

DIXON

**JOHNSTON**  
Quality Property



**RIVER REPORT**

SPRING 2007



Ever  
**RISING  
TIDE**  
of river sales

**THIS ISSUE**

Ever Rising Tide of River Sales  
Top Ten  
Down to the River in Boats  
Lone Voice on Mangroves  
Clean Sweep of the River



# Ever RISING TIDE of river sales

by Josephine Johnston-Rowell - Riverfront Director

## Welcome to our new look River Report

DIXON JOHNSTON Quality Property has been publishing the respected bi-annual River Report since 1993, providing a valuable and consistent log of Brisbane's riverfront residential real estate market. What incredible advances we have witnessed in that time.

A decade ago, we reported with enthusiasm that the average price of a riverfront home had climbed to \$724,000. At the time we were excited to reveal six sales in a single year that had eclipsed the magic million dollar mark. This year so far, the average riverfront sale price has climbed above \$3 million.

Befitting this dynamic and exciting market, we have given our report some new styling, while still bringing the usual comprehensive information on Brisbane's most sought-after and highly prized residential sector.

This issue also provides the latest news on our efforts to bring some sense to the mangrove management debate and looks at some good 'clean' fun on our river.

Enjoy!

Josephine Johnston-Rowell  
RIVERFRONT DIRECTOR

**Direct line:** (07) 3858 8820

**Mobile:** 0414 23 35 75

**Email:** josephine@dixonjohnston.com.au

Twelve months ago we were expectant of a "feather-soft landing" in Brisbane's quality residential sector as the wider real estate market experienced a post-boom correction. Instead, the exclusive river market has taken flight, soaring to even greater heights.

Each year at this time, we look at the progressive tally of river precinct sales, comparing it to market performance in the corresponding period of the previous year. The 2007 result has shown a dramatic surge in river property sales activity, exceeding even the more optimistic market predictions.

The number of sales recorded has lifted by 62.2 per cent, leading to an even more impressive 67.4 per cent increase in total sales value.

A total of 73 Brisbane riverfront and riverside residential properties worth

almost \$187.6 million (houses, land and development sites) changed hands in the eight months to the end of August.

In 2006, the tally by mid September was 45 properties worth just over \$112 million.

Riverfront homes and land are in such demand and in such short supply that prices climb ever upward. In 2003, at the height of the latest official real estate boom, the average price for an absolute riverfront house was \$1.89 million. By mid 2006, it had risen to \$2.54 million.

This year, the average sale price of a riverfront home has lifted a further 19.3 per cent.

As at the end of August, the average price has overtaken the \$3 million mark, at \$3,031,106.

## 2007 Snapshot

Here is a comprehensive breakdown of the river precinct sales recorded from January 1 - August 31, 2007:

Property	Location	Number sold	Total Value
Houses	Absolute Riverfront	33	\$100.027 million
	Riverside	22	\$36.602 million
Land	Absolute Riverfront	10	\$28.930 million
	Riverside	5	\$6.570 million
Sites	Absolute Riverfront	1	\$6.050 million
	Riverside	2	\$9.420 million
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>All River</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>\$187.599 million</b>

Note: 'riverside' property is that separated from the river by no more than a road or parkland.



Queensland continues to benefit from high interstate migration, strong executive salary growth and capital inflows due to the sustained commodities boom. These key drivers are underpinned by a broad, solidly-performing economy and enormous lifestyle appeal.

Even the first of two expected interest rate rises this year and the extended electioneering in the lead-up to the Federal poll seem to be having little or no effect on Southeast Queensland's quality property market.

While the fundamentals remain so strong, most particularly in the river market characterised by very limited inventory and consistently high demand, the momentum will remain.

Recent jitters in share markets might contribute even more impetus to the property market.

## Landmarks

A review of sales to date this year reveals landmark outcomes that illustrate the current market confidence and are worthy of individual comment.

