



WELLINGTON

Monday May 12 2008

\$1.30 (Includes GST and delivery)

GOLD RUSH
On the West Coast
C3



FASHION BLUNDER
Topless Kiwi teen
A3

SUPER SEMIS
6 teams, 3 spots
D8



House prices cut for cash

BY NICHOLAS

DESPERATE vendors are offering discounted cash prices to sell their homes as the property market continues to wobble.

Variable Value analysis published today shows annual increases in property values dropped to 4.8 per cent in April compared with 5.7 per cent in March, and continue a trend of rapidly dropping growth.

QV has warned that property growth will continue to slide and will probably show negative values in coming months.

In cases where Real Estate Institute figures last month showed house sales falling to their lowest level in 17 years, the volume of sales had fallen from 11,956 in March 2007 to just 1126 in March this year.

The fall has left real estate agents with a mounting pile of properties, as the market grows more nervous and buyers holding out for bargains.

This has spurred agencies to try new marketing tactics. Some leaders in advertising homes with separate cash and conditional prices. The cash price is between \$10,000 and \$20,000 lower than the conditional price, and is in exchange for a quick, clean sale without conditions.

Many properties are being advertised well below their asking valuations, prompting some agents to warn that cash deals are no longer the norm.

Wellington couple Roger and Anita Winslow are offering a cash price for their Miramar home at \$200,000 below its market value of \$180,000 when the market without a bid.

The average time it took to sell a house between January and

INSIDE

3388,485

QV latest C1

The housing crunch A2

March in Wellington's main suburbs was 41 days compared with 28 days a year ago. Real Estate Institute figures show, for example, a market hot spot, has gone from 21 days between January and March last year to 41 days.

Wellington's second city has also been hit hard, going from an average of 28 days in 2007 to 62 days. Commentators believe this is because of the high number of agencies, which have taken the biggest fall in value and buyer interest.

Wellington commentary indicates that some agencies owners had secured significant losses. While Wellington had not experienced the same loss as Auckland, where small "bachelor" flats had secured buyer confidence, it appeared some apartments were overvalued, managing director Gareth Stevens said.

The entire Wellington market had just 600 sales in March, compared with 1184 the year before.

Harcourt Term Wellington managing director Matty Scott said prices were looking for sales had dried up. "It's a very challenging market. The buyers are having their day in the sun."

'I'm gonna eat you' - Jerry goes undercover for Disney



Shayne Walker: Jerry Collins' arrival at the last thing 12-year-old Quaid North expected.

BY NICHOLAS

WHEN Hurricanes and All Blacks hardman Jerry Collins smashed through a fence and warned "I'm gonna eat you after this," you had better believe it.

Quaid North, 11, and members of the Eastbourne under-12s rugby team, were all sure when the former flanker arrived at Quaid's Porirua home to offer some coaching.

The surprise visit was part of an Undercover Coach series being filmed for the Disney Channel. Quaid, who plays for Portman's Northern United under-12s rugby team and dreams of one day wearing the No 10 Hurricanes jersey,

thought he was going to be filmed kicking a ball. Instead, Collins curled his back into a crouching position and even smashed through a makeshift fence for the camera, drawing perplexed neighbours outside.

"It was an honour for me to meet him," Quaid said. "I was just so nervous about how they managed to get him here at my house. He's fun... It was one of the highlights of my life so far."

Collins spotted one of the Eastbourne youngsters as he lined up to do a haka and said "I'm gonna eat you after this" before admitting he was a little rusty on the moves and took some pointers from young Quaid.

Collins said he used to live around the corner from Quaid and attended Corinna School, just up the road and was "a bit of a part of the community. I suppose".

He was thrilled to be offering advice on tackling and ball carrying to tomorrow's top-rated young rugby great.

"They were pretty good, man, they're pretty keen. I don't think the kids were expecting to see me as it was pretty close."

"We were rolling around in the mud for a while, breaking a fence - just a crystal day. A great way to spend a Sunday."

The show will screen on the Disney Channel on July 20.

Don't believe the label

BY GENE HARTEN

FRUIT there was the case of Ribena, recalled by two Auckland schoolgirls over false claims about vitamin C levels.

