing to two years for a 2 per cent capital gain and to one years for a 3 per cent capital gain.

The advantage of observing the position in this respect is that if in fact property is rising, the person that purchases and is in stress can overcome the stress in a short period of time and in particular those who have taken out more than one loan can consolidate their loans into one loan by re-mortgaging. Generally speaking the second loan, being a 2nd mortgage or personal loan will always be at a higher rate of interest than a 1st mortgage, plus having two loans requires two concurrent payments. Therefore the benefit to a property owner is that as



### Figure 11:Affordability ratio allowing for capital gain

the value increases, the owner has more equity in the dwelling (asset) and can by re-mortgaging consolidate the loans at the standard housing rate of interest. Also the added benefit is that the household only has one repayment to make.

But prices have fallen and to be fair to the argument, what happens if housing prices continue to fall, after all we are in a financial crisis? Figure 12, using the same commencement data as Figure 11 and the subsequent fall in interest rates (5.24 per cent) in March 2009, assumes prices falling by 5 and 10 per cent over the next two years and a 1 per cent increase from the fourth year onwards, as one would expect to see increasing prices after four years of negative growth. As can be observed there is "pain", housing stress increases to over 40 per cent and nearly 60 per cent respectively and then begins to fall. With falling prices the stress period now extends to seven years and 10 years respectively.

In other the words, even with a further 10 per cent fall, the pain would be gone within 10 years and the buyer has the luxury of home ownership. One may then argue, why not wait for prices to fall? The problem with that argument is, identifying the absolute "bottom" of the market. Whilst some commentators will argue that people are better off renting, let us look at some of the facts. The end

## ... the pain would be gone within 10 years and the buyer has the luxury of home ownership.

result of people not being able to buy is that rents will be driven up, as has been the case in recent times. The latest REINSW report (2008) shows that the residential property vacancy rate in Sydney has remained below 2 per cent from September 2006 – "the benchmark figure that indicates whether or not there is a rental crisis". The figure as at 2008 was 1.4 per cent. So whilst some commentators may say that people are better off renting, rental prices are also creating affordability stress.

## Conclusion

This paper does not solve the housing stress problem, but it offers a reason why consumers should still consider buying. As the alternative to buying is renting, it was shown that rents have also risen, continue to increase and are forecast to rise even further. These increases in rental costs are also eroding savings and in particular those that are in need of saving for any future deposit for purchasing.

Provided consumers have the capacity to purchase, they can sacrifice early in their purchase for lifetime gains. History has shown income grows over time and if applying last year's rate of income growth, the purchaser's housing stress reduces to about three years and possibly less, depending on capital growth. In addition, the current rate of interest is expected to fall further.

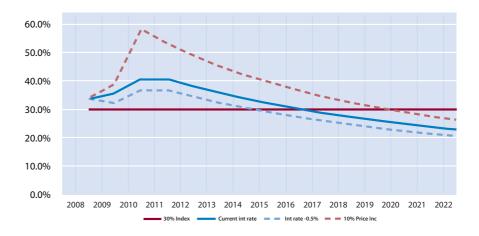


Figure 12: Affordability ratio allowing for capital loss

It must be understood that should property values stay stable then the buyer would be in the position as shown in Figure 10. More importantly, should there be a decreasing housing price environment then the initial stress would be further compounded as we saw in Figure 12.

However, history has shown that property values increase over the longer term. In this study, we found that a 1, 2 and 3 per cent capital growth rate would reduce housing stress to three, two and one year respectively. Even if prices did decrease by 10 per cent over the next two years and then only achieved a 1 per cent growth after that, the result would be that stress would extend for a period of about 10 years. But the purchaser will have the luxury of home ownership, therefore, satisfying the cliché, *no pain, no gain.* 

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## Compulsory acquisition of property arising from land use planning: an Australian perspective

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## Abstract

Historically compulsory acquisition of private property rights in Australia arising from land use planning only arises in defined and quite narrow circumstances. Compensation accrues to the dispossessed property owner on such occasions, but even this assessment of compensation can be restricted, and arguably unjust. Attempts have been made to liberalise the grounds for such compensation, however recent legislative amendments notably in NSW have arguably confounded such endeavours. The current compulsory acquisition legislation in NSW is canvassed in the light of these recent developments. The rising value of property rights notably in major urban areas of NSW has caused government agencies to seek ways to ameliorate their legislative obligation to pay full compensation. Current policy settings suggest that the interaction between planning and law will be increasingly important especially as land use regulation is being carefully crafted to ensure the "taking" threshold is not unwittingly traversed, notwithstanding the effective obliteration of almost all private property rights as a result of a highly restrictive zoning.

The key argument in this paper is that the relationship between planning and law is being intentionally misused. This is of great concern in a social democracy such as Australia where private property rights are specifically guaranteed "just terms" compensation in the Australian Constitution. However, the six Australian states retain remarkable vestiges of their colonial legislative heritage, one such power is the ability to reduce or even deny compensation for the abrogation of private property rights arising from state action.



### Introduction

Since European settlement of the Australian continent land grants were made by the Crown to settlers, however it was common that such grants reserved a right to the Crown to resume ownership of all or part of the alienated land for public purposes. In Australia the act of resuming Crown ownership is

## described as "resumption", and the term can be found in clauses in colonial Crown grants. The term is synonymous with other

in colonial Crown grants. The term is synonymous with other terms used in other jurisdictions such as "eminent domain", "condemnation" and "expropriation".

The right reserved to the Crown was clearly intended to permit the resumption of alienated land, however the development of embryonic land use planning in Australia in the early 20th century resulted in the resumption power being extended to land identified for parks and reserves. In 1919 John Sulman, (then) President of the Town Planning Advisory Board to the NSW Department of Local Government, proposed reforms in land use regulation to permit the orderly creation of open space, notably for the expanding metropolitan area of Sydney:

Sydney already has its fair share of parks and reserves, a few of them, like the Inner and Outer Domain, among the most beautiful in the world. Some country towns are also well provided with reserves, but in many cases they are not made the most of, and have a neglected appearance. Till this is remedied, it may be said, why ask for more; but the aim of town-planners is to secure now, while land is cheap and unbuilt upon, the parks, playgrounds and reserves that will surely be needed in the future, and which then will be unobtainable.

The Hon J.D. Fitzgerald, Minister for Public Health and Local Government in the NSW Parliament in 1919 supported the proposed Sulman reforms, stating:

[t]he new System which Mr Sulman tells us of so clearly, aims to secure a radical alteration in the methods of city building, in order to secure comfort, convenience, and beauty.

After a long gestation, the first significant planning legislation in Australia known as the *County of Cumberland Planning Scheme Ordinance* was passed on 27 July 1951 by the NSW Parliament. The *Ordinance* was heavily influenced by the *Town Planning Act 1932* (UK) and the earlier *Town Planning Act 1925* (UK) which allowed for the acquisition of land compulsorily with the approval of the Ministry of Health and to pay compensation arising from such acquisition.

The urge to enact Australian land use regulation was obviously influenced by the growth of such regulation in the UK, which proceeded steadily after the passing of the 1932 legislation, such that by 31 March 1939 nearly 26.5 million acres (1.07 million hectares) of land in England and Wales were under planning control of one form or another. With the enactment of the *County of Cumberland Planning Scheme Ordinance*, land use regulation developed to the point that most settled parts of the continent are now subject to some form of control.

However with the steady growth of land use regulation, compulsory acquisition for public purposes arising from zoning has seen compensation rights accruing to land owners remaining very restrictive. This topic is the subject of the following section of this paper.

## Compulsory acquisition and compensation arising from land use planning

In Australia, where land is zoned or reserved for a public purpose, compensation rights for losses derived from such zoning exist, and can be activated generally at the discretion of the landowner. Zonings or reservations which do not have a public purpose are not compensable.

This restriction on the right to compensation from land use zoning or reservation contrasts with the US position which is much broader, with the Supreme Court first holding in 1922 that a regulation could violate the takings clause and hence invoke compensation. There has been continual refinements of the regulatory takings jurisprudence by the US Supreme Court, and importantly in 1992 it was held that a regulation depriving a property owner of all economically beneficial use of land is a categorical taking.

This is clearly not the situation in Australian jurisprudence where the only general obligation for compensation arises when private property rights are commuted for a "public purpose". The definition of public purpose is articulated in the various Australian statutes e.g. s.26(1)(c) *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (NSW) as follows:

... reserving land for use for the purposes of open space, a public place or public reserve within the meaning of the Local Government Act 1993 [NSW], a national park or other land reserved or dedicated under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 [NSW], a public cemetery, a public hospital, a public railway, a public school or any other purpose that is prescribed as a public purpose for the purposes of this section.

The comprehensive definition of public purpose set out above in s.26(1)(c) appears to provide clear indicia that the intention of the legislative drafters was to describe a broad range of land uses which are traditionally the responsibility of the Crown. However, it is a truism that compensation does not necessarily follow zoning, but a resuming authority cannot use the zoning process to artificially reduce the value of land which is to be acquired by the Crown. Nevertheless, arguments have increasingly been advanced by the Crown and its agencies that certain zones or reservations are not wholly for a public purpose, and hence compulsory acquisition can be avoided. Mr Justice Hemmings of the Land and Environment Court of NSW detected this trend as early as 1989, where state and local government agencies were starting to include a range of uses in specific zonings or reservations – uses potentially capable of private action such as agriculture or recreation.

The test for a successful compensation claim arising from a public purpose zoning or reservation lies in the requirement that private usage must be totally denied, and that the land is reserved or zoned "exclusively" for the public purpose. Whilst some zones and reservations may purport to permit some private usage, Farrier and Moore pungently observe:

[s]ometimes, however, restrictions on land use may be so complete that they essentially take away the whole substance of a property interest. In these circumstances there is an indirect acquisition of property ...

## restrictions on land use may be so complete that they essentially take away the whole substance of a property interest

Gray has pointed out that the use of some obscure or unanticipated private use in what is clearly a public purpose zone or reservation can constitute an effective taking of property notwithstanding that:

## ... the owner is still left with a residue of reasonable alternative forms of use.

It is emerging that claims for compensation are being rebutted in the UK and US if the courts can be convinced that "a residue of reasonable alternative forms of use" still remains. This pattern of rebuttal is being emulated in Australia although there has been only scant public debate on the topic. As drafters become more innovative and presumably more confident, "private" uses in public purpose zones and reservations might include bee keeping, utilities, forest plantations, and even electricity generating plants. In 2007, the Australian High Court criticised such misuse of drafting in its decision in *Shu-Ling Chang & Anor v Laidley Shire Council*, stating that restrictive land use controls were a "cloak" to obscure a regulatory taking by stealth:

... "Cloak" is an especially apt term here because, instead plainly and openly, of legislatively declaring that the various changes to zoning and uses within the designated area or region, will not attract compensation, that result is achieved by the device, clumsy and obscurantist, of a "properly made application" and the fiction of an application which is not to be treated as an application in fact and in law. If it were at all possible sensibly and properly to read the legislation as a conferring a right to compensation upon the appellants I would be glad to do so. I cannot do that, but I can surely at least commend to the legislature the restoration to the appellants, and others similarly affected, of the right to compensation to which historically and morally they are entitled.

