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Border prices buck trend

COOLANGATTA and Tweed Heads apartment values reached new heights in 2008, defying the downward pressure on property prices across Australia, new research by Colliers International has revealed.

Preliminary figures show high-rise apartment resales in the two suburbs averaged \$768,535 during 2008, up from \$747,127 in 2007, and achieved an average capital growth of 7.1 per cent per annum.

The report, compiled by research manager Lynda Campbell, showed three buildings in the area achieved an average resale price of more than \$1 million – Niecon's Reflection on the Sea and Reflection Tower Two in Coolangatta and Lindor on Greenmount Beach.

However, sales plunged last year, with figures showing just 43 high-rise apartments changed hands compared with 106 in 2007.

The research was based on 840 settled apartment resales in 22 high-rise apartment buildings in Coolangatta and Tweed Heads from January 1997 to the end of 2008.

Colliers International director of project marketing Brinton Keath

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said the research showed how strong the fundamentals of the area were in a quieter market.

"Localities that experienced an increase in values last year only did so due to strong fundamentals and a lack of supply," he said.

"The majority of new high-rise apartment development in the area is along the beachfront strip, which is one of the factors driving up resale values as the demand for premier positions on the beach remains strong.

"Billions of dollars is also being poured into major infrastructure improvements in the area, further fuelling values growth.

"Major projects include the \$100 million redevelopment of Gold Coast Airport, the \$920 million extension of the rail-line south to the airport, which has started with the extension to Varsity Lakes, and the \$70 million



Niecon's Reflection Tower Two at Coolangatta was one of three towers to record an average unit resale price of more than \$1 million in 2008

expansion of Southern Cross University to a site adjoining the airport.

Mr Keath said the area was becoming increasingly desirable to residents and investors.

"Coolangatta and Tweed Heads have developed a reputation as more relaxed and affordable alternatives to comparable suburbs further up the coastline," he said.

"All the facilities, including quality restaurants and shops, are on the doorstep, there are fewer

crowds and there is a selection of the Gold Coast's premier beaches and surf breaks.

"Sydney investors love Coolangatta because it is so close to the airport, while Brisbane buyers love it because it was such a popular tourist spot during the 1950s to 1970s, so the baby boomers now holiday there with their children.

"Developers have also recognised the area's appeal with owner-occupiers and, along with projects targeted at the visitor market, are

developing an increasing number of boutique projects designed to meet the residential market.

"These projects typically achieve higher values and capital growth.

Mr Keath said the report revealed the area remained popular with tourists.

"The research found occupancy rates in Coolangatta remained solid, sitting at about 66.2 per cent for the September quarter, in line with the same period in 2007 when 67.9 per cent was achieved," he said.

Island auction hooks \$4.9m winning bid

RAY White Runaway Bay and Paradise Point have reported auction sales of \$11 million this week.

The highest sale was of an opulent waterfront mansion at The Sovereign Islands which sold on a bid of \$4.9 million last Sunday.

A Gold Coast resident was the successful bidder for the property at 19 Queen Anne Court, which went under the hammer before a crowd of 80 people.

Prestige agents Ali Mian, who is principal of both agencies, and Amir Mian handled the marketing campaign.

The property was sold by a couple who paid \$672,750 for the 1464sq m site in 2002.

The French Mediterranean-style residence measures 1022sq m and includes a gym, bar, cellar and cinema room. It has an 80m frontage to The Broadwater, a pontoon and a jet-ski dock.

Ali Mian said there were seven registered bidders and 72 inspections in the four weeks prior to the auction.

Mr Mian said six of 16 properties listed for the agency's January auction on Wednesday at the Sheraton Mirage had sold for a total of about \$6 million.

A further \$6 million in sales was expected from post-auction negotiations.