

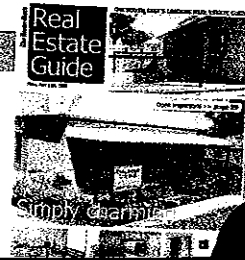
The Border Watch

South Australia's Largest Regional Newspaper

Friday, April 11, 2008 | \$1.00 inc. GST

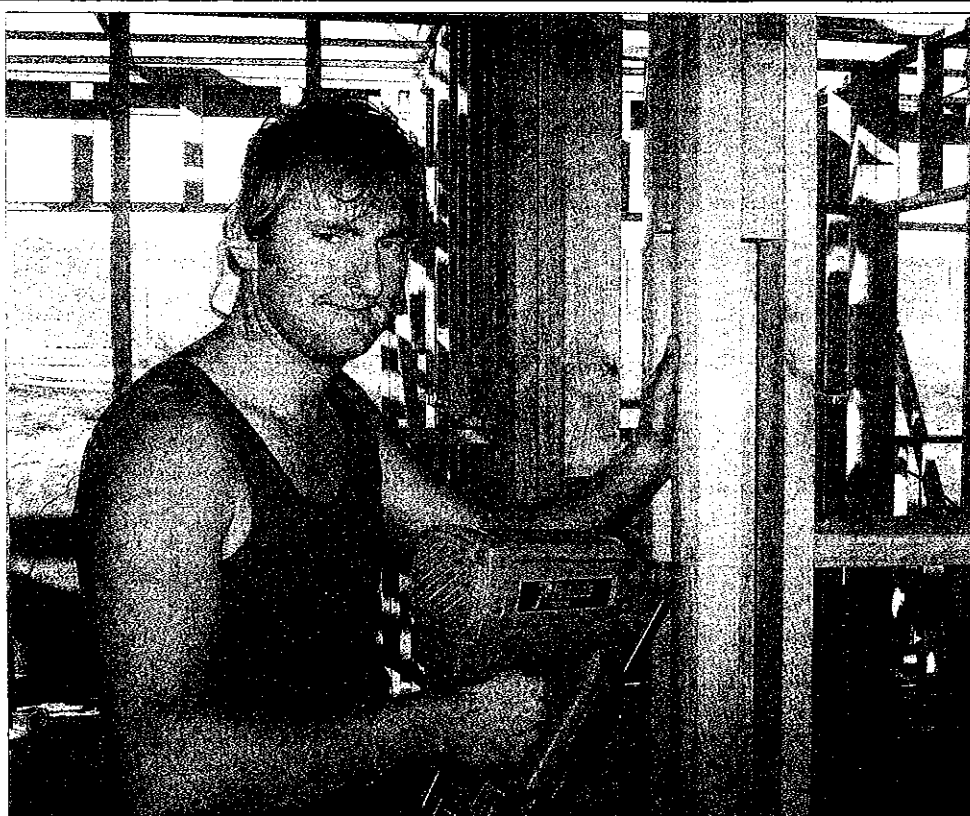
HUGE 32-PAGE LIFTOUT INSIDE TODAY

The South East's leading
Real Estate Guide



SPORT
NETBALL FEEL GOOD STORY
Back page

Forced from home



Patrick Grubb works on one of the many new houses still being built in the region despite rising interest rates putting strain on home-owners. Story page 5. Picture: NIKKI MOTT.

Families battle to pay the bills



BY HEIDI THOMPSON AND ANELIA BLACKIE

At least two Mount Gambier families have lost their homes in the past two weeks, due to higher interest rates making their repayments unaffordable.

Local welfare agencies have also noticed a drastic increase in local families seeking emergency relief.

Both Salvation Army core manager Stephen Black and Anglican Community Care marketing manager Anne Hinkly-Tyler blamed recent hikes in interest rates, food and petrol for the increase in poverty and homelessness in the city.

Mr Black said the two families lost their homes due to unaffordable mortgage rates, but were also struggling to afford rent.

"These families can't afford to pay back both the money they owe on their mortgages and rent, as there is no government assistance for anyone in this situation," Mr Black said.

"Their only short term solution is to declare bankruptcy, but that only starts a new cycle of problems."

Ms Hinkly-Tyler said there had been a drastic increase in families joining Anglican Community Care's emergency relief program in the past few months.

"These people are doing it tough because of an increase in the cost of living, especially petrol and food," Ms Hinkly-Tyler said.

Two local real estate agents have also admitted that isolated cases of mortgage stress do exist in Mount Gambier, but it is not a major problem and the city remains an affordable place to buy property.

Continued page 4

<p>BF II FALCON XR8 DEMO \$41,990*</p>  <p>5.4L V8 282kW 16 speed auto Sports leather interior 20" alloys Sports exhaust Premium 6 disk CD 4.270 kilometres XCD 577</p> <p>SAVE \$10,000 OFF NEW</p>	<p>WQ FIESTA LX 3 DOOR \$13,990</p>  <p>DRIVEAWAY</p> <p>1.6L 4 cylinder 5 speed manual Air conditioning Power windows Power mirrors CD player Keyless entry Geartronic Engineering</p> <p>WAS \$18,234</p>	<p>LT FOCUS ZETEC SEDAN DEMO \$26,990</p>  <p>DRIVEAWAY</p> <p>2.0L 4 cylinder 5 speed manual Sports suspension Body kit 6 airbags Air conditioning 16 disk CD 17" alloys 1205km XSB-149</p> <p>WAS \$29,668</p>
<p>Barry Maney Ford Jubilee Highway, MT GAMBIER. Phone 08 8721 3400 Barry Stafford 0818 885 662 Paul Clark 0477 922 194 Darren McFadden 0405 173196</p>		

Record state employment

SOUTH Australia's job boom continued in March, setting new records in total employment and unemployment, together with a new record number full time jobs.

