

Quick news

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**OBAMA MEET:** US President Barack Obama met activist-actor George Clooney, pictured, at the White House yesterday to discuss American involvement in Sudan ahead of a critical election on January 9

next year in Africa's largest nation. Clooney recently returned from Sudan, and is asking the US and world community to use international pressure and robust diplomacy to prevent violence.



**DEADLY NOTE:** A man was fatally shot in the head in Sydney's west because of a neighbourhood dispute sparked by loud music, said police. They discovered the 37-year-old man at the Russell

Street property in Mount Pritchard on Tuesday night with serious head injuries which they said were consistent with a gunshot wound. Paramedics worked on the victim but he died at the scene.

# It's Melbourne or bust

**EXCLUSIVE**  
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**Brian Stewart confirmed figures which showed Coasters were heading to Melbourne**

THE building and construction industry says more Gold Coasters are heading to Melbourne than vice versa, for the first time since 1982.

UDIA national executive Brian Stewart said figures in the Population Growth Highlights and Trends Queensland 2010 report had confirmed the flow of interstate migration had been reversed because of issues such as housing affordability and availability on the Gold Coast.

"Interstate people don't have the

same confidence in Queensland and the Gold Coast that they did in the past," he said.

"They came across the border for the lifestyle but now the house prices are too high and there are not enough jobs to attract them."

The UDIA has made it clear the construction industry had, instead,

turned its gaze to the growth of urban development due to affordability issues in cities such as Melbourne.

The topic was highlighted on Tuesday night when planners, council officers, academics and others took to the stage at Griffith University to take part in what was supposed to be a light-hearted debate about tackling growth in the city.

The event turned serious when key speaker Michael Arnold, from Arnold Development Consultants, instead highlighted the critical problems facing the construction industry on the Coast that were stopping growth.

"There is no point discussing if growth is a good or a bad thing on the Gold Coast," he said.

"All the impediments standing in the way of it have made it a non-argument."

Mr Arnold listed high infrastructure charges, delays in building approvals and problems with state planning documents such as the South East Queensland Regional Plan among a string of issues causing developers to pack up and go elsewhere and for buyers to follow them.

He said government and the industry needed to work together to get 'people back on the tools'.

"We are very confident as an industry that it can be turned around," he said.

Mr Stewart said the State Government at least finally seemed to be listening.

He said, however, that the UDIA had been calling for urgent action on the issues facing the housing sector for 18 months.

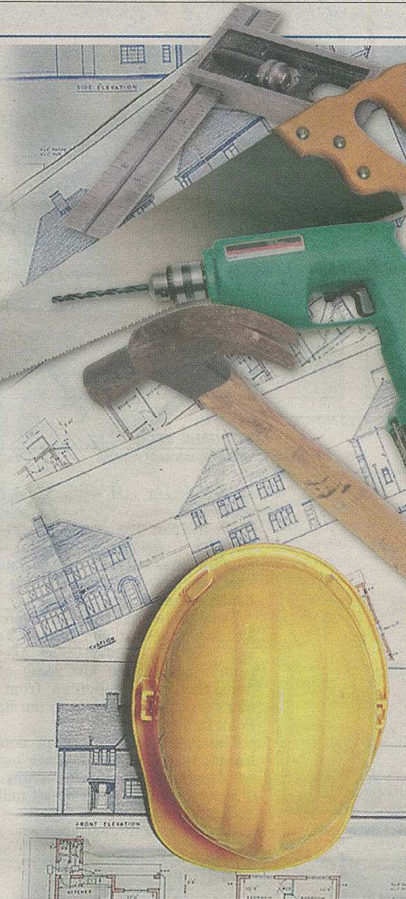


**ONLINE POLL: Are you concerned by the exodus of Gold Coasters to Melbourne?**

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE



These 140 sqm homes would cost \$389,000 to build on the Gold Coast but only \$335,000 in Melbourne and \$295,000 in Adelaide.



City	Home price	Infrastructure charges
Adelaide .....	\$295,000 .....	\$3000-\$5000
Melbourne .....	\$335,000 .....	\$18,500
<b>Gold Coast .....</b>	<b>\$389,000 .....</b>	<b>\$33,000</b>

Figures calculated on a 140sqm brick and tile home on a 450sqm block, 35km from the CBD.

## Coast to miss out on jobs

**JESSICA ELDER**  
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THE Gold Coast is set to miss out on thousands of jobs because the State Government thinks we are big enough to look after ourselves.

Government headquarters will be moved from Brisbane to regional cities in the next four years to promote growth and boost employment in those areas.

A spokeswoman for Premier Anna Bligh said the Coast had been snubbed because it was 'big enough already'.

"This program is to help regional cities grow - the Gold Coast is big enough already," she said.

Queensland Rail will open in Ipswich later this year and other departmental offices will be moved to north Queensland.

But the Gold Coast will get nothing, despite an increasing unemployment rate.

The Coast's unemployment rate of 6.1 per cent is higher than the state average of 5.4 per cent for the first time in years.

A prime example of the benefits a major headquarters can bring is Austar.

The cable company opened a national headquarters at Robina in 2002, creating 700 full-time jobs.

Austar is still successfully operating from the same site eight years later.

City business leaders have reacted angrily.

Gold Coast Combined Chamber of Commerce president Bob Jansen said the city could not be described as 'big enough'.

"The Government's own South East Queensland Regional Plan predicts the city's population will double within 15 years - we are going to get bigger and will need permanent employment for our residents," he said.

Sustainable Development Gold Coast president Greg Short said government headquarters would benefit the city greatly.

**Developers moving out: read more at goldcoast.com.au**

## Council charges drive housing costs out of reach

A BASIC new brick-and-tile home costs Gold Coasters between \$54,000 and \$75,000 more than it would in Melbourne and Adelaide.

Devine Homes state development manager Peter Dunkley said an entry-level home on the Gold Coast would cost about \$389,000, while Adelaide buyers would pay \$295,000 and in Melbourne the price would be about \$335,000.

The Gold Coast City Council charges appear to make a differ-

ence to the end price, with infrastructure costs on the Coast amounting to \$33,000 a home.

In Adelaide they are only 10 per cent of that and in Melbourne, the council charges about half the Gold Coast amount.

Mr Dunkley said the company had compiled a list of the different council charges and delivered them to Premier Anna Bligh in an attempt to get something done about the big variation.

The council and the State Government have studies under way to investigate building charges and their economic impact.

"Premier Anna Bligh has acknowledged a number of strategies are not working, including high infrastructure charges," said Urban Development Institute of Australia chief executive officer Brian Stewart.

UDIA Gold Coast president Steve Harrison said the building

industry had been fighting to have council charges lowered for more than a year and so far there had been little action.

Mr Harrison said the high charges had not only shut the building and construction industry down, they were putting homes out of the reach of the average family.

"If you charge a higher rate up front, it gets passed on and homes become more and more unaffordable," he said.