In June, we had the privilege to auction an unassuming fibro house in Pixley Street, Kangaroo Point. It was an unremarkable house, to say the least. What was remarkable was the riverfront position, stunning city view and high rise zoning. The resultant under-the-hammer sale set a record per m<sup>2</sup> price for inner Brisbane. The 563m<sup>2</sup> site sale of \$3.42 million equates to \$6,075 per m<sup>2</sup>.

Within weeks of that, the market was further tested by a large riverfront holding on three lots (2479m<sup>2</sup>) in Longman Terrace, Chelmer. It brought more than \$5 million, at auction, setting a new record price for the suburb. In Indooroopilly, a new

\$6 million-plus benchmark was set with the sale of a magnificent 900m<sup>2</sup> residence on more than 6000 square metres of riverfront land in Jilba Street.

New Farm saw a similar figure paid for a smaller home on a very much smaller river block (688m<sup>2</sup>) in Julius Street. Unique features include the appeal of the Kevin Hayes-designed house and the property's wide 33-metre frontage. Again, breathtaking city views commanded a premium.

Finally, the sale of Brisbane's historic Rhyndarra in Riverview Place, Yeronga, must be acknowledged. This grand heritage-listed 1889 property designed by prominent 19th century architect, Andrea Stombuco, is now a private home, but was once a Salvation Army home for orphaned girls and a military hospital. This sale achieved more than \$3 million.



Pixley Street



Longman Terrace

*“Yeronga is still significantly undervalued and a Bulimba-style surge of capital growth is just around the bend.”*



### Yeronga's year

Last year we tipped Yeronga as a rising star, noting that in the first eight months of 2006, it had attracted nine river sales totalling over \$17.5 million. Star, it did!

In 2007, Yeronga has more than doubled its previous best – recording nine absolute riverfront and three riverside sales totalling \$35.738 million.

That makes it by far the most active river property hot spot in Brisbane. Savvy market

watchers will pick up on some key indicators of growth in what was for many years a tucked-away, much overlooked river suburb.

Just 4km from the CBD, this little gem is now being discovered.

The opening of the Eleanor Schonell Bridge has put it within minutes of all the facilities at Queensland Uni in St Lucia. The new international tennis centre in neighbouring Tennyson will provide a further boost.

Among this year's tally are five absolute riverfront houses on Brisbane Corso and

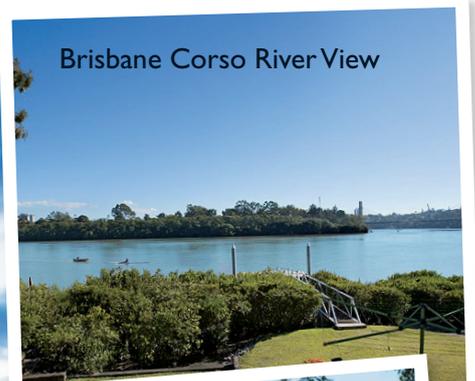
three riverside houses in Ormadale Road. One absolute riverfront home in Ormadale Road achieved \$5.7 million.

Yeronga is still significantly undervalued and a Bulimba-style surge of capital growth is just around the bend. It would seem restaurateur, Matt Harvey, one of the first to open in the Valley's now legendary James Street, shares these sentiments. He has put his foot on a new bistro and bar in Yeronga. Has he picked another winner?... we think so!

