



## REGIONAL BOOMTOWN MARKETS LEAD THE WAY IN ECONOMIC RECOVERY

Australia's resilient and diversified regional boomtowns are better placed than most markets to survive prevailing global economic challenges. In fact, many regional areas continue to experience prosperous conditions, underpinned by population growth, improving agricultural conditions, housing affordability, strong employment levels, and diversified economies.

### Regional housing affordability

Regional Australia offers residents lower housing costs that account for a smaller proportion of overall household income.

- Metro Queensland (Brisbane) – average house cost is \$464,500\*; 7.7 times higher than the average Brisbane resident's household income#
- Regional Queensland (e.g. Roma) – average house cost is \$272,000\*; only 4.0 times the average total household income for a Roma resident#

### Regional big spenders

Regional Australians have the propensity, and inclination to spend across a broad range of discretionary items.

- Almost 60% of regional Australians describe their financial well-being as "No worries" (can save and buy whatever they want), or "Comfortable" (can afford to spend on extras)†
- This is significantly higher than the 50% of metro consumers who align themselves with these two segments†

\*REIQ January to March 2009; Local Government Area (LGA)

\*\*Queensland Government Office of Economic and Statistical Research; June 2009 (Qld/National); December 2008 (individual markets)

#ABS Census Data 2006; ##ABS Regional Population Growth 2008

† foresechange April 2009

In particular, Queensland's regional economy continues to prosper and grow – due to a range of diversified and virtually recession-proof industries. Whilst the nation's mining sector faces some significant challenges, Queensland's mining regions continue to thrive – particularly in the coal-rich areas of the Bowen and Surat Basins. Several other economic growth sectors have also emerged, to ensure Queensland's ongoing prosperous economic performances – education, rural, construction, and health.

### This positive and vibrant regional outlook is characterised by booming population, employment, and business investment levels:

- Population in regional Queensland areas has increased by 2.5% in 2007-08 (1.7% national)##
- Unemployment levels are significantly lower than national average in key regional areas. For example: Roma 1.7%, Fitzroy 2.6%, Stanthorpe 2.6%, Toowoomba 2.6%, Gatton 2.9% – versus national unemployment rate of 5.8%\*\*
- Business investment in Queensland is expected to increase 7% in 2008-09 – a level three times that recorded in 2000-01; the majority of this investment will be attributed to regional areas for mining, energy, tourism, transports and roads\*\*
- In 2009-10, the Queensland Government will drive the state's \$18 billion building infrastructure program to stimulate growth, create and protect jobs and meet the infrastructure needs of Queensland's rapidly growing population



## KEY PROJECTS IN SELECT APN AUSTRALIAN PUBLISHING REGIONAL QUEENSLAND MARKETS

### Mackay/Whitsunday region

- Home to the Dalrymple Bay Coal Terminal (DBCT) and Hay Point, the world's largest coal port. These two ports are an integral part of Australia's coal supply chain, ensuring reliability and continuity of coal supply from the Bowen Basin coal fields to the world export market.
- Record amounts of coal were exported in July 2009 – 5.86 million tonnes; this represents a 22% increase versus the previous record output in August 2008.
- An unprecedented number of coal ships (88) are lined up along the Mackay coastline – signalling significant increase in demand for coal exports, particularly from China for the region's metallurgical and thermal coals. (Source: DBCT)

### Rockhampton region

- Proposed \$7.5 billion open-cut mine in the Galilee Coal Basin, Central Queensland, to service international export markets for thermal coal. The project is expected to provide total employment for 2,500 people during construction, as well as 1,600 permanent positions during the operational stage. (Source: [miningaustralia.com.au](http://miningaustralia.com.au))

### Gladstone region

- A multi-billion dollar liquefied natural gas (LNG) project has been declared a 'significant project' by the Queensland Government. This joint Shell Australia/Arrow Energy Ltd. project will develop an LNG facility on Curtis Island off Gladstone. Coal seam gas will be supplied from the Surat and Bowen Basins in South-West and Central Queensland, and exported to major international markets. Up to 3,000 construction jobs will be created. (Source: Qld. Government Dept. of Mines and Energy)

### Surat Basin region

- This coal-rich South-West Queensland region is booming. Almost 50 mining and energy projects are expected to be up and running by 2011, with a number of companies planning or developing coal seam gas, underground coal gasification and liquefied natural gas projects.
- Construction of the \$250 million Cameby Downs coal mine commenced in July 2009; it will produce 1.4 million tonnes per year for export, and employ 100 people in the region.
- Investors Direct Invest also plan to inject an additional \$1.5 billion into clean coal technology over the next five years. 600 jobs are expected to be created. (Source: Syntech Resources Pty Ltd.)

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