

Soaring land values push Moranbah rents higher

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THE most expensive town in Queensland is set to get worse after the State Government yesterday released land valuations which would push up rents in Moranbah.

The Property Council of Australia (PCA) has warned the mining town's 300% jump in land value from 2004 would result in a flow-on in land tax and rent rises from the current rate of between \$500 and \$900 a week.

For the Myers family, who moved to Moranbah just over a year ago and are living in a caravan, it means no

hope of buying a house.

"We decided to buy a caravan because it was the only possible accommodation available when we came here," mother of four Georgia Myers said.

"It's just crazy. We really wanted to buy but it was out of our price range and we didn't want to pay the high rents people were wanting."

In the Mackay region other massive increases were at Collinsville (1300%), Clermont (142%), Sarina (108%), Proserpine (60%), Bowen (51%) and Whitsunday (43%).

By comparison, land values in Brisbane as a whole went up 8%.

Mackay was not included in this year's survey.

PCA Queensland executive director Robert Walker said the new numbers would have "dramatic effects" such as "massively over-inflated prices".

"Those not in the mines, such as shop assistants and staff on low incomes, won't be able to afford to live there and will be driven out," Mr Walker said.

He called on the State Government to release more land and to lessen the "land tax burden".

Belyando Shire Mayor Peter Freeleagus yesterday assured Moranbah

ratepayers that the 300% land value hike would not equate to a similarly meteoric rate rise.

"Rates will eventually go up but land values are not a major part of how we determine the figure," Cr Freeleagus said.

"What affects rates most is the cost of running councils — projects, roadworks and sewage et cetera."

However, Mrs Myers warned rent was not the only cost crippling the town. "Everything here is more expensive— houses, rents, petrol, groceries. The other night we went out and it cost us \$120 just to go out for something to eat."