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Googong shift

Canberrans jumping at cross-border opportunity ...

By Meredith Clisby

MORE than 25 per cent of land buyers in the burgeoning Googong township are residents from across the border.

While the great majority of buyers are based in Queanbeyan and Jerrabomberra, the chance to live on a bigger block at a cheaper price is attracting many Canberrans to NSW.

CIC national sales manager Frank Joris said it was not a surprise that ACT residents were flocking to be part of the new township. He said the value for money offered in the project was better than what was on the market in Canberra and the inaugural community was already becoming connected.

The company also expects more interest in Googong from across the border after increases in the first home owners grant and stamp duty concessions in this week's state budget.

The first two land releases of 220 lots attracted 170 sales and remaining blocks became available on the open market on Tuesday.

Mr Joris said this was not due to the failure of the blocks to sell, but rather to provide people an opportunity to buy the "traditional" way and not through the ballot process.

There will be a further 65 blocks released in Googong later in the year. Queanbeyan and Jerrabomberra residents make up 72 per cent of buyers while the ACT and Canberra region holds 28 per cent.

About 12 per cent of land has been purchased by people living in Tuggeranong.

Banks residents Awni and Kylie Kalha decided to purchase land in Googong after comparing what was on offer in Canberra. They were won over by the larger block sizes and the community spirit they could see developing in the township. But they had not decided completely on the purchase until a car smashed into their Canberra home and not a single neighbour came



Awni and Kylie Kalha, despite the commute from Queanbeyan to work in Belconnen, are two of the many Canberrans purchasing lots in Googong. Photo: Elesia Lee

to see if they were ok. "The Googong environment will be totally different ... there will be that interaction between neighbours," Mr Kalha said.

The Kalhas are busy working on designs for their new home and expect to move there in early 2014.

Queanbeyan mayor Tim Overall said it was not a surprise that so many Canberrans wanted to move across the border. "I think Googong will attract new residents from the wider region and as far away as the metropolitan areas," he

said. And he agreed that state budget initiatives would bring more people across the border. The doubling of the first home owners grant and increasing stamp duty concessions on first homes up to \$650,000 would not just encourage people to buy at Googong, but also other new housing developments in Queanbeyan, he said. On Wednesday Queanbeyan City Council approved the development application for Club Googong, a two-storey indoor recreational facility.

... and more are set to come

QUEANBEYAN mayor Tim Overall says people buying their first homes will get the biggest benefit from initiatives to stimulate the NSW housing sector under this year's state budget.

NSW treasurer Mike Baird said the budget delivered the most generous first homebuyer scheme in the country for new properties.

From October 1 the First Home

Owner Grant will be doubled to \$15,000 for new properties up to \$650,000 and the upper threshold for stamp duty concessions has been changed to \$650,000.

A New Home Grant of \$5000 will go to non-first homebuyers of new properties up to \$650,000.

"I think [the budget] will have a positive effect, particularly with first home buyers," Mr Overall said.

Other housing initiatives include \$481 million of infrastructure to boost housing supply through the Housing Acceleration Fund, \$30 million in interest concessions to allow councils to build more infrastructure and an Urban Activation Precinct Program which includes \$50 million of incentives for local councils to build essential infrastructure.