

Vendors' reality cheque

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If confidence in a market is enough to keep it buoyant, the Gold Coast outlook is as sparkling as champagne.

Real estate agents are positive; researchers are putting a Gold Coast lining on the global cloud; banks are coming to the party keeping interest rates on hold and non-bank lenders are falling over themselves to offer cheaper products which appeal to the first-home buyers who may have missed the bonus boat.

And while sellers in a shy market beg 'show me the money', the solution and a sale is in their hands.

Take the advice from the experts: meet the market.

Just as in times of fat when sellers were happy to boost their asking price and values by thousands a week – a situation which saw prices double in the years from 2000 to 2004 – sellers now need to recognise that bandwagon has passed them by.

While the sum attainable a mere three years ago now may be just a dream, only a minority of vendors will need to sell their property for less than they paid.

The Gold Coast Bulletin will tomorrow release its annual Property and Suburb Guide.

The headlines say it all – 'The price is right'; 'Opportunity on the horizon'; 'Warming up for a hot spring'; and 'Gold Coasters can look on the bright side'.

Andrew Bell believes the strength of the Gold Coast fundamentals not

only ensure a sustainable market but position the region for a solid future.

The CEO of The Ray White Surfers Paradise Group, Queensland's largest real estate firm, said his office had defied a traditionally slow winter with more than \$68 million worth of sales last month.

That follows an impressive \$427 million in sales during the first half of the year.

His optimism is tempered with the observation that the industry is not 'entirely out of the woods'.

"A sense of financial insecurity has resulted in more people leaving money in the bank and taking a far more conservative approach to real estate," said Mr Bell.

"Today people are driven more by their needs and the quest for value for money."

Head of CB Richard Ellis project marketing division Chris Litfin agreed that investors now, as always, would reap the rewards if they took a long-term view.

"History shows that buyers who make informed decisions with a long-term outlook and act at the start of an upward cycle, reap the greatest rewards," said Mr Litfin.

Colleen Coyne of Colleen Coyne Property Research is another objective observer who says 'it's a time of opportunity in the Gold Coast property market'.

"Relatively strong employment and new industries will continue to underpin the local economy and support the real estate market," she said.

"Owner-occupiers are active and there is evidence investors are back in the market."