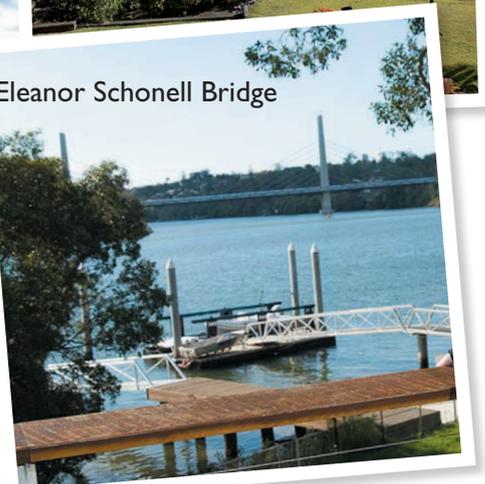
Rhyndarra



Brisbane Corso River View



Eleanor Schonell Bridge



## TOP 10



Here's my pick of noteworthy sales recorded in the first eight months of 2007

Suburb	Location	Description	Price indication
Bellbowrie	Lather Road	Contemporary absolute riverfront home on 18,080m <sup>2</sup> (4.5 acres) – record price for a riverfront home in Bellbowrie.	\$3.2 million
Chelmer	Longman Terrace	Stately family home on 2,479m <sup>2</sup> (3 lots) – record price for a riverfront home in Chelmer.	\$5.16 million
East Brisbane	Laidlaw Parade	3 individual sales, one achieving the highest price per square metre for riverfront land in Brisbane.	\$10 million +
Indooroopilly	Jilba Street	Contemporary absolute riverfront home on 6000m <sup>2</sup> (1.5 acres) – record price for a riverfront home in Indooroopilly.	\$6.1 million
Kangaroo Point	Pixley Street	Original home on magnificent 563m <sup>2</sup> river site – record price for a riverside home and highest price per sqm for land in Kangaroo Point.	\$3.42 million
New Farm	Julius Street	Absolute riverfront home on 688m <sup>2</sup> .	\$6 million
St Lucia	Austral Street	1171m <sup>2</sup> absolute riverfront site – record for riverfront land in St Lucia.	\$6.05 million
Sherwood	Woodberry Avenue	Absolute riverfront home, tennis court, 3,490m <sup>2</sup> (subdivision potential) – price record for riverfront home in Sherwood.	\$3.8 million
Westlake	Westlake Drive	Modern riverside home, tennis court, 2,244m <sup>2</sup> – riverside record in Westlake.	\$2.2 million
Yeronga	Ormadale Road	Absolute riverfront home, 1,400m <sup>2</sup> – riverfront record in Yeronga.	\$5.7 million





*“There is nothing – absolute nothing – half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats.”*

So said the Rat to the Mole in Kenneth Grahame’s 1908 classic, *The Wind in the Willows*. Generations of Brisbane residents have clearly shared the Rat’s sentiment.



# Down to the river in boats

*Events such as the annual Riverfestival remind everyone of the beauty and value of the Brisbane River. But there are many who need no such reminder – people who are drawn to the river weekly, even daily, to dip an oar or skim along her surface.*

You cannot get much closer to the river than to paddle it by canoe or kayak, or to scoot across it in a skiff on a brisk breeze. These activities have been part of Brisbane’s river life for generations. The visions they create – of a river reach festooned in colourful sails, or of serene strength as oars pull as one to propel craft silently along – are part of this city’s identity.

The resurrection of a traditional river ritual, the rowing regatta, is another reminder of the simple pleasures of “messing about in boats”. Toowong Rowing Club’s *Head of the Brisbane* (October 7, 2007) starting downstream from the William Jolly and ending near the Eleanor Schonell Bridge, follows the same route the Kings Cup regattas took in the ‘50s and ‘60s.

A resurgence of interest in traditional boating pursuits, whether for fun, fitness or sporting competition, reminds us of the pleasures and thrills to be had without need for noisy engines and breakneck speed.

Brisbane’s proud history of boating is continued today by many clubs, including several that have been the mainstay of river recreation for more than a century.

If you want to rekindle your love for watersports, learn a new skill or simply discover the joys of getting up close and personal with the Brisbane River, check out one of the many clubs that line its banks.

