



Pacific Parks Estate, Sarina's first master-planned community, has received strong interest from southern markets and Western Australia, according to Pacific Property Developers director Paul Dingle. Locals have also been quick to invest in the estate, he said.

"Response to the first release has been strong, with more than 70% of the lots in stages 1C and 2 no longer available," he said. "We are finding that people are seeking larger blocks than are available from new estates in Mackay. Our land prices provide a more affordable entry point into the property market than Mackay, where it's difficult to find a larger block under \$200,000."

Mr Dingle said the popularity of the first release prompted the developers, Pacific Property Developers, to work towards releasing Stage 3 earlier than originally planned. For more information about the estate, visit www.pacificparks.com.au.

All eyes on Sarina



By **KATE BASTABLE**

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SARINA'S good rental returns, largely attributed to the strong growth in the mining sector, are attracting interest from interstate investors, according to a local real estate agent.

Pollock First National principal Russell Pollock, who believes demand for Sarina property will remain strong, says he has received

enquiries from buyers as far away as Western Australia.

"More people are investing in Sarina, capitalising on strong returns due to the booming mining sector and resulting Queensland Rail expansion," he said.

"The average rental is about \$320 a week. To buy a house to achieve this you're looking at about \$300,000 to \$340,000. It's a good return because there are very low vacancy rates. The occupancy rates remain very high because of all the work that's going on in the hinterland."

LJ Hooker Sarina principal Faye Wright said property prices, which had previously increased dramati-

cally, had steadied, but remained consistent because of the many employment opportunities within the region.

"People remain interested in Sarina because of its strong surrounding infrastructure," she said.

"They are also interested in everything else it has to offer. I think people here recognise that Sarina is an attractive township with six beautiful beaches just 10 or 15 minutes away and a 20-minute drive from Mackay's city gates. Sarina has its own hospital, ambulance, two doctors' surgeries, two large supermarkets and excellent sporting facilities. People

coming to the region with the mining industry and its associated rail infrastructure choose to live in this area because of its country environment and the many facilities it offers."

Mr Pollock, who has lived in Sarina since 1988 and worked in its real estate industry since 1992, says some property prices have tripled in the last four years.

"If you go back to 1999 or 2000, some prices would have quadrupled," he said.

"We sold numerous houses for \$60,000 to \$85,000. Now those same houses would be worth around \$300,000."

Mr Pollock estimated Sarina's

current median property price was \$320,000.

"This is still very affordable. You can still buy some very nice properties for good prices."

Sarina's demographics had changed to include many 30 to 40-year-olds with children, Mr Pollock said.

St Anne's Catholic Primary School principal John Ballinger-Oches said the school had witnessed significant increases in student numbers and was catering for a bigger future with new buildings.

"We're preparing for an onslaught of enrolments, not particularly this year but in coming years," he said.