Notwithstanding it is well established that where privately held land is to be zoned or reserved for a public purpose such as open space the compensation to be paid to the dispossessed land owner will reflect an underlying zone and hence equivalent underlying value. It was held by Gobbo, J. in *City of Brighton v Road Construction Authority* that:

[w]here a parcel of land is set aside for parkland use, its value will be related to the price that a purchaser of parkland will be prepared to pay, given that such purchaser will be using the land for that which constitutes for it the highest and best use of the land. It will also be related to what that purchaser would have to pay – assuming reasonable opportunity and not compulsion to effect a purchase – if it were to purchase other land that might equally meet its purpose. Such purpose of other land may lead it to have to pay the equivalent of residential values.

The fact that emerges very clearly is that municipalities, especially those like that claimant in developed areas, cannot purchase land appropriately zoned for parkland purposes. They are obliged to buy residential land, at or near residential values, when they wish to secure parkland.

The authority's valuers argued that where a municipality bought residential land for parkland purposes and then had imposed on the land a reservation for public open space, its value was immediately reduced. It is difficult to understand why this is so, for the municipality is the main factor in the market for parkland. It will clearly be prepared to pay the original price it paid for the very good reason that, if it did not buy this land at that price, it would be compelled to pay that price for residential land, there being no parkland so zoned available for sale.

The importance of this decision lies in the exposition of the trial judge that land acquired for the purposes of open space will need to be purchased at the equivalent underlying value, not at the discount caused by the restricted zoning or reservation. Court decisions such as this clearly strike fear in the treasuries of the Crown and its agencies, and highlight why "circuitous device[s]" are increasingly being used with "evasive intent".

### The result being that the benefit of a public purpose is gained without a need to provide compensation, nor even the need to compulsorily purchase privately held land.

The following section of this paper deals with the issue of inverse compulsory acquisition procedures, which can provide some relief to owners of privately held land.

## Inverse compulsory acquisition

McAuslan in his 1975 seminal work *Land, Law and Planning* observed in respect of land use regulations that a need could be conceived for inverse compulsory acquisition, such rights lying with the affected property owner:

[t]here are occasions when planning restrictions or proposals are held to be so drastic that the owner of the land affected is entitled to require the local planning authority to purchase his land. It may be suggested that the broad ground on which such inverse compulsory purchase is admitted into the law is that the economic value of the land to the owner has been so substantially reduced that it would be inequitable to insist that he bore the total loss involved. The restrictions or proposals are made in the public interest and the owner should not be required to bear more of their cost than any other tax or ratepayer.

This principle appears in Australian planning legislation, with the affected landowner able to claim compensation for the reservation or zoning of his property for a public purpose. Once aware of the reservation or zoning, the landowner can require the beneficial authority to acquire the property and once acquired, a claim for compensation under the *Land Acquisition (Just Term Compensation) Act 1991* (NSW) can be made. There is a requirement that the acquiring authority give written notice within 30 days of the publishing of the notice of acquisition including a statutory offer of compensation by the Crown. There is no time constraint upon the former property owner as to when the statutory offer has to be accepted, although if unacceptable an objection must be lodged with the Land and Environment Court within 90 days of the issue of the statutory offer:

Whilst these provisions appear to empower the private owner of land, in NSW amendments were made recently to the *Land Acquisition (Just Term Compensation) Act 1991* (NSW), which deny compensation for additional losses such as disturbance, solatium, in return for early acquisition by the authority. Arguably the dispossessed owner would be more beneficially positioned if he waited until the property was actually resumed rather than invoke the hardship provisions for early acquisition. Further a review of inappropriate or outdated reservations is required by Crown agencies in NSW, yet there appears to be reluctance by those agencies to actually review their beneficial zones and reserves. The intent of such a review is to release detrimentally affected private land, however the risk exists that long-term strategic planning by major infrastructure agencies such as railways and water authorities might be impaired through reduced flexibility. There is a balance to be struck between these twin competing principles and currently the agencies are resisting on the grounds that the cost of future acquisition might be untenable.

Whilst there is resistance to accepting restrictions on the capacity of Crown agencies to reserve or zone land for future public purposes, more concerning are the strident attempts to ameliorate the quantum of compensation when acquisition actually occurs.

## ... the States are unfortunately not constitutionally bound to provide just terms on the compulsory acquisition of property ...

The final section of this paper canvasses the vexed relationship between planning and law in the context of public purpose zonings and reservations.

## Towards fairer compulsory acquisition and compensation arising from land use planning?

The decision of the Australian High Court in Shu-Ling Chang & Anor v Laidley Shire Council referred to earlier in this paper also canvassed the remarkably unjust colonial vestige of the six Australian states wherein, the Court observed:

... the States are unfortunately not constitutionally bound to provide just terms on the compulsory acquisition of property ...

It is not surprising that there is continuing reluctance by the six Australian states to contemplate extension of the right to compensation. The NSW Parliamentary *Standing Committee on Law and Justice* stating as recently as 2001 such changes (amongst others) were "not in the public interest for the NSW Government to enact a statutory Bill of Rights". There remains no right to compensation unless part or whole of an owner's property in NSW is actually compulsorily acquired or designated for compulsory acquisition. Losses in property values for owners subject to rezoning, or abutting substantial new zonings and hence land use changes, are not compensable. This obduracy to



expanding compensation contrasts with the earlier recognition in the 1951 *County* of *Cumberland Planning Scheme Ordinance* which included compensation provisions for owners injuriously affected by zoning:

[I]egislation providing for planning must ensure that those injuriously affected by a scheme and those from whom land is compulsorily acquired will not be unjustly treated, but the legislation must also ensure so far as possible that the community will not be forced to pay unreasonably. In order to achieve these results, there must be carefully detailed clauses in the Act saying whether compensation is or is not payable in particular circumstances, and just how the assessment of compensation is to be determined.

Town and country planning legislation almost invariably provides that owners of property which is injuriously affected and loses value when the scheme comes into effect will be entitled to payment of compensation by the responsible planning authority, usually the local governing authority, or council.

However, this provision in the Ordinance for the payment of compensation or injurious affection arising from zoning change was repealed in the 1960s in Part XIIA Local Government Act 1919 (NSW).

The Ordinance also provided for the collection of betterment charges from those owners gaining beneficially from

zoning. However, the extraction of betterment from private landowners has never been greatly successful in Australia, for example in NSW betterment from land development commenced in the 1970s but ceased due to the adverse impact on the cost of subdivision, the relevant legislation, *Land Development Contributions Act 1970* (NSW) and *Land Development Contributions Management Act 1970* (NSW) being subsequently repealed.

A significant exception however, is the offset to compensation arising from expropriation of actual private ownership rights to permit public works, for example specific provisions for betterment as an offset to compensation for railways are provided for at s.18 *City and Suburban Electric Railways Act 1915-1967* (NSW).

Further, there has been debate in some states as to whether compensation for "town planning" losses should be more widely applied, for example in Victoria this occurred in 1978. In 1980 the Commonwealth Law Reform Commission reported that there was no Commonwealth or State law providing for compensation for injurious affection unless land is acquired. In 2008 the Law Reform Commission of Western Australia published its Final Report into its investigation of *Compensation for Injurious Affection*, and recommended that where a landowner was unable to sell reserve land an application on hardship grounds could be made to the Minister:

... it was suggested in a submission to the Commission, some landowners are both unable to sell reserved land and unable to make a development application in good faith, and are thereby deprived of any avenue for compensation. However, the overriding purpose of the compensation provisions is to delay payment of compensation until the land is needed or the landowner is distinctly disadvantaged ...

In the circumstances postulated, the landowner and the relevant authority may need to reach agreement on sale or acquisition ...

It is clear that the Law Reform Commission of Western Australia does not envisage significant changes to the relevant state legislation to permit affected landowners to invoke compulsory acquisition provisions more readily. Indeed, the final paragraph in the above quote from the Commission's Final Report suggests a very weak response to this issue. The Commission a number of times refers to concern regarding the "financial consequences" for the Government and "the impost on Treasury".

Currently, continent-wide Australian legislation remains resolutely drafted against any expansion of compensation, and it appears highly unlikely that the evasive intent evident through the drafting of public purpose zones and reservations will continue unabated.

This paper was presented to the Third Conference of the International Academic Association on Planning Law and Property Rights, Aalborg Denmark 11-12 February, 2009

**References** are available on request. Email: editor@api.org.au



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## Most probable price

#### **Maurice Squirrell**

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## **Background**

This paper is derived from materials developed for workshops run under the auspices of the Valuer-General of Victoria dealing with newer and objective approaches and techniques to land valuation. For those wishing to get an immediate grip on the issues discussed in this paper the reference Property Valuation and Analysis by Professor Tom Whipple (Curtin and Sydney universities) provides a complete coverage. A review of the recent second edition of this book appeared in the March 2009 edition of this journal.

## Abstract

Valuations are often made to answer the question "What would the property sell for?" The valuation *rationale* is to answer this question where there is a need for this information. However, other than in the case of valuations for mortgage purposes, at the time of the valuation the subject property is usually either not actually for sale, or has not yet sold.

The valuation process suggests that the best way to answer the valuation question is to examine prices paid for similar properties and to infer a sale price from that examination.

There are three fundamental steps:

- Identify what is being (hypothetically) sold, and to consider the likely terms and conditions of sale and the purpose for which the valuation is required.
- To identify properties that can best provide relevant sale data or information that can be used to predict the sale price of the subject, under the conditions discovered under Step 1, to produce the "comparable sales" set.

3. To apply the sales data or information gleaned from Step 2 to infer a value for the subject property.

This paper is concerned with cases where the objective is to find the market price of the subject property, perhaps where it is actually being offered for sale in a specific market, at a specific time, under explicit terms and conditions.

In the seminal Australian valuation text *Principles and Practice of Valuation* (4th edition, 1969), Dr J. F. N. Murray, LFCIV, states: "In brief, value to the appraiser is *hypothetical market price* and as such it may be contrasted with prices paid in individual cases" (p.83). Also, "valuation is the art of imputing a price to property" (p.76).

The thesis of this paper is that there are valuation cases of importance where the traditional concept of Fair Market Value, usually referred to as "market value", is an inadequate response or part response to the valuation issue and that it should, when appropriate, be replaced or assisted with a prediction of Most Probable Price.

## Market Value to Most Probable Price

In Land Valuation and Compensation in Australia (1993 reprint), R. O. Rost and H. G. Collins state: "the concept of value accepted for statutory purposes and for most other purposes is that authoritatively formulated by the High Court of Australia in Spencer v The Commonwealth of Australia (1907)" (p.36).

This paper need not examine this judgment in any detail. The basic assumptions to the sale hypothesised by the High Court in the Spencer case are:

- Fair "the all important fact on that day is the opinion regarding the fair price of the land".
- 2. Both the (hypothetical) vendor and purchaser are to be willing but not anxious to trade, by voluntary bargaining. i.e., equally balanced in bargaining strength.
- "Both (hypothetical parties) to be perfectly acquainted with the land and cognizant of all circumstances that might affect its value".
- 4. Economically rational both parties would not "overlook any ordinary business consideration".
- Presumption of Highest and Best Use

   "the most advantageous purpose for which the land was adapted".
- 6. Presumption of normal or prevailing terms and conditions of sale.
- 7. Presumption of the prevailing marketing period.
- 8. The date of the valuation is to be specified.

