

Grants help to secure first homes



PRIYANKA Ray is making the most of the generous first-home owners scheme to buy her first home at Seven Hills.

Last week, the 28-year-old nurse paid for a deposit on a two-bedroom, off-the-plan unit at Mason Apartments, to be built in Olive St.

As one of the first 20 buyers she was offered a \$20,000 first-home owner grant by the developer, Civic Properties.

This was on top of the State Government's \$10,000 scheme.

Ms Ray said the benefits made a huge difference for her purchase of a unit at the 400-apartment complex.

"I'm very happy because it's a saving, it will definitely help," she said.

"It's not a small amount of money."

The latest NSW Office of State Revenue data shows that areas neighbouring the postcode of 2148 – which includes Blacktown, Arndell Park, Huntingwood, Kings Park, Marayong and Prospect – received the third-highest number of first-home owner grants in NSW, just behind Liverpool and Westmead.

More than 7000 grants worth about \$65.8million were issued to first-home buyers by the NSW Government between July 1 2000 and August 31 2016 in this postcode.

Last month, Civic Properties offered 20 grants of \$20,000 to first-home buyers such as Ms Ray.

With 10 grants still available, Civic Properties investment manager Chris Ferris encouraged people to apply.

"We wanted to do all we could to encourage first-home buyers," he said.

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BLACKTOWN

Central location a huge drawcard for residents



Christine Aranas and Dario Enriquez are looking forward to moving into their new home.

Dwelling completions

- » Sydney: 2836
- » Blacktown: 2245
- » Camden: 2170
- » Parramatta: 1884
- » Liverpool: 1571
- » The Hills: 1492
- » Rockdale: 1363
- » Penrith: 1233
- » Ryde: 1188
- » Hornsby: 1171

Thriving in building boom

Angela Ranke

BLACKTOWN City is leading a building boom in greater Sydney not seen since the 2000 Olympics.

More than 2200 houses and apartments were built in the area over the past financial year, figures from the Metropolitan Housing Monitor show.

The figure is just behind the City of Sydney for the most construction activity, and comprises 1768 detached dwellings and 604 units.

About 3700 residential dwellings in Blacktown City were approved for building in 2015-16, behind the City of Sydney with 3500 dwelling approvals.

Christine Aranas and her husband, Dario, recently bought a house at the Fairwater Estate in Blacktown, allowing room for their 16-year-old daughter, Nikolai, and a spare room for guests.

Ms Aranas said proximity to infrastructure, such as major roads, buses and the train station attracted her to the area.

"Blacktown is already established, there's hospitals and the train nearby," she said.

Ms Aranas, who is of Filipino descent and lives at Roseville on the north shore, said being close to friends who lived in the area was another drawcard.

Blacktown Mayor Stephen Bali said he was not surprised at the construction activity happening in the local government area.

"We're growing by 8000 residents a year," he said.

"Blacktown is in a central location and a prime location in western Sydney.

"It's affordable, it has great facilities with lots of pools, libraries and community centres.

"We have what it takes to build a community and people are responding by moving out here."

With the population expected to grow to half a million by 2036, Cr Bali said the council was planning for the future but needed help from the state and federal governments.

"There is a huge deficiency of state infrastructure," he said.

"With a population of that size, of 500,000 people, we need to work with state and federal governments to deliver road infrastructure, schools and hospitals."

fastlane

Help clean up our town's act

● Volunteers are wanted to take part in Graffiti Removal Day on Sunday, October 30. The project is Australia's largest graffiti clean-up operation. Graffiti-busters will be provided with training, removal equipment and protective gear on the day. Last year more than 2000 volunteers cleared 21,000sq m of graffiti from more than 450 sites across the state, saving the NSW Government and private property owners about \$1.4 million. To volunteer, register at graffitiremovalday.org.au.

Parks need some protection

● Go green this weekend with council projects at Woodcroft and Blacktown. Take part in the Adopt A Park project at Woodcroft on Saturday between 8am and 10am when residents are encouraged to collect rubbish and clear weeds. Covered shoes and protective clothing must be worn. Meet near the wharf at Woodcroft Drive. Also on Saturday, there is a plant giveaway in The Village Green, Flushcombe Rd, Blacktown, from 9am to 1pm. Two plants per household (bring identification).

Baby animals could use help

● Wildlife Information and Rescue Service (WIREs) is calling on Blacktown residents to help feed baby animals that have been rescued. From now until late January WIREs volunteers will be feeding hundreds of hungry young native birds and animals until they are mature enough to fend for themselves and be released into the wild. All donations to the WIREs Food Fund Appeal go to food and milk purchases. Donations over \$2 are tax-deductible and can be made by visiting foodfund.org.au.

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