It is the 12th consecutive month of jobs growth and shows a record 777,500 South Australians were employed in March in trend terms - a rise of 1300 jobs on February.

Full time employment set a new benchmark of 535,200, the figure's 13th consecutive monthly rise.

As a result, the state's trend unemployment rate dropped to 4.5pc, establishing the new record low.

South Australia recorded a rise in seasonally adjusted participation in the workforce to reach 63pc, which indicates confidence in the labour market, according to Employment Minister Paul Caica.

Youth unemployment rate also dropped 2.8pc to 19.7pc, with 1000 less teenagers unemployed and looking for full time work.

Trust a local to deliver the right home loan.



Heidi Ireland
8726 2653

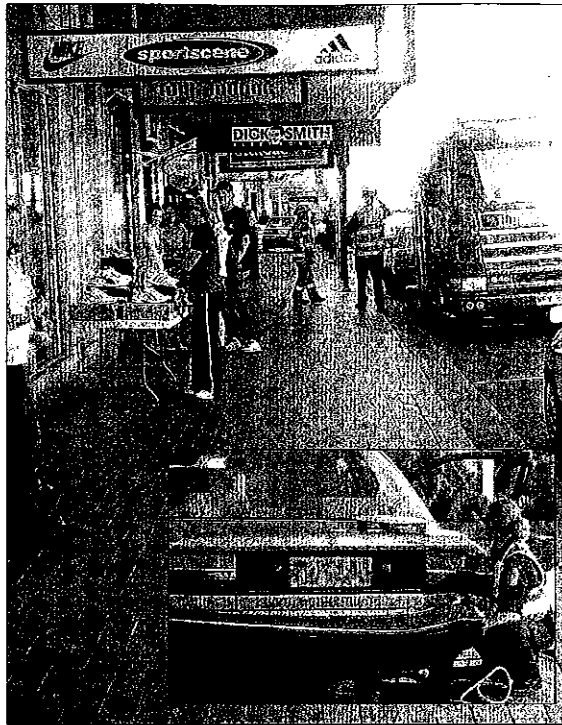


Paula Gasparini
8726 2600

Our Home Lending Managers live and work in your area. They know finance and the local real estate market, and personally make the decisions on a home loan that's exactly right for you. So if you're looking for a new home loan, refinancing or a HomeStart loan, talk to us. We're closer. **BanksA**

Lending criteria, terms and conditions apply. Full details of the relevant terms and conditions are available on request. BanksA - A Division of St. George Bank Limited ABN 92 055 513 070 AFS Licence 240997, TC11098W (03/08)

Elderly driver hospitalised after crash



□ This Commercial Street footpath was the scene of yesterday's vehicle accident and (inset) the vehicle involved. Picture: MICHELLE TREWARTHA.

AN elderly male driver was taken to hospital following a vehicle accident on Commercial Street yesterday afternoon.

The man was the driver of an early model Toyota Corolla sedan which came to rest on the footpath outside the Mount Gambier Hotel around 2.30pm.

The vehicle initially crashed into a sign as the driver attempted to parallel park outside Henri Post Jewellers.

The driver became disorientated and collided with a parked green hatchback as he veered on to the footpath, according to emergency service reports.

The vehicle proceeded along the footpath and also crashed into a display table before coming to rest outside the Mount Gambier Hotel.

No injuries were reported, however, the driver was conveyed to hospital as a precaution.

The incident halted traffic and was attended to by State Emergency Service, Metropolitan Fire Service, police and ambulance officers.

Interest rates begin to bite

From front page

Allen Smith of Century 21 Allen Smith Real Estate said he had been given the impression in the course of his work that some people were struggling.

"I don't see a heap of mortgage stress, but you can see the signs that people are tightening up," Mr Smith said.

This is despite a Today Tonight segment screened on Wednesday evening which focused on the affordability of local housing and land.

Mr Smith said the Today Tonight segment featured a dual income couple with no children who would be unlikely to be suffering mortgage stress, however the situation would be different for some families.

"The reality out there is where you have got two people with only one person working and two or three children, they're under pressure," he said.

"But, they may have put themselves under pressure by setting themselves up."

A sentiment, fellow real estate expert, Paul Chuck from Gebhardt's Real Estate agrees with.

"Mount Gambier is one of the few areas in the country...that is almost mortgage stress free," he said.

"The secret of course being that purchasers stay within their affordability."

Mr Chuck said rising interest rates were impacting on the property market all over the country and in Mount Gambier to a lesser degree.

"With the uncertainty of interest rates purchasers are now still doing all of their research and attendances of open inspections are high, however the percentage of these purchasers actually committing to buy has slowed considerably," he said.



□ Century 21 Allen Smith Real Estate owner Allen Smith said he had noticed signs of people tightening their belts following recent interest rate hikes. Picture: HEIDI THOMPSON.

This may explain the high demand for rental properties in the city.

"The rental supply is very low, especially for quality places," Mr Smith said.

Mr Chuck said high demand

for rental properties was a trend which looked set to continue.

"Rental demand remains high in the city of Mount Gambier with the average family home of three to four bedrooms being extremely hard to source," he said.

FLETCHER JONES

CLOSING DOWN SALE

Get an extra 20% off already marked down prices

Don't miss out, get in now
Doors close 26th April
7 Commercial Street East, Mt. Gambier
(08) 8725 0133