The Spencer judgment was concerned with the assessment of compensation to be paid by the Commonwealth Government under the Just Terms of Compensation provision of Section 51 of the Constitution for the compulsory



acquisition of a parcel of privately owned land. In this case the focus was to find a fair amount of money in exchange for the land taken, based on the market value or price that the property would have sold at on the relevant date and assuming the conditions and assumptions set out in the judgment and summarised above. It is these conditions that act to remove the value or price to be predicted from what the property would actually sell for in the market. It is this characteristic that makes the definition or concept "normative" (see notes at the end of this paper for more detail on the definitions used here).

In reality actual sales do not usually conform to the Spencer concept. Valuers need to investigate the sales evidence to understand where they deviate from the Spencer conditions or assumptions. The bargaining position of vendor and purchaser are not always equal. Purchasers are not usually as well acquainted with the land as vendors are. The valuation process therefore requires the valuer to adjust the prices of the comparable sales to comply with the Spencer assumptions, as well as any other differences such as any physical differences between the assets.

If one of the fundamental assumptions inherent in the Spencer concept of value is violated then (Fair) Market Value is not the result. Market Value, at best, is a hypothetical notion.

Having established the "balanced" and accepted concept of Fair Market Value, digression from the concept in many valuation situations is accepted to address particular circumstances. For example;

- I. Special value to the owner (*Pastoral Finance* case).
- 2. Statutes that require specific assumptions to be made, such as valuing the "Site Value" only, or, specifying the nature of the "interest" other than the "Fee Simple" to be

valued or vice versa. Consider the Land Acquisition & Compensation Act of Victoria: "Market Value in relation to any interest in land on a particular date means the amount of money that would have been paid for that interest if it had been sold on that date by a willing but not anxious seller to a willing but not anxious purchaser." As might be expected, this definition is close to the Spencer concept; however, it does not explicitly deal with all of the assumptions listed under 1. above, including the "use" statement or that the parties are "perfectly acquainted", and other assumptions such as those imposed by Section 41(2).

- 3. Australian Property Institute (API) and International Valuation Standards Committee (IVSC) definition: "Market Value is the estimated amount for which an asset (a property) should exchange on the date of valuation between a willing buyer and a willing seller in an arm's length transaction, after proper marketing wherein the parties had both acted knowledgeably, prudently and without compulsion." This definition is similar to, but not the same as, that described in the Spencer concept. For example, the presumption of being "not anxious" is removed, and the level of knowledge is downgraded from "perfectly acquainted". Also, it is what the property "should" sell for, not what it would probably sell for. It is interesting to note that this definition was formulated 85 years after the Spencer judgment. These concepts move away from the prescriptive approach traditionally advocated and adopted in Australia and invite a reconsideration of what the professional approach to a client should be.
- 4. Most Probable Price: "The Most Probable Selling Price is that selling

price which is most likely to emerge from a transaction involving the subject property if it were exposed for sale in the current market for a reasonable time at terms of sale which are currently predominant for properties of the subject type." (This definition was devised by the original exponents of Most Probable Price: Professors R. Ratcliff & J. Graaskamp, The Appraisal of 25 N. Pinckney (1977)) The use of this definition would remove the artificial or theoretical constraint "willing but not anxious". It explicitly allows for the consideration of "special value" to a particular purchaser and removes

... there are valuation cases of importance where the traditional concept of Fair Market Value, usually referred to as "market value", is an inadequate response ...

constraints of having to assume the adopted value be "fair" or that all parties are "perfectly acquainted" with the property and all that that means. This approach invites a further statement setting out the "terms of sale which are currently predominant for properties of the subject type". This approach can also allow for different terms of sale to be assumed and stated where relevant, with their impact on Most Probable Price, and to provide assistance in constructing and describing a price range. This concept produces an objective outcome; "price" being something that actually occurs which is a fact.

The question then is, are there valuation purposes where a prediction of price would be more appropriate than or in addition to that of Fair Market Value?

## Price and Value

A professional is expected to provide a service outcome that best meets the needs of the client - within certain parameters. In valuations this must include adopting a definition of value that best helps the client solve the business decision that the client has to make. That is, a definition of value which best addresses the purpose or use of the valuation. This may or may not be a Spencer type of (Fair) Market Value or variant of it. It might be a constraint due to a statutory definition, it might be to answer some "What if?" questions or it might need to meet the needs of a vendor or a seller who, in their circumstance, require a prediction of the price at which a subject property is most likely to sell. In this case a likely transaction price prediction is therefore more relevant, particularly for a vendor in setting a reserve price.

While prescribed definitions and concepts provide essential guidance where they are appropriate, to only apply the Fair Market Value assumptions to the buy/sell case can be expected to be of little use in predicting an actual price in the market by people all acting in their own sets of interest.

Prescriptive definitions of value must be seen for what they are: theoretical and often of little assistance in answering real world questions. In most transactions there are all sorts of levels of knowledge. Further there will generally be friction of some sort, with different levels of eagerness to buy or to sell.

In the case of the traditional open auction, bids beyond the "Fair" Market Value level are usually accepted. Is there any documented evidence of a practice where vendors terminate price negotiations or an auction once a price is reached that is the level that a willing but a not anxious buyer would pay, and no more? In the case of sale by tender, there is no reported evidence of bids beyond the Fair Market Value being rejected. On the contrary, vendors and their agents use much of the sale process carrying out (lawful) actions that will maximise the price from the potential purchaser. If they can discover the person who is most anxious to purchase, then that person or group of persons becomes the target market. This is the reality of a free market economy.

## Some issues for the valuer using most probable price

### I. "One value for all purposes".

Murray states: "The purpose for which the valuation is being made cannot affect the value ascertained, but if the task of the valuer is to ascertain a value which is distinguishable from market value he should proceed in accordance with normal principles of valuation and comply with all relevant statutes. The fact that his result is not market value should be clearly indicated in his report."There is no rational reason why a valuation purpose that requires something other than the assumptions inherent in traditional definitions of market value or similar should not be recognised. Most vendors can be expected to be more than willing and, where the opportunity exists, to become most anxious to accept a price as high above (Fair) Market Value as might be available at the relevant date.

## 2. Valuation and property standards

- a.) Australian Property Institute (API).
  - Valuation Standards have been progressively produced and updated by the API since the mid-1990s.The

following is a brief review of some of the aspects relevant to this paper.

#### Code of Ethics

2.1.1 "Members shall at all times observe the requirements of the Code of Ethics, the rules of Conduct and the Practice Standards of the Institute."

### Rules of Conduct

2.2.1.2. "Members are bound by and agree to abide by all Fundamental Rules which include the ... Code of Conduct ... [and] Practice Standards ... as adopted by the Institute."

2.2.7.1 "Where a member considers circumstances exist that warrant departure from or non-compliance with any rule herein, the Member's report shall include a statement that outlines the reasons for the departure or non-compliance and any impact on the content of the report."

b.) International Valuation Standards Committee (IVSC) Standards.

3.3.6.8.1 Standards are devised for the generality of situations and cannot cater to every eventuality. There will be occasions where departure from Standards is inescapable. When situations arise, departure would be unlikely to constitute a breach of these Standards, provided such departure is reasonable, complies with the principles of ethics and measures of competence, and a rationale for such departure is provided in the valuation report.

4.1 International Valuation Standard 3. Standard 3 sets out the required Valuation Reporting requirements. 3.8 deals with Departure Provisions. 3. 8.3 states "In any circumstance involving a departure from *Market Value*, the Valuer should clearly identify that the valuation reported is other than *Market Value*. The Standards, while highly prescriptive, and not referring specifically to Most Probable Price, do not forbid the valuer from using the Most Probable Price concept. What is important – and which should always be the case – is that when Most Probable Price is used, its use should be clearly stated together with reasons that justify its use. This also means that all (professional) valuations should show a logical progression from stating the purpose of the valuation through to the adoption of the concept and definition of the value/price outcome that should result.

### 3. Judicial Analogy

In a Supreme Court of Victoria – Court of Appeal decision of 26 August 2008 (*Eureka Funds Management Limited & Anor V Freehills services Pty Ltd* (2208) VSCA 15), the 24-page court judgment deals with the interpretation of the terms "current annual market rental"(face value) and "current annual market rental value""(rental value) in rent review provisions.

The question to be resolved in the appeal was whether the two different expressions used in the rental review provisions of a lease had the same meaning. The Court of Appeal cited from "a detailed article by Squirrell (the author of this paper) and J. J. Hockley, (barrister and then RMIT property law lecturer) entitled 'Lease Incentives and Rental Valuations' published in *The Australian Property Law Journal* in 1993".

At page 14, Cavanough AJA said: "In their abovementioned article ... after analysing several relevant cases, Squirrell and Hockley say: Does the lease use the terms "rent" and "rental value" or the terms "market rental or annual rental" and/or "current open market rental" in the same Clause? If so, they should be understood to have different meanings (See McCafferty's case and the AOTC case) ... I agree."

The terms face rent and sale price are analogous, as are the terms market rental value (effective rent) and fair market value. When using evidence to predict either, economic differences need to be adjusted by "discounting" or alternatively by "grossing up" as appropriate. Fair market valuation in almost every case requires the valuer to take sale prices from a set of comparable property sales and adjust those prices for any economic differences in the same way, be they due to property attributes or sale terms and conditions.

## Implications of Most Probable Price.

The prediction of the Most Probable Price as well as (Fair) Market Value does not require any fundamental change in the valuation process. The same basic steps are required by the valuer. Some of these may require a change in emphasis or importance or in what is analysed, but these are no different to any other required deviation from a value predicted only on a pure Spencer concept of market value. These issues are outlined below.

#### I. The Valuation issue

The first critical step for any professional is to clearly understand and then define the issue. In valuations this is often referred to as The Purpose of the Valuation. Put another way, the valuer must determine the business decision that the client needs to make in order to provide the best valuation or other property service that provides the best input to the decision. In cases involving the buy/sell decision this is most likely to require the prediction of the Most Probable Price, or an agreed variant of it.



#### 2. Value or Price definition

The appropriate definition, as with all valuations, must be determined to best meet the need of the valuation issue. Care should be taken in the defining of the sale terms and conditions. Again, where the issue requires a deviation from a standard definition, then that deviation can be included in the definition, but it must be carefully explained, with reasons why it is chosen to meet the need of the client's issue.

### 3. Use

After a description of the property attributes, the valuer must identify possible uses. For Fair Market Value this is "highest and best permitted use". For Most Probable Price this may be the "Most Probable Use". In any event, the valuer will need to determine and evaluate the current market characteristics and possible motivation of particular potential purchasers in order to move to a use statement.

#### 4. Most Probable Buyer

The market analysis needs to include a careful evaluation of the motives of

the buyers in the subject's market and the current level of effective demand. The valuer should then predict who the most probable purchaser would, or will be, at least by buyer group. In cases where that buyer can be named, then the valuer may want to also include other evaluation predictive models in moving to his Most Probable Price conclusion. Experienced valuers will know of many occasions where an adjoining owner, or a buyer active in a locality will often be required to pay above "Fair market Level", particularly where their need has been identified by the vendor. In the author's experience, where more than one "anxious" potential purchaser is identified, very large increments in price above market value can result. The author has personally experienced a differential approaching a sale price increment of up to 80 percent above the believed "Market Value". The author had, before the auction, identified probable reasons for this divergence when writing instructions to a valuer he had engaged. In recent years, prices paid for Carlton commercial properties by certain large users have seemed to be up to 20 percent above

the Spencer level. In both cases the synergies of adjoining and nearby owners drove the market for the particular properties.