*You need no better excuse than this view of the river from our friend the Rat: “Whether in winter or summer, spring or autumn, it’s always got its fun and its excitements”*

## Rowing/Canoeing

**Brisbane & GPS Rowing Club (West End)**  
[www.brisbanegpsrowing.com.au](http://www.brisbanegpsrowing.com.au)

**Brisbane Canoeing Inc. (Graceville)**  
[www.brisbane.canoe.org.au](http://www.brisbane.canoe.org.au)

**Brisbane Outrigger Canoe Club (Bulimba)**  
[www.brisbaneoutrigger.com](http://www.brisbaneoutrigger.com)

**Centenary Canoeing and Rowing (Riverhills)**  
[www.centenary.canoe.org.au](http://www.centenary.canoe.org.au)

**Centenary Rowing Club (Jindalee)**  
[www.ccrcc.com.au](http://www.ccrcc.com.au)

**Commercial Rowing Club (West End)**  
[www.commercialrowing.com](http://www.commercialrowing.com)

**Queensland Canoeing (Graceville)**  
[www.canoeqld.org.au](http://www.canoeqld.org.au)

**Rowing Queensland (West End)**  
[www.rowingqld.asn.au](http://www.rowingqld.asn.au)

**Tattersall’s Rowing Club (Fairfield)**  
[www.tattersallsclub.com/rowing](http://www.tattersallsclub.com/rowing)

**Toowong Rowing Club (St Lucia)**  
[www.toowongrowing.com](http://www.toowongrowing.com)

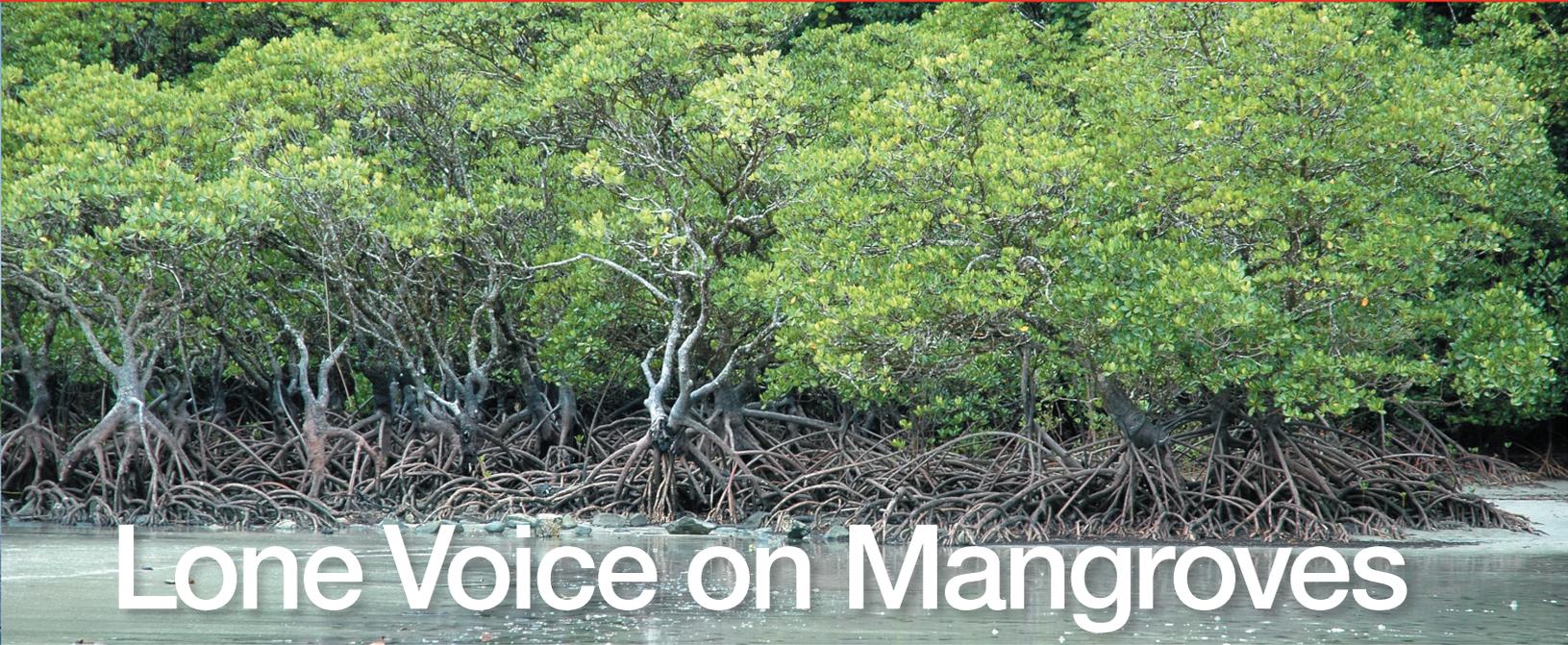
**University of Qld Boat Club (St Lucia)**  
[www.uqbc.org.au](http://www.uqbc.org.au)