New Zealand's official study by Biovitamin Science and Research shows the problem of dodgy labels is far more widespread than people may think.

Food scientist Barbara Thomson, of Christchurch, measured concentrations in 300 foods, including baby food, cereal and fruit drinks, and compared them with manufacturers' claims on the labels. The differences in levels of vitamins C, D and A, folic acid, iron and sodium were slight.

Nearly 50 per cent of samples did not meet the label claims.

Of these, 10 per cent had fewer nutrients than the label claimed, potentially in breach of the Fair Trading Act, which prohibits false representations of products.

And 45 per cent contained more of the nutrient than the label claimed, which could lead to consumers getting too much of a good thing. The other 45 per cent met the label claim.

"The labels don't necessarily reflect what's in the food," Ms Thomson said. "Being over the label could be a problem. The more we know about the products are up to five times over."

Among the findings, a fruit-based canned baby food had about five times the advertised level of vitamin C.

A single serving of the food would result in a seven to 10-month-old infant receiving seven to eight times the adequate intake of the vitamin for their age group, though still within the upper limit of the standard.

Another baby food had about half the advertised vitamin C concentration. A fruit cereal had three times the fibres claimed on the label.

The little fibre can cause up to 100m in babies, weakness, fatigue and irritability. New Zealand bread, with a few exceptions, will be fortified with folic acid from 2008.

Too much fibre leads to nerve damage and adverse reproductive and developmental effects.

Ms Thomson's team was done for the New Zealand Food Safety Authority over three years. Up to five hundred of each food were tested.

Her findings would not result in actions against manufacturers whose products did not meet label claims.

Authority spokeswoman Jenny Reid said the team was done as part of a monitoring programme, rather than for policing reasons.

INSIDE Sour grapes in a small town



Marlborough residents, upset at losing a proposed Gordon Blue co-educational school, are angry at the man who led the opposition to the project. A3

Volcano ash crash fears



Scientists are worried that a 12km high plume of ash, erupting from Chile's volcano in Chile could collapse catastrophically, showering the region with hot gas, ash and molten rock. B2

Survivors face death while junta fiddles



All groups say thousands more people will die if the Myanmar cyclone survivors don't get help soon. B1

HEALTH Helena's last days



The Mary Potter-Helena Helena and Helena Catalina enjoy their last days together. Plus: Dr Chris Kallenberg on chronic fatigue syndrome. A8-A9

Kiwis ready to leave car at home

BY KERRY WILLIAMSON

A DRAMATIC shift away from private vehicles is coming, with a quarter of those preparing to leave their cars at home if the price of petrol hits \$1 a litre.

Fulli research released in The Dominion Post by the New Zealand Business Council for Sustainable Development suggests the \$1 mark for a litre of unleaded 91 will be a tipping point for motorists.

The \$1 mark has been reached in the Coromandel West Coast, Northland and the West Coast. The vast majority of those polled expect petrol prices to rise further in the next two years.

The survey results, part of a ShapeNZ online poll of 2647 people, came as the price of a barrel of crude hit a record US\$135 on Friday.

Petrol prices in most parts of New Zealand remained at \$1.00 a litre yesterday.

Almost a quarter of those surveyed said they had significantly cut petrol use because of high prices, while 41 per cent said they would significantly reduce petrol use if the price hit \$1 a litre.

The most significant tipping point would come at \$1 a litre, a price probability if crude prices hit the forecast US\$135 a barrel.

Last week the Government backed off introducing an excise tax on petrol in the face of growing concern over the risks of

living. It also backed away from a regional fuel tax, expected to become law on July 1.

If people are forced from their cars, many are unsure how they will commute to Wellington City - with the highest public transport usage in New Zealand - just 42 per cent said they had a viable alternative to their car.



WEATHER: A10 WELLINGTON CLEAR PM 16°C AUCKLAND FINE PM 16°C TARBURN FINE PM 16°C HAMILTON BOWERS PM 16°C DUNEDIN CLOUDY PM 16°C NELSON BREEZY PM 16°C CHRISTCHURCH FINE PM 16°C INDEX: A2

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