#### 5. Reporting a range

It is rare for a valuer to be able to state with 100 percent certainty the value or price prediction of a property, and that even after the most meticulous sale price adjustments to standardise sales data to the subject, the same (adjusted) price does not result for each sale property. Further, it may well be relevant for a range to be explicitly sought as different terms and conditions of sale are examined.

## Other considerations.

The original exponents of Most Probable Price, Ratcliff & J. Graaskamp, argue that the great majority of cases require that the valuer predict the transaction price at which the property would probably sell. They argue that Market Value is synonymous with Most Probable Price because Market Value is derived from actual sales in the market which reflects the market outcomes of actual vendors and actual purchasers. This paper argues that the entrenched concept of market value is that of "Fair Market Value", flowing from the Spencer concept. It also argues, particularly in buy/sell decisions, that the most probable price concept will provide more relevant information for the client.

This paper essentially argues that there are clearly recognised cases where deviations from the Spencer concept are appropriate, being required by statute or for insurance purposes or compensation cases when the Pastoral Finance concept applies. Most probable price will be appropriate where the Spencer or other traditional assumptions that lie with those definitions do not apply. This does not preclude alternate predictions based on Fair Market Value, consistent with the Spencer concept as well as most probable price predictions, which deals with market realities and where both predictions are of interest or benefit to the client.

Further, the concept of Most Probable Price is not necessarily only relevant to the Buy/Sell case. Such circumstances will reveal themselves when the issue is better understood and indicate the appropriate outcome for the issue.

Some issues that may require re-emphasis are as follows:

- The purpose of the valuation based on the business decision requirement of the client should be clearly identified. Issues giving rise to the valuation and any pressures on the hypothetical or actual seller should be identified.
- 2. The adopted definitions of value and price should then be determined.
- 3. The reasons for the adopted definitions should be clearly spelt out.
- 4. Where critical assumptions address the state of the market and/or identify a most probable buyer or buyer group or particular circumstances affecting the vendor, reference should be made to more detailed relevant analysis provided elsewhere in the report.
- 5. The Market Analysis, dealing with the macro elements, should include a particular focus of the attributes and motives of likely purchasers, particularly where different classes of buyers are active.
- 6. The Most Probable Buyer section, while drawing from the market and subsequent "use" analysis and outcome, may sometimes be able to name the buyer and in most cases, the buyer class.
- 7. Appropriate discussion should be provided where there is a divergence.

There is no logical or practical reason why multiple outcomes should not be reported if relevant and the reason for such differences clearly shown.

Appendix A shows a flowchart of the valuation process consistent with the approach advocated in this paper.

## Conclusion

It has long been the view of the author that in all circumstances, the concept and definition of value cannot be determined until the valuation issue is clear and that it is only then that the most appropriate value or price definition can be arrived at. Further, that in many circumstances to progress a valuation from a fixed market value definition is unprofessional and can be contrary to the real needs of the client.

(Fair) Market Value is a theoretical concept that provides a normative valuation solution often required by the purpose of the valuation, such as in compensation cases and where it best fits the client's needs. However this approach should no longer be seen as the default or routine definition in valuations.

Most Probable Price is an objective and positive concept that is not encumbered by fixed and prescriptive assumptions; it is adaptable to the purpose of the valuation where the client's need is to deal with what is actually occurring in the market and a prediction of a market price is required.

In some cases the spread between these two may be small, even imperceptible in a stable market, in others substantial, where the market is volatile or non-equilibrium forces are present, such as an adjoining owner keen to expand, or where additional value is created by synergy between two properties.

#### APPENDIX A

#### An Objective Valuation Process Adapted from Graaskamp "The Appraisal of 49 N. Pinckney".

### Notes

#### Note 1.

This paper is not over-concerned with the semantics of value v price; rather the important focus is on concepts.

The terms Market Value and Fair Market Value are treated in this paper to be synonymous in traditional (land valuation) and normative use in Australia. This paper often uses "Fair" to ensure that that passage clearly relates to a "Spencer" concept of value and/or accepted close variants and is thereby differentiated from Most Probable Price.

Most Probable Price stands as defined. The essence of the paper is that when sold, a property is transacted at a price, which may or not be at its Fair Market Value.

In this paper, the term "Fair" value does not necessarily have the same definition as "Fair Value" as defined in Australian Accounting Standards Board Accounting Standard AASB 116 "Property Plant & Equipment". Under the AASB 116 definition, "Fair Value" means "the amount for which an asset could be exchanged between knowledgeable, willing parties in an arm's length transaction".

This paper does not discuss "Fair value" in relation to financial reporting valuations.

#### Note 2.

#### In this paper:

a) "Normative" refers to an ideal standard or mode; what people believe to be right or wrong and is characterised by prescriptive rules.
b) "Objective" refers to what actually is. That is, something which is real and not a product of the mind but external to the mind.

c) "Positive" refers to matters of fact, formally or

explicitly stated, definite and unquestionable.

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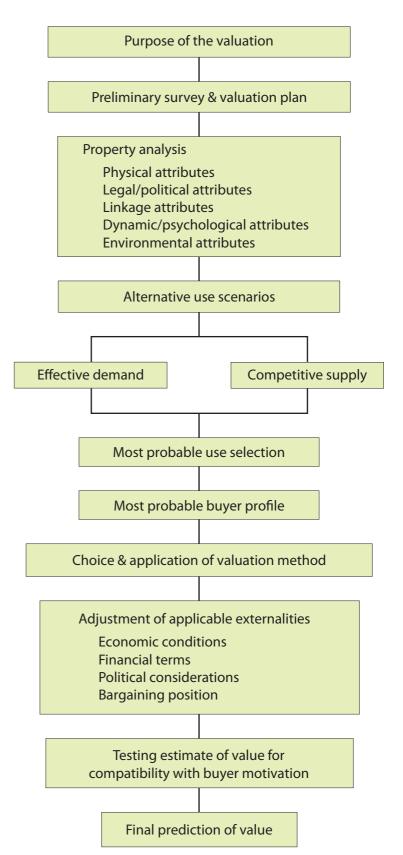
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## Letter to the Editor

# DCF models – time for a retrofit

## It's time to throw out our basic old discounted cashflow models and let the next generation start afresh. New graduates are smarter than we were. Let's put them to work.

DCF models I see in valuation reports from city valuers tend to be fairly similar. Most forecast cashflows over a 10-year period taking into account scheduled rent reviews on the scheduled dates based upon a current market rent, an assumed growth rate, and often with a ratchet clause. Multi-tenant models are simply an extension of this. Provision can be made for re-leasing costs, refurbishments as required, non-recoverable expenses, and capex. The models are generally versatile enough to be used as a base for report templates such as tenancy schedules, rental analysis and market rental comparison schedules, and cashflow forecast charts. Reversionary values are typically calculated on either the market or contract rents at the end of year 10 with shortfalls often accounted for.

By now these are fairly standard tools, with application widespread. The mathematics and basic Excel modeling of the models is standard, relying on a couple of sets of explicitly forecast monthly cashflows which are not usually published in the report. These are simply tallied up in the NPV function using Excel and the annual cashflow numbers and valuation presented in a summary page.

My experience is that these models are useful and fairly easy to establish and operate. I've only heard of one senior valuer resorting to over-typing the number he really wanted in the final value cell.

Such models are particularly suited to pricing the difference between a standard leased investment property and one where the cashflows are non-standard, such as buildings which are underrented, over-rented, due for major capital works, or subject to structured lease arrangements.

Some of the inputs used in analysis and application do however remain too subjective. Human nature will result in these being modified to get the "right" answer by some valuers. Let's be honest, all young graduates have seen their senior valuers do this. It's easy to be cynical.

What is happening is that the DCF models are not capturing something that experienced valuers are concerned about.

Damn the cynics. What is happening is that the DCF models are not capturing something that experienced valuers are concerned about. These models are all at least 10 years old and based upon fairly primitive financial mathematics. Our models are not accounting for tenant default risk, strong tenant covenants, leases longer than 10 years, rent review costs, different types of ratchet clauses, CPI linked reviews, depreciation benefits, the building nearing the end of its economic life, a high underlying land value, a chance of rezoning, short-term lease renewals, or a poor location.

All of these require some tedious adjustments to most of our current DCF models in order to factor them in manually. Even if done correctly, there is little chance that the valuation spreadsheet was prepared with consistent assumptions to analysis of other transactions.

In fact, if we don't factor these things in to our models then all they are good for is recognising under-renting or over-renting. Other adjustments get thrown into the category of subjective adjustments made to discount rates. The DCF model is only a small improvement over the "equivalent yield" approach where the IRR is basically the compounded sum of the capitalisation rate and the growth rate.

What we have now is a great advantage over using a calculator and annual cashflows in the 1970s and the basic computing power available in the 1980s. However, our standard DCF models now need to take a step up the technological ladder from the 1990s to the 2010s.

Fortunately, the current crop of Gen Y grads seem to be very intelligent and capable, often with double degrees and far more relaxed about computers than us Generation X valuers who set up the current systems. These graduates need to be set loose on our systems with a fresh start. New graduates with finance qualifications are far better qualified than old valuers with a Diploma in Urban Valuation when it comes to setting up finance models.

What we need is DCF models which deal with far more complexity. Let's incorporate the following:

- Scrap the universal 10-year investment horizon. With computing now, it's just a poor effort.
- Stop trying to forecast growth at silly little increments like 1.5 percent year 1, 1.5 percent year 2, 3 percent year 4, 3 percent year 5 ... Markets move with volatility that needs to be recognised. If there is a ratchet clause of any kind, then market rent reviews can only be accurately priced with option pricing formulae.
- Factor in existing possible renewal costs and vacancies as a risk-adjusted cashflow.

Continued over page

## Continued from p.111 Letter to the Editor

- Forecast future "lease cycles" of income including all rent, risks, costs, rent reviews, tenancy refurbishment costs from typical leases. Run these until the building is likely to be demolished.
- Build in CPI-linked review options. They are replacing valuers anyway.
- Include various types of ratchet clauses, it's not that hard if you put your mind to it.
- Factor in redevelopment options taking into account land value volatility.
- Price urban renewal and rezoning potentials.
- Account for depreciation benefits. Tax is real. Don't ignore it.
- Allow for capex contributions.
- Use continuous discounting like the rest of the finance world.
- Price in over-renting or default risk as a non-secured loan on the abovemarket income.
- Price corporate-backed lease income at the discount rate it deserves for the term of the lease.
- Develop defensible independent inputs for long term rental growth.
- Use Monte Carlo analysis tools.
- Include automatic reconciliation of the model to show how the yield that would arise if it was applied to a typical newly leased investment property in that category.
- Re-write net effective rental analysis taking into depreciation and tax, rental volatility, and ratchet clause types.

