

## Money on the bank

# Rich sellers on strike

**Melissa Ketchell**

HOUSING EDITOR

LUXURY homes are being taken off the market and offered for rent as owners refuse to budge on price, despite a dearth of buyers.

Volumes in one of the most prestigious sectors of Brisbane property — riverfront — plunged by more than a third last year.

But prices were not eroded with the average Brisbane riverfront home sale breaking the \$3 million barrier at \$3.05 million for the first time.

Riverfront real estate specialist Josephine Johnston-Rowell said many sellers were either withdrawing from the market or opting to lease properties.

There were still six sales over \$4 million during the period.

They included \$6.88 million for a property in King Arthur Tce, Tennyson.

The riverfront market results were reflected across other sectors too with the sales in blue chip suburbs of Hamilton and

and Ascot well down on 2007.

And Real Estate Institute of Queensland chairman Peter McGrath said the top end had been hit hard with those who had to sell having to take lower prices in many cases.

“There aren’t many buyers at the very top end and often those that are buying are cashed up and only prepared to buy if they think they are getting a bargain,” Mr McGrath said.

Stimulus from the first homeowners grant and State Government stamp duty concessions helped some budget-priced suburbs to perform well.

Mainly West, Woolloongabba, Runcorn, Wynnum West and Taigum all saw big median price increases.

But other suburbs including Milton, Carindale, Windsor, Highgate Hill and Red Hill did gain as much in capital growth.

Figures compiled by the Real Estate Institute of Queensland showed there were still capital gains in some suburbs but the number of houses changing

hands had plummeted.

Mr McGrath said after months of turnover being concentrated in the affordable suburbs there was evidence of some buyers trading up.

“It’s taken much longer but now we are seeing some people who sold an affordable property around Christmas time, buying something further up the scale.”

But latest data for January shows the state’s property market is still in a bad way. Sales volumes were down 64 per cent on the 10-year average and 53 per cent lower than the same time a year ago.

RPdata researcher Cameron Kusher said: “Low consumer confidence and economic uncertainty resulted in fewer transactions.”

Some markets have showed a pick-up in values over recent months but Brisbane is lagging behind, recording a of 2.2 per cent drop in values for the three months ending February.

RPData says it is Australia’s weakest performing capital city.