

SOLVED

WITH RED TAPE BUSTER SHANE BOWERING



Housing boom hangover

ARE you one of the many property owners confused by how our land valuations are calculated and why?

This year, especially, property owners in southeast Queensland were outraged by the astronomical increases.

Samantha from Biloela asks why land valuations are undertaken each year and on what basis the values are determined.

Annual Department of Natural Resources and Mines valuations are based on the unimproved value of land in its natural state, without buildings, structures, fences, leveling, filling, etc.

Land valuations

The valuations are used by local government as a base for the levying of rates, by the Office of State Revenue as a base for the calculation of land tax, the Department of Natural Resources and Mines for calculating state land rental, and the Commonwealth Grants Commission to assist in the allocation of funding.

To calculate unimproved values the department examines sales information for each land-use category in an area and sends registered valuers to inspect properties that have recently been sold.

The department advises that it likes to inspect, where possible, lightly improved or vacant properties as this gives it a better indication of "unimproved" values in the area.

The unimproved value of the land is then calculated by deducting the added value of improvements — buildings, fences, structures, etc. from the sale price.

The value arrived at is then compared with previous values to determine the relevant market movement in the area.

Given Queensland's recent property boom, land values have soared. The department says that a valuation increase does not necessarily

mean that your council rates will increase.

Hang on — even those like me who lack common sense and struggle with maths, will realise that if valuations go up, council rates in general must increase.

When you receive your valuation, I suggest that you look into the proposed valuations very carefully.

I have heard of experiences where people have been outraged over the proposed valuations, have challenged them and had the valuations reduced.

If you do disagree you need to obtain evidence to challenge the valuations.

I would be contacting local real

estate agents to get them to quantify values in the area and even engaging your own valuer to provide an assessment. That will cost about \$400.

Essentially, you need to prove that the values that the department has used do not reflect the true value of land in the area.

You must lodge a Notice of Objection and submit it to the department within 42 days of receiving your valuation notice.

Next year when valuations are released around March, we can surely see some of our land values dropping as a result of the slowing in the property market — and pigs might fly!

Lorikeets ruffle feathers

Noisy wildlife

WE ARE lucky in this country to have a wide variety of fauna and flora that help to make Australia unique.

Many of our much-loved animal and plant species are rightfully protected.

What happens, though, when one of our delightful feathered friends — the lorikeet — ruffles the feathers of residents?

Rachael from the Sunshine Coast has some serious concerns with thousands of lorikeets roosting in a nearby tree.

Rachael has complained that the birds' incessant noise starts just before dusk and continues for a few hours, starting again intermittently for short periods at night. It starts again before daybreak each morning.

She asks what, if anything, she can do.

The Environmental Protection Act and supporting Noise Policy covers only noise from domestic animals.

The Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service suggests the birds are likely to be rainbow lorikeets, which are protected



RAINBOW LORIKEETS: A beautiful part of Queensland's wildlife ... but oh so noisy

under the Queensland Nature Conservation Act 1992.

It says that in general it will not move flocks of native birds, nor is any relocation likely to be successful. But they say ibis have been successfully relocated in some situations.

Further comment suggests that bird-scaring devices are likely to cause a side issue with surrounding homeowners.

In short, the service was fairly short on answers that would help Rachael.

But if Rachael is adamant the birds are affecting her badly, she should contact the service's Sunshine Coast office, lodge a complaint and ask them to investigate.

She should also ask her neighbours if they support her. The more residents who share

Rachael's concerns, the more chance there is that the service will act.

While the local council has little authority in this area, if the trees are on council land, the service can empower the council to take action to remove the birds.

This seems to be an issue where you are damned if you do and damned if you don't.

All adds up to Triple-0

THE email has burst a boiler following our report about dialling Triple-0 in an emergency.

Some readers say that 112 is a hoax while others have raised a few other issues about 112.

Those who know me well can verify that anything more complex than a toaster leaves me scratching my head.

Just to answer some of your questions — 112 isn't a hoax and is the recognised international emergency number. It is programmed into all GSM phones and works anywhere in the world.

Triple-0 is the recognised emergency number in Australia and is the preferred number for our emergency services and the Federal Government.

But 112 is a viable op-

Mobiles

tion when your phone is out of network range, or reads "Emergency Use Only", if you have no credit left on your SIM card, and even when you phone is locked, as it will over-ride the need for a PIN.

It seems that if you have no credit left on your mobile phone, Triple-0 won't work but 112 will.

State Emergency Services Minister Pat Purcell has urged everyone to stick to Triple-0 after an survey showed up to 50,000 Queensland adults do not know the Triple-0 emergency phone number.

On the plus side, kids as young as two have rung the number to save a grown-up.

GOT A PROBLEM?

Contact Red Tape Busters founder Shane Bowering at PO Box 93 Clontarf Beach Qld 4019 or solved@redtapebusters.com.au

Advice offered in this column is general in nature and readers should obtain specific qualified advice from experts in the appropriate field in all circumstances.

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Handy Hints

STOP DRAIN PAINS

On sewer or septic - toilet shower or sink - smells and blockages are a pain in the... drain.

The answer is **ACTIZYME** used by thousands of Aussies. Safe, environmentally helpful **ACTIZYME** solves the problems.

Available from hardware stores and supermarkets. (Ask about **ROOTOX** to fix tree root problems).

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