Some of this is rocket science. Valuers can choose to continue to value houses in the suburbs if they want to, but if there are rocket scientists coming through the ranks, get out of their way, because they will be shooting for the stars.

Reid Quinlan, Principal, Seagar & Partners, Auckland City, New Zealand

## Legal casenote

# Valuer sued \$2 million for overvaluing properties

## By Lindsay Joyce and Carmen Elder, DLA Phillips Fox

In the case of Adelaide Bank Ltd v DTS Property Services [2008] NSWSC 1328 a valuer was successfully sued by Adelaide Bank after it was proven the valuer had overvalued a number of properties.

The bank had relied upon five valuations given to it by the defendant valuer in determining whether to advance loan funds to borrowers. Each borrower defaulted under the relevant loan. The bank alleged that each valuation was performed negligently and, had the valuations been "correct", it would not have approved the loans. It sought to recover from the valuer the loss suffered under the loans.

As a preliminary matter, the Court was satisfied that the defendant valuer owed a duty of care to the bank in circumstances where the bank was clearly identified in each valuation as an entity that was entitled to rely upon the valuation.

The bank produced evidence prepared by an expert valuer, which included a retrospective valuation of each property and a critique of the valuations in issue. That evidence was unchallenged by the defendant valuer, who did not appear at the hearing. The following evidence was before the Court:

	Casula	Casula	Prestons	Woy Woy	Rose Bay
Defendant's valuations	\$250,000	\$330,000	\$420,000	\$1.9 million	\$2.65 million
Retrospective Valuations	\$195,000	\$195,000	\$330,000	\$1 million	\$1.75 million
Percentage difference	28%	69%	27%	90%	51%

Whilst established valuation practice recognises that two valuers, each acting reasonably and carefully, can differ in their opinions as to the value of a property at a particular date, the bank argued that a difference substantially in excess of 10 percent itself demonstrates negligence (the difference between the defendant valuer's and the expert valuer's opinions ranged from 27 percent to 90 percent). The Court accepted the bank's argument and found that the defendant valuer had negligently overvalued the properties, preferring the expert's retrospective valuations as evidence of fair market value.

The Court noted the following points of critique identified by the expert valuer:

- Failure to make allowance for certain negative features of the properties.
- Reliance on sales that were not truly comparable and failure to have regard to sales that were proximate in time and location which indicated a significantly lower value.
- Reliance upon sales of which there was no evidence/trace.
- Failure to have regard to the sale of the property to the intended borrower (in one instance, the sale price of \$336,000 was \$84,000 less than the assessed market value).
- Overstatement of living areas.
- Failure to adopt standard valuation practice when arriving at the value of a property comprising four townhouses by simply multiplying the value of one townhouse by four:

The Court was satisfied that the defendant valuer had negligently overvalued each property.

If the bank was to establish liability, it had to show that it relied on the valuations. To be satisfied of this, the Court examined the bank's loan approval process. Helpfully, the Court acknowledged that obtaining a valuation is only one part of the lending process.

The Court then examined each of the loans to satisfy itself that, had the defendant valuer assessed the "correct" market values, the Bank would not have advanced four out of the five loans. In respect to the fifth loan the Court, albeit without evidence from the borrower, inferred from the facts of the loan that the borrower would have accepted 80 percent of the lower (i.e., expert valuer's) valuation. The fifth loan was therefore considered on a "different transaction" basis rather than a "no transaction" basis. During this examination, the Court noted that an 80 percent Loan to Value Ratio (LVR) was "appropriate".

Judgment for just under \$2 million was entered against the valuer, plus legal costs and interest.

## Implications

This case provides a helpful example of some issues that a court will consider in determining whether a valuer is liable for any loss or damage caused by an overvaluation. The Court also provided useful observations (which may assist when defending valuers in the future) about the need to examine the lender's conduct in investigating the loan proposal (including whether a loan would still proceed for a lower amount) and what may be an "appropriate" LVR for residential property.

# Legal Notebook

Recent cases, headline issues and new legislation



**Dr John Keogh** Barrister at Law

Dr Keogh commenced practice at the NSW Bar in 1990 with a focus on property, planning, building and construction law and commercial matters and was awarded a law doctorate from UTS in 2000. Council may not compulsorily acquire land for the purpose of re-sale without the land owner's approval

#### ~ HIGH COURT OF AUSTRALIA 🤆

R & R Fazzolari v Parramatta City Council; Mac's Pty Ltd v Parramatta City Council & Anor [2009] HCA 12

In the Fazzolari Case, the High Court of Australia held that Parramatta City Council ("the Council") may not compulsorily acquire the parcels of land owned by R&R Fazzolari Pty Ltd ("Fazzolari") and Mac's Pty Ltd ("Mac's") without the owners' approval.

## The Facts

Parramatta City Council proposed to redevelop a block within the city centre called "Civic Place", in partnership with two companies in the Grocon Group ("Grocon"). The Council and Grocon agreed that Council would compulsorily acquire two parcels of land within the redevelopment block and transfer part of the land to Grocon. In return, the Council would receive substantial financial payments and other benefits from Grocon. The subject land was owned by R&R Fazzolari Pty Ltd and Mac's Pty Ltd, and adjoined land in Darcy Street and Church Street which was owned by the Council.

Pursuant to s188(1) of the Local Government Act 1993 "a council may not acquire land under this Part by compulsory process without the approval of the owner of the land if it is being acquired for the purpose of re-sale". However, s188(2) of

**Continued over page** 

the same Act sets out that the owner's approval is not required if:

(a) the land forms part of, or adjoins or lies in the vicinity of, other land acquired at the same time under this Part for a purpose other than the purpose of resale.

The Council sent proposed acquisition notices to Fazzolari and Mac's. Both land owners objected to the acquisition on the grounds that it contravened s188(1) of the *Local Government Act 1993*, as the proposed acquisition of their land was for the purpose of re-sale and thus required their consent. The Council argued that the purpose of the acquisition was to implement the Council's "Civic Place" project, not to re-sell it to Grocon. Therefore, the Council argued, it did not need the owner's consent to compulsorily acquire the land.

At first instance, the Land and Environmental Court held that the proposed acquisition was unlawful as the purpose of the acquisition was for re-sale, requiring consent of the land owners.

The Council appealed to the Court of Appeal of New South Wales, which unanimously held that the land was being acquired for the purpose of implementing the "Civic Place" project and not for the purpose of re-selling to Grocon. Thus, the Council did not need the land owner's approval for compulsorily acquiring the land.

Fazzolari and Mac's appealed to the High Court, seeking to have the Court of Appeal decision overturned.The Council argued, before the High Court, that sl 88(2) of the *Local Government Act* meant that the Council was not required to obtain the owners' consent, as the subject parcels of land adjoined other land not acquired for the purpose of re-sale.This would be the case, the Council argued, even though the subject land was said to be compulsorily acquired for the purpose of re-sale. The Appellants submitted that the Council could not rely on s188(2) as the other land had not been "acquired ... under this Part", and they maintained that the purpose of the acquisition was for re-sale.

## **The High Court Findings**

The High Court, constituted by French CJ, Gummow J, Hayne J, Heydon J and Kiefel J, found that the Council's purpose in compulsorily acquiring the subject parcels of land was to re-sell them to Grocon. Referring to the reasoning of the Court of Appeal, the High Court majority noted at para 93:

Very particular terms governing both acquisition and disposition of the appellants' land had been stipulated in the development agreement.

"To ask which function or functions of the Council would be being exercised if the Council acquired either the Fazzolari land or the Mac's land does not assist in deciding whether, under s I 88(1), the acquisition was for the purpose of resale."

Furthermore, at para 94 and 96 the High Court commented:

"It is not necessary in these cases to decide whether 'the purpose' spoken of in s I 88(1) is to be defined more precisely: whether as the sole purpose, or the dominant purpose, or in some other way. That is not necessary because the proposed acquisition of both the Fazzolari land and the Mac's land is for only one purpose: the purpose of re-sale of the appellants' land to Grocon.

"... No doubt the acquisitions of the Fazzolari land and the Mac's land are only two steps in a much larger arrangement recorded in the development agreement. And the development agreement can be described as being directed to the end of implementing the Master Plan for the development of Civic Place. It is therefore possible to describe each of the steps for which the development agreement provides as a step towards implementing the Master Plan or effecting the development of Civic Place. But when the Council gave proposed acquisition notices to Fazzolari and to Mac's, the Council had made the development agreement with Grocon. The development of Civic Place for which the appellants' land was to be acquired is for the development as the Council and Grocon stipulated in the development agreement. Stating the purpose of the acquisition as being to implement the Master Plan or to develop Civic Place, or at some other similar level of generality, must not be permitted to obscure the fact that when the acquisitions were proposed a precise form of development had been agreed. Very particular terms governing both acquisition and disposition of the appellants' land had been stipulated in the development agreement."

As to the application of \$188(2) of the *Local Government Act* and the requirement that the "other" land is "acquired ... under this Part" the majority found that the other land had not been acquired under the *Local Government Act*. Thus, the exception in \$188(2) did not apply. Furthermore, the majority held that the "other" land would not be acquired at the same time as the subject land.

The High Court consequently allowed the appeal.

Lessee to pay reinstatement damages to lessor plus rental losses during restoration

## - HIGH COURT OF AUSTRALIA

#### Tabcorp Holdings Ltd v Bowen Investments Pty Ltd [ 2009] HCA 8

In the *Tabcorp* case, the High Court of Australia held that Tabcorp Holdings Pty Ltd ("Tabcorp") had breached a lease covenant which provided that Tabcorp could not make any substantial alterations or additions to the premises Tabcorp leased from Bowen Investments ("Bowen"), without Bowen's written consent. The High Court held that Tabcorp was liable for the cost to restore the premises to its unalterated condition and the loss of rent suffered while the rectification works took place.

## **The Facts**

Tabcorp leased the office premises at 5 Bowen Crescent, Melbourne, from Bowen for a term of 10 years from 1 February 1997. Under clause 2.13 of the lease agreement Tabcorp promised:

"not without the written approval of the Landlord first obtained (which consent shall not be unreasonably withheld or delayed) to make or permit to be made any substantial alteration or addition to the Demised Premises."

Tabcorp wished to make certain alterations to the foyer but Bowen had indicated to Tabcorp that it would not consent to such alterations until the proposed alterations had been examined at a site meeting. When Bowen's representative attended the premises for the scheduled site meeting, she found that Tabcorp had removed a glass and stone partition, timber panelling and stone floor tiles in the foyer, and the remaining floor stone work was being jack-hammered. Tabcorp continued with the works until it was completed, despite Bowen's protests.

Bowen sued Tabcorp for damages in the Federal Court, as Bowen claimed that Tabcorp had undertaken the works without Bowen's consent. The trial judge described Tabcorp's conduct as involving "contumelious disregard" of Bowen's rights and found that Tabcorp had breached the lease covenant. However, the trial judge only awarded minimal damages in the amount of \$34,820 to Bowen. The trial judge assessed the damages as being the reduction in the value of the premises due to the alterations to the foyer.

The trial judge described Tabcorp's conduct as involving "contumelious disregard" of Bowen's rights and found that Tabcorp had breached the lease covenant.

Bowen appealed to the Full Court of the Federal Court against the method used by the trial judge to assess the damages. The Full Court of the Federal Court held that damages should include the costs for restoring the foyer to its original condition and rental losses during the restoration period, totalling at \$1.38 million. Tabcorp appealed the Federal Court's decision to the High Court.

## The High Court Findings

The High Court dismissed Tabcorp's appeal and upheld the decision of the Full Court of the Federal Court.

In respect of the measure of damages, the Court noted that: (at para 15)

"the Landlord was contractually entitled to the preservation of the premises without alterations not consented to; its measure of damages is the loss sustained by the failure of the Tenant to perform that obligation; and that loss is the cost of restoring the premises to the condition in which they would have been if the obligation had not been breached."

The High Court further noted: (at para 19 & 20)

"the Landlord correctly submitted that the Tenant's submission misconstrued what this Court said in Bellgrove v Eldridge [1954] HCA 351; (1954) 90 CLR 613 at 618. The "qualification"" referred to in the passage quoted above[31] that the "work undertaken be necessary to produce conformity" meant, in that case, apt to conform with the plans and specifications which had not been conformed with. Applied to this case, the expression "necessary to produce conformity" means "apt to bring about conformity between the foyer as it would become after the damages had been spent in rebuilding it and the foyer as it was at the start of the lease". And the Landlord also correctly submitted that the requirement of reasonableness did not mean that any excess over the amount recoverable on a diminution in value was unreasonable.

"... If the benefit of the covenant in cl 2.13 were to be secured to the Landlord, it is necessary that reinstatement damages be paid, and it is not unreasonable for the Landlord to insist on their payment." The Point Gourde principle operates in reverse when land is injuriously affected by Council's planning scheme

## SUPREME COURT ~ OF QUEENSLAND ~ COURT OF APPEAL

Redland Shire Council v Edgarange P/L [2009] QCA 16 (13 February 2009)

This is a compulsory acquisition case decided by the Supreme Court of Queensland Court of Appeal under the Acquisition Land Act 1967 ("ALA"). The Court found (in dismissing the appeal and affirming the decision of the Land Appeal Court) that the Point Gourde principle applied in reverse when the land owned by Edgarange Pty Ltd ("Edgarange") compulsorily acquired by the Redland Shire Council ("the Council") was injuriously affected by the Council's planning scheme. The amount of compensation should be assessed without regard to the diminution in value caused by the scheme.

## The Facts

In July 2000, Edgarange purchased 27.7 hectares of land ("the land") which formed part of Lot 3. After the purchase, I.396 hectares of Lot 3 was still owned by another proprietor, Daniel Holzafel. Lot 3 was situated between Redland Bay Road and Coolnwynpin Ceek on the south-eastern edge of the Capalaba commercial area.

Edgarange intended to develop the land as an industrial estate as the land at that time was zoned "Rural/Non-Urban" under the 1988 Planning Scheme which was then in force.

The 1988 Strategic Plan, which formed part of the Planning Scheme, identified the southern two-thirds of the land as an "Industrial Area" and immediately north



Brisbane Supreme Court

a proposed arterial road was identified running generally in an east-west direction through the land. The land between Coolnwynpin Creek and the proposed arterial road corridor and east of the existing sewerage treatment plant had a preferred dominant land use of "Public Open Space". The proposed arterial road was intended to be a limited access road.

The area of the road to be constructed and the area north of it constituted part of Lot 3 and was later resumed and by that time, the resumed areas were known as Lot 701 and Lot 702.

In 1998, the Planning Scheme was amended and substituted by a new Strategic Plan which showed a Future Transport Corridor ("FTC") traversing Lot 3 at about the same place as the arterial road as shown in the 1988 Strategic Plan. The FTC was generally within Lot 701. Lot 702 was designated as Special Facilities/Public Purpose while Lot 703 was also designated in part as the same purpose and in part, Special Protection Area.

In February 2001, Edgarange and Mr Holzafel made a claim for compensation in the sum of \$2,494,800 pursuant to the *Local Government* (*Planning and Environment*) Act 1990 and the *Integrated Planning Act 1997* against the Council for injurious affection to the market value of Lot 3 arising out of the inclusion of part of that land in the Special Facilities/Public Purposes designation and part of it in the Special Protection Area. This claim had not been heard.

In October 2004, as the Council compulsorily acquired Lot 701 for "road purposes" and Lot 702 for "sewerage treatment plant purposes", Edgarange then made a claim for compensation under the *Acquisition of Land Act 1967*.

## Acquisition of Land Act 1967

s20 Assessment of compensation (2) Compensation shall be assessed according to the value of the estate or interest of the claimant in the land taken on the date when it was taken.

The Queensland Land Court awarded compensation of \$5,992,098 and an appeal to the Queensland Land Appeal Court ("LACQ") was dismissed. Both Courts applied the Pointe Gourde principle in reverse when assessing the quantum of compensation.

... the right to claim compensation for injurious affection is subsumed by the right to claim compensation for compulsory acquisition and so does not survive.

Redland Shire Council appealed against the decision of the QLAC. Council submitted that QLAC erred in applying the Pointe Gourde principle in reverse to the assessment of compensation under s20(2) *Acquisition of Land Act 1967* ("ALA") and that QLAC's assessment risked awarding double compensation.

## **The Findings**

The Court of Appeal ruled that there was no double compensation in this present case.

The Court noted that: (para 68)

"in each of the Queensland statutes under which a claim for injurious affection can be made,[22] such claim must give way to any compensation payable under the ALA." The Court further noted that: (para 70)

"The "matter for which compensation is payable" under the ALA is for the loss of the value of the land because of its acquisition; that is, the market value of the land before the scheme which preceded its acquisition. It can be seen that the compensation payable under the ALA is greater than, and includes, the compensation that would otherwise be payable for injurious affection. The claim for compensation must then be made under the ALA rather than the IPA. Accordingly no question of double compensation arises."

The Court of Appeal found that: (at para 72)

"the right to claim compensation for injurious affection is subsumed by the right to claim compensation for compulsory acquisition and so does not survive. As the right to claim compensation for injurious affection has been lost because it has been replaced by the right to claim for the compulsory acquisition, then the common law principle can and should apply. The value of the estate or interest of the claimant on the date on which it was taken is, as it usually is at common law, the value ignoring the increase or decrease in value caused by the scheme which gave rise to the compulsory acquisition. Such value has not been reduced by the payment of compensation for injurious affection or the right to make such a claim."

The Court held that as no compensation for injurious affection had been paid in this case, the Pointe Gourde principle in reverse applied as the land was injuriously affected by the Council's planning scheme.

The Court held that the compensation should be assessed without regard to the diminution in value caused by the scheme underlying the compulsory acquisition.

# Professional Development for Recent Graduates



#### Iona McCarthy

Iona McCarthy is a lecturer in valuation in the Department of Economics and Finance at Massey University, New Zealand. She has a B Agr Sci (Rural Valuation and Management) and MBS in Valuation and Property Management. She practised as a valuer for a number of years and is a registered valuer and a Fellow of PINZ. She has been involved in teaching for many years and has a continuing interest in property education and professional development. Property graduates entering the workforce quickly realise that they have a basic grounding and a whole lot to learn. Universities have a duty to ensure that their graduates are appropriately prepared for the workforce but after graduation continuing professional development becomes the shared responsibility of the graduate, the employer and the professional body. It is important that the need for continued learning is embraced by all parties, so graduates, who make a positive contribution to the growth and prosperity of the property industry, are retained. It is also important that graduates focus on areas of greatest weakness in their professional development.

The Property Institute of New Zealand (PINZ) is well aware that it has an important role to play in supporting the education of all members. The Institute also acknowledges that recent graduates are very important for the industry and offers an annual induction program to assist this group in the early stages of their career leading up to registration as a property professional. In addition PINZ monitors university education program and holds accreditation meetings annually with the three universities that offer property degrees to ensure learning meets industry standards and requirements.

This paper reports on the results of three surveys undertaken in 2006 by PINZ in conjunction with Massey and Auckland universities. Students nearing the end of their degree in property, recent property graduates and employers of recent graduates were surveyed to gain a complete picture of the current state of property education in New Zealand. Survey results are being used by the PINZ Education Committee to develop appropriate training and Continuing Education Programs for graduates through to registration and beyond.

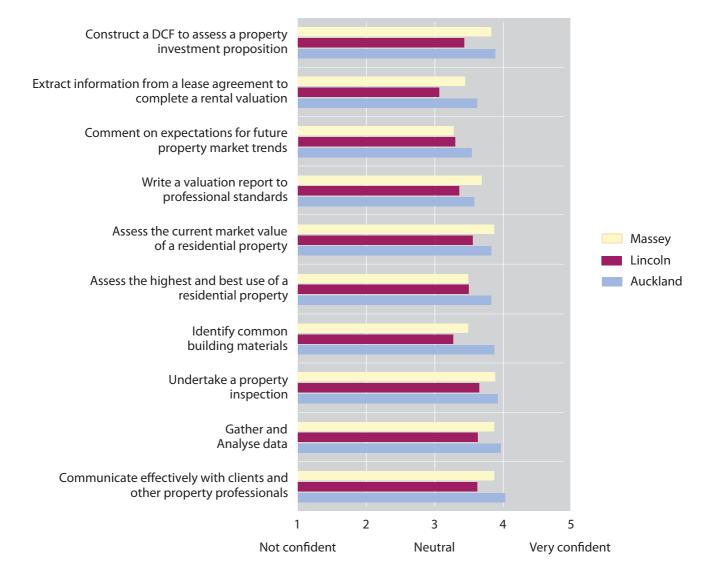
Written questionnaires, designed to gather quantitative and attitudinal data, were adapted from those used in two earlier studies by Callanan and McCarthy (2003) and Gilmore (2004). Current internal students were surveyed during class time; all other surveys were administered by post.

## Results

## Current Students

This survey was sent to the three universities in New Zealand that have educational qualifications that are recognised by the property profession (PINZ and Valuers Registration Board). There were 223 valid responses to the survey, 108 from Auckland University, 49 from Lincoln University and 66 from Massey University. Fifty eight per cent of respondents were male and 42 per cent female. The majority were in the 20 to 25 year age group (76.7%).

Graduates should be able to complete fundamental skills with a high level of competency when they enter the workforce. In this study final year



#### Figure 1 Confidence in Basic Property Skills

property students were asked to assess their own level of confidence in undertaking 10 basic skills. Average response levels, presented in Figure I, show that students from all three universities were generally "just confident" to "confident" in all of the areas they were questioned about.

## **Recent Graduates**

This survey was posted to all affiliate and full, but unregistered, members of the PINZ.There were 109 respondents to the survey, 71 per cent were male and 29 per cent female. Most respondents had a bachelor degree in urban valuation from a New Zealand University (70.7 per cent); only 11.4 per cent of respondents had completed a rural degree. The time that respondents had been working in the property industry was evenly spread from only recently employed to more than three years in employment. Only one respondent was not currently employed, the rest were working in a property related field. Ten respondents were working in a field of property that differed from the area they had studied.

The most common job role of the respondents was urban valuation. This was followed by commercial valuation, property management, property consultancy and rural valuation. Forty respondents were involved in more than one field of property work. This was most commonly combining commercial or rural valuation with urban valuation. Plant and machinery valuation, property financing, contract agency, property development, corporate real estate and facilities management were all roles that were undertaken only by those who had been working in property for more than three years.

Respondents indicated that their property degree had provided an adequate level of preparation for property-related employment. A common theme was that the degree had provided a good broad grounding in property knowledge but lacked practical application. Very few respondents noted topics from their degree that had not assisted them in their career.

Respondents were also asked to list any topics not included, or skills not developed, in their tertiary study that could have assisted them in their professional career. Interpersonal business skills such as negotiation, client relations, and communication skills, were areas that were mentioned by several respondents. Practical skills and computer/IT skills were also perceived by some as underdeveloped.

# Survey of Employers of Graduates

This survey was sent to property firms in New Zealand listed in the PINZ database. Firms were asked to participate if they had employed a graduate within the past five years.Twenty two valid responses were received from a wide spectrum of property businesses, with the majority in small commercial and urban valuation practices.

All the respondents preferred to recruit graduates with a property degree as these students had the required educational qualification for registration as a valuer and the required skill set for the field of employment. Graduates had been recruited from the three universities in New Zealand that provide a qualification recognised by the valuation profession. One respondent had employed a law graduate from Victoria University and three respondents had recruited graduates from overseas (UK and South Africa).

The majority of respondents thought that the graduates they had employed were "adequately" to "quite well prepared" for employment in the property sector. The main areas of concern relating to graduate skill and knowledge levels (expressed by six respondents) were with report writing skills and practical knowledge. Fifteen employers noted that graduates showed strengths in IT.

### **Core Competencies**

The PINZ has developed a competency matrix that outlines the level of knowledge expected at each stage of a professional career in the separate registration streams: property management; valuation; facilities management; plant and machinery valuation; and property consultancy. The matrix covers a wide range of personal, business and technical fields. Some

... the graduates they had employed were "adequately" to "quite well prepared" for employment in the property sector.

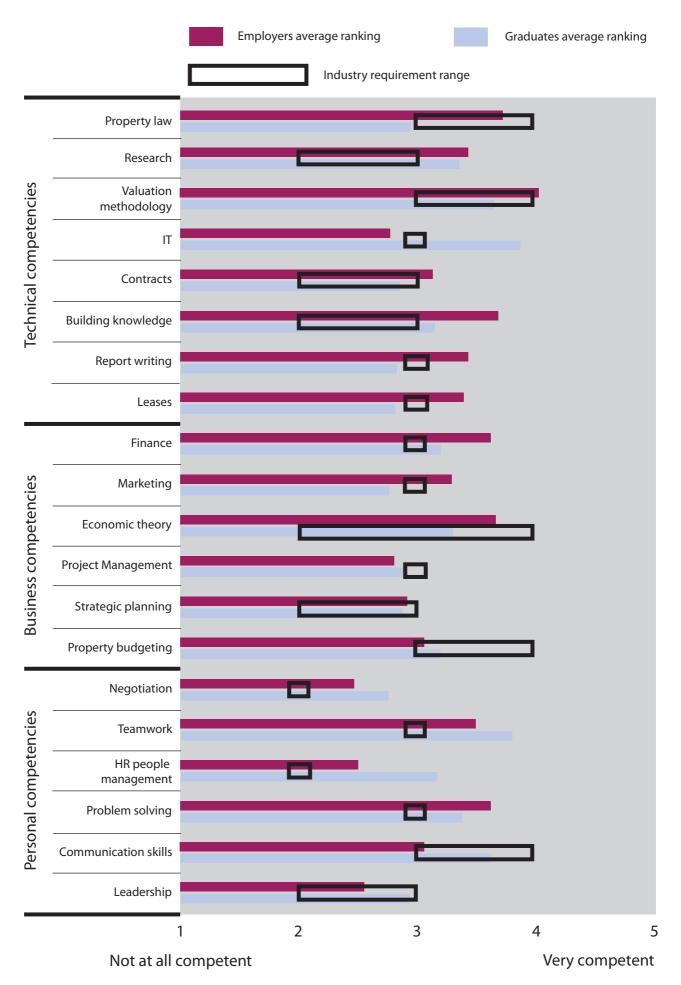
of the competencies should be well developed during university study; others are developed with work experience. The levels of competency expected of graduates range from, a requirement for basic awareness and understanding of key issues, to a need for graduates to have a good understanding of the topic and an ability to apply knowledge in a competent manner. In this study we wanted to investigate graduate perceptions, and employers' assessment, of how well some of the main competencies had been developed during university study.

Six business, six personal and eight

technical competencies were selected. Recent graduates were asked to rank, on a scale of one to five, how well they thought each competency had been developed during university study. Employers of recent graduates were asked to rank the graduates' skill levels in each of the areas, also using a scale of one to five. The graduate and employer rankings were then compared to industry requirements, as listed in the PINZ competency matrix, for competency levels required of graduate valuers and property managers. Results are presented in Figure 2 below. A ranking of one is equivalent to a level of "not at all competent" and a ranking of five indicates the graduate is very competent. Industry requirement range for graduate valuers and graduate property managers are superimposed over the employer and graduate rankings.

Recent graduates' perception was that core personal competencies were being developed at university to a level that is appropriate in relation to industry requirements, with the exception of communication skills and a slight weakness in leadership skills. Recent graduates perceived that the business competencies of; finance, marketing, and strategic planning were being adequately developed in relation to industry requirements. They were less confident with economic theory. Property budgeting and project management were perceived as poorly developed at university in relation to industry requirements. Technical competencies of research, valuation methodology, contracts, building knowledge, report writing and leases were all ranked as being adequately developed during university study. Property law was perceived as a weaker area and property IT was perceived by recent graduates as being poorly developed at university.

Figure 2 Graduate and employer ranking of competencies in relation to industry requirements



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Feedback from the graduates is very useful but should be considered alongside feedback from their employers.

Employers rated the graduates' skill levels in the same group of personal, business and technical core competencies. These results show that employers generally feel that graduates' core personal competencies are adequate. Communication is the field that employers have noticed is weakest in relation to industry requirements, this confirms the graduates' perception about communication. Finance and strategic planning were the only core business competencies where employers rated graduates at the level required by industry competency ratings. This indicates that employers see a need for improved skill levels in all other business competencies to meet a level required by the industry competency standards. It is worth noting here that several respondents stated that their graduates had no involvement in several of these areas. It is possible that industry guidelines for business competency are overstated. The employers rated the graduates' skill level at research, contracts and building knowledge at a level appropriate to industry expectations. However skill and knowledge levels in relation to property law, report writing, and leases were rated well below industry requirements and knowledge of valuation methodology slightly below industry requirements. Employers differed from the graduates in their rating of property IT skills where employers felt graduates easily meet a required standard.

# Summary and Recommendations

Students were questioned about their confidence at completing the fundamental property skills of: communication; sales analysis; property inspection; building material identification; assessment of highest and best use and current market value; market analysis; understanding lease agreements; and constructing discounted cash flows. These are all areas where industry guidelines state graduates should have a good understanding and be able to apply theory to practice. A "confident" rating from students in all these areas is desirable. On average students from all universities were only just confident to confident in these areas.

Graduates and employers were questioned on how well university had prepared new entrants to the industry for employment. Both groups assessed the standard of education as better than adequate for a career in property. In general graduates thought that they had a good broad grounding in the property industry but they would have benefited from more practical work. The most common comment from a small number of employers (who thought graduates were not well prepared) was that they had poor report writing skills and superficial practical knowledge.

The professional body responsible for monitoring property education in New Zealand has developed a competency matrix that details the level of knowledge



expected, in a wide range of personal, business, and technical fields, at each stage of a professional career in property. When graduates' perceptions, and employers' assessment, of how well universities are preparing graduates for employment are compared with industry competency levels for graduates, the following strengths in education are evident. Graduates' personal competencies are adequate with the exception of communication skills. Graduates' technical competency in the fields of research, contracts, and building knowledge are adequate. Graduates' business competency in finance is adequate. There are a number of weaknesses in property graduates' education. In the key area of technical competency, graduates do not have the appropriate level of knowledge and skill in: property law; leases; and report writing. In the areas of business and personal competency, communication skills, project management, and property budgeting need to be better developed during university education.

There is always room for improvement in our teaching program and this has again been emphasised in the responses to these surveys. The three stakeholders surveyed have signalled that university property program are providing an adequate standard of education but graduates are falling short of the industry guidelines for competency on graduation in some areas. Students are being taught the theory but do not always have the opportunity to put the theory to practice. I believe that the best way to achieve this is to continue to encourage students to work in the property sector while studying, and make contact with property professionals and arrange to spend time in the field with them. Work and study can be successfully combined with extramural study options, available from Massey University, and with vacation employment for full-time internal students.

> ... graduates do not have the appropriate level of knowledge and skill in: property law; leases; and report writing.

Graduates were concerned about their competency with interpersonal and business skills and several suggested that university program should include courses that develop negotiation, client relations and communication skills. Communication is a subject area that is currently taught at an introductory level and then integrated in all disciplines. This should be reviewed to ensure teaching program make the most of opportunities to develop these important personal competencies. Students should also consider elective paper choices carefully; options such as negotiation or dispute resolution could be beneficial. Other extra curricular interests also help to develop these communication skills and getting involved in the local community is always beneficial.

The professional body (PINZ) has an important role in designing appropriate continuing professional development programmes for recent graduates. These program should be aimed at improving the basic competencies, reinforcing and building on university courses. While university courses cover all key areas required by the profession there are time and budget constraints that lead to graduates who fall short of industry expectations in some areas. The professional body is well positioned to offer short courses that focus on further development of fundamental property skills in a practical way. Case studies and field exercises led by experienced practitioners are likely to be beneficial for recent graduates.

In recent years the PINZ has been proactive in supporting recent graduates. It is important that this support continues to ensure the future of the Institute and meet the objective of the mission statement: "To be and to become known as the pre-eminent organisation of property professionals in New Zealand".

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## **Book review**

# Commercial and Residential Tenancies: The Laws of Australia (Thomson Reuters, 2008)

Edited by Anthony Moore

## Reviewed by Alan A Hyam OAM, Barrister-at-Law, Valuer and Land Economist

I have had the enjoyable experience of reviewing the above text edited by Adjunct Associate Professor Anthony P Moore, of the University of Adelaide.

As the title implies the publication is in the format of the *Laws of Australia*, which is now only available online. This format is designed primarily for legal practitioners and researches.

Professionals engaged in finance, banking, accounting, development, facility management and the like will find the work to be a valuable source of information ...

The work is a narrative statement of the law in the topics of commercial leases, retail tenancies; residential tenancies and retirement village leases. It states the legal principles in relation to each topic in sufficient detail to be a convenient and comprehensive first point of reference. Indeed, it is encyclopaedic in nature, stating clearly and precisely the legal principles associated with each topic. Reference is provided to the relevant case and statute law upon which each principle is sourced. Whilst the work does not profess to provide solutions to individual problems, which are encountered on a day-to-day basis by lawyers, property professionals and businesspeople, it provides the source material and information for further research and study in the pursuit of solving problems. The law in all Australian jurisdictions is covered, and where differences occur those differences are emphasised.

The text is very readable for not only lawyers, but for other professional people who need to source the topics covered. Each principle is clearly and precisely stated with references to related principles or topics. The principles are explained in succinct terms and comprehensive footnotes are provided. The footnotes provide a basis for further research and verification of the principles stated. A reading of the work from cover to cover gives the reader a very good understanding of the law and legal principles covering each topic.

Whilst the publication is primarily designed for use by lawyers, it is a very good reference source for other professional people who have an interest in leases of commercial, retail, residential and retirement village premises. The index is comprehensive and well designed which makes the task of finding a particular subject quite easy. The words and phrases index is particularly useful

## COMMERCIAL AND RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES

THE LAWS OF AUSTRALIA

ANTHONY MOORE

Lawbook Co

in directing the reader to definitions of terms and words in common usage in the property industry.

C THOMSON REUTERS

I believe that the book will be very useful to valuers and land economists, particularly those engaged in lease and rent review disputes. Professionals engaged in finance, banking, accounting, development, facility management and the like will find the work to be a valuable source of information, and a vehicle for further research on matters which arise in business and professional dealings on a regular basis in relation to leases of the proscribed classes of property.

In all it is a very good, concise and precise source of legal principles concerning the leasing of commercial, retail, residential and retirement village properties.

# **REAL TIME**

# The valuation of historic property With an overview of International Valuation Guidance Note No. 15

## By William Reynolds

# Heritage buildings by definition have unique attributes which require careful consideration in terms of valuation.

In early 2008 the International Valuation Standards Committee released guidance note 15 – The Valuation of Historic Property which will be of assistance to valuers who need to value heritage assets. There are other relevant guidance notes may also be of assistance depending upon the purpose of the valuation (e.g., IVA 1 Valuations for Financial Reporting, IVA 2 Valuations for Lending Purposes, and ANZRPGN 4 Methods of Measurement etc).

Some sections quoted in this article are extracts from the guidance note and provide an introduction to some of the provisions of the guidance note to help valuers value historic properties.

"Historic properties are assets that embody a cultural, historic, and/or architectural heritage.

"Historic properties may have legal or statutory protection because of their cultural and economic importance. Many governments have enacted measures to safeguard specific historic properties or to protect whole areas of special architectural or historic interest.

"The Guidance Note applies to the valuation of historic properties in both public and private sectors."

Like most forms of property, "the sales comparison, cost and income capitalisation approaches may be employed in the valuation of historic properties". Of these methods most valuers will use the sales comparison and income capitalisation approaches. It is preferred to be in a position to be able to compare like with like and the subject historic property to the sale of a comparable heritage property.

"Criteria for the selection of comparable properties include similarity in location (i.e., in zoning, permissible use, legal protection, and concentration of historic properties), architectural style, property size, and the specific cultural or historic associations of the subject property."

In doing so, it is an important to give regard to the respective level of protection and potential conversion for commercial uses. Historic buildings can be successfully converted for alternative uses whilst preserving the historic significance, yet simultaneously affording greater



The Henry Jones & Co IXL Jam Factory on Hunter Street in Hobart was successfully converted to a boutique hotel, retail shops, restaurant and residential apartment complex in 2004.

The author is a commercial property valuer in Hobart, Tasmania and Director of Brothers & Newton Pty Ltd. The City of Hobart retains many historic buildings and the author has valued numerous heritage assets for both the private and public sector for various purposes including for mortgage security and financial reporting. William is also a member of the Australian Valuation and Property Standards Board.

## **Real Time**:

This is the first of an occasional series of articles airing the views of API members on topics of interest.

access to the public to enjoy and respect the historic attributes of the property.

Whilst most properties of historic value are recorded on heritage registers, some properties may not be recorded but nevertheless have a high probability of having protection orders imposed should it be proposed to demolish, or even refurbish, buildings which are of high historic significance.

So if a building is not heritage listed, but demonstrates historic significance, heritage restrictions could still be imposed.

Historic significance is not just related to the architectural style of a building. It may be of historic significance because of an event that occurred at the property. Even comparatively modern buildings or buildings of bland architectural style can be of heritage value.

By way of example, a building which was not heritage classified was considered to be worthy to be preserved in the Resource Management and Planning Appeals Tribunal of Tasmania case of *Robert Nettlefold Pty Ltd v Hobart City Council* [2000].

The case evolved around whether a small, two level brick building (circa 1890) which had been used as a blacksmith's shop and residence should be demolished.

In that case "evidence was given ... that if the building were not demolished it would preclude not only redevelopment of that portion of the land ... but also make the larger land area including the subject site less attractive to any potential purchaser ...

"It was also contended ... that to refuse demolition ... would mean that it had to be restored to ... a residential or commercial property and that the cost in so doing would produce a financially disadvantageous situation."

There was also evidence "that the building had lost its original architectural context" and "that there was nothing remarkable about the building..."

Yet it was unsuccessfully argued that

the absence of any listing in the heritage register should mean that the demolition should be approved, and the decision of the planning tribunal that the building be preserved was upheld by the tribunal.

Notwithstanding this judgement, heritage registers are the usual first point of reference in determining whether restrictions may be imposed and the following may be of guidance to valuers in searching whether a property is heritage recorded:

Naturally if a property is heritage listed, then the valuer should consider if the highest and best use of the property is limited by the heritage listing, and any other limitations which may be imposed, such as legal requirements to maintain the building and restrictions on refurbishing or modifying the property.

"Historic properties having a commercial use are often valued by means of the income capitalisation approach."

In these cases the distinctive architecture and ambience of an historic property can contribute to its appeal to prospective owner occupiers or tenants. Some elements of the building may be inefficient in comparison to more modern buildings, for example thick internal load-bearing walls not suited to modern open-plan office accommodation. But conversely, the presence, ambience,



38 Barrack Street, Hobart – Despite the building not being heritage listed, and "that there was nothing remarkable about the building..." it was held that the building should be preserved.

prominence and possible lower operating expenses (from not having lifts or air-conditioning) and potentially lower statutory outgoings, may mean that an historic building commands a rental which appears high by comparison to modern buildings which provide a superior standard of accommodation and services. It is also important for valuers to be careful in the measurement of historic buildings in calculating net lettable areas. The Property Council of Australia Method of Measurement requires "structural columns" to be included within net lettable areas. In the case of historic buildings, load-bearing walls can be thick (up to 600 mm) and the area taken up by

Local council planning schemes	Local council (LGA) websites
Australian Heritage Places Inventory	www.heritage.gov.au
Australian Heritage Council/National Estate	www.ahc.gov.au
National Trust of Australia	www.nationaltrust.org.au
Heritage Council of New South Wales	www.heritage.nsw.gov.au
Heritage Victoria	www.heritage.vic.gov.au
Queensland Heritage Council	www.epa.qld.gov.au/cultural_heritage/queensland_heritage_council/
Tasmanian Heritage Council	www.heritage.tas.gov.au
South Australian Heritage Council	www.environment.sa.gov.au/heritage/council.html
Western Australian Heritage Council	www.heritage.wa.gov.au
Aboriginal Sites	www.dia.wa.gov.au/HeritageCulture/Heritage-management/Register-of-Aboriginal-sites/
New Zealand Places Trust/Pouhere Taonga	www.historic.org.nz

these walls are effectively unusable. Some valuers have therefore excluded such areas from net lettable areas and perhaps also for ease of measurement, taken the internal distance between walls for rooms. The treatment of hallways is also another consideration. If hallways are for the movement of personnel between offices, these should be included in net lettable areas, in the same way that circulation areas in open-plan offices are included in the net lettable area.

Whilst measurement of historic buildings can therefore be subject to interpretation, what is paramount is that valuers maintain consistency in terms of measurement with any comparisons made between the subject property and any comparable sales or rental evidence.

Sometimes historic properties cannot be reliably valued by sales or the income capitalisation and it may be necessary to employ the cost approach. In doing so, "the valuer needs to consider whether the historic features of a building would be of intrinsic value in the market for that property ... The modern equivalent of such properties would need to reflect either the cost of reproducing a replica, or if this is not possible because the original materials or techniques are no longer available, the cost of the modern building with a similarly distinctive and high specification.

"In all cases the adjustments for physical deterioration and functional obsolescence will need to reflect factors such as the higher cost of maintenance associated with historic property and the loss of flexibility for adapting the building to the changing needs of an occupier."

In using the cost approach, valuers should be conscious that depreciation of historic properties is likely to be different to modern buildings, with the total life likely to be considerably higher (potentially hundreds of years) and straight-line depreciation is unlikely to reflect the regular upgrading of the building and diminishing depreciation of old assets.

"The land or site, upon which an historic building property is constructed, stands may be subject to constraints upon its use. In turn, any such constraints will affect land and overall property value."

Whilst valuers will usually endeavour to value historic property using traditional valuation methods "historic, or heritage assets, for which there is no reliable or relevant sales evidence, which have no potential for generating income, and which would or could not be replaced may be incapable of reliable valuation. An example could be a partially ruined building with no income generating potential. Where a reliable assessment of value is not possible, the valuer must disclose the reasons for this conclusion in the report."

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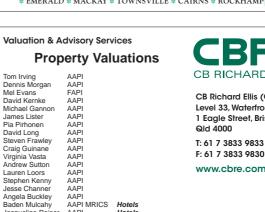
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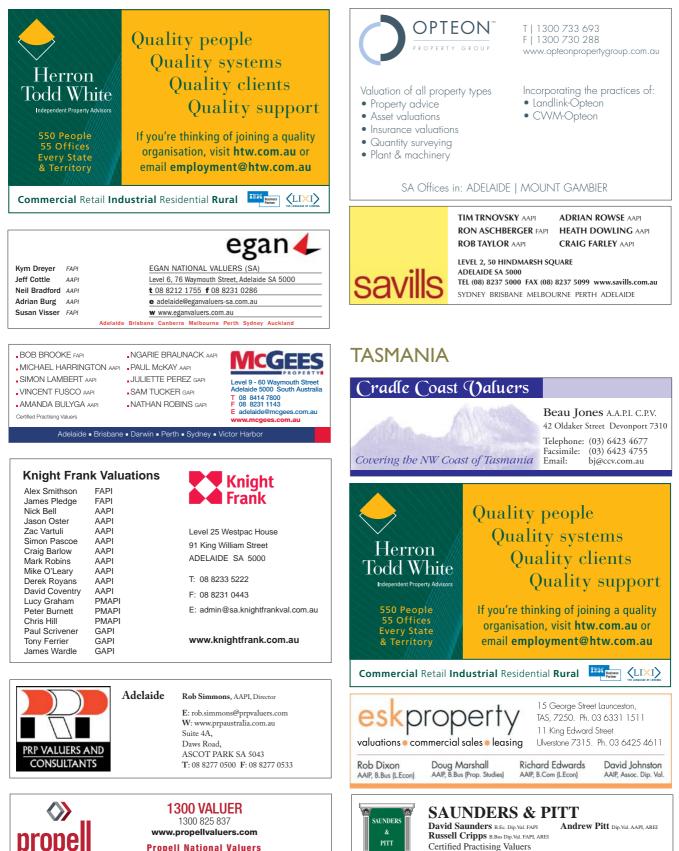
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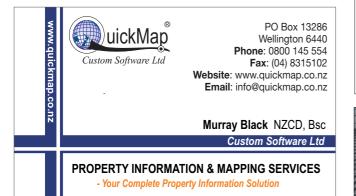
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