## Sailing

**Oxley Sailing Club (Chelmer)**  
<http://oxleysc.googlepages.com>

**South Brisbane Sailing Club (West End)**  
[www.sbsc.org.au](http://www.sbsc.org.au)

**Trailer Sailer Club of Qld Inc. (Bulimba)**  
[www.tscq.org.au](http://www.tscq.org.au)



# Lone Voice on Mangroves

**Congratulations Ronan Lee MP, Member for Indooroopilly. You are the only one among 13 state politicians and 11 Brisbane City councillors we wrote to on the mangrove issue who was prepared to unequivocally state your support for permissible mangrove trimming.**

Last year, we surveyed riverfront residents seeking opinion on mangrove proliferation and management. A massive 98% of respondents favoured selective trimming of upstream saltwater mangroves, provided no environmental harm would be caused. In particular, they want research done to ascertain, once and for all, whether trimming would be harmful or not.

Survey results were sent to every elected representative whose constituency is on the river, seeking a response. Ronan Lee was the lone voice of reason. He wrote: "I agree that there is a need to allow folk to trim mangroves and I am happy to begin work on changing this policy." No buck-passing, just a straight-forward statement of his position. Refreshing.

In contrast, answers from other MPs, councillors and bureaucrats ranged from non-committal to downright critical. Most simply passed the buck (though not all knew who to pass it to!).

Then Premier and Member for Brisbane Central, Peter Beattie, and Simon Finn (Yeerongpilly MP) expressed no opinion, referring our letter to the Minister responsible, Tim Mulherin (Primary Industries & Fisheries). We had already written to Mr Mulherin. Lord Mayor Campbell Newman also gave no view and passed the matter on to DPI & F.

Mr Mulherin pointedly noted our survey "canvassed a select sample of riverfront owners" advising that "the DPI & F's custodian role extends to protection and management of mangroves on behalf of the whole community." Further, he directed General Manager of Fisheries and Aquaculture Industry Development, Ian Yarroll, to answer our letter.

Mr Yarroll's long response was more critical and defensive than informative or consultative. He opened by describing our initiative as a survey "to solicit the views of a select group of waterfront residents on the community mangrove resources adjacent to their properties...".

***"there is a need to allow folk to trim mangroves and I am happy to begin work on changing this policy"***

Mr Yarroll acknowledged "enhanced tidal penetration, now > 65 kilometres, leading to mangrove colonisation further upstream." But this was beneficial, he said, because it offsets mangrove loss in other areas. He closed by implying our survey was not "meaningful" because it did not cover a "representative sample from all users of the Brisbane River."

We never claimed our survey did anything other than canvas the views of riverfront residents. We clearly stated it was an indication of the views of people whose properties are directly impacted by mangroves. Are riverfront residents' opinions not of value?

Responses from Premier (then Deputy) Anna Bligh (South Brisbane), Deputy Premier (then Transport Minister) Paul Lucas (Lytton) and former Local Government Minister, now Treasurer, Andrew Fraser (Mt Coot-tha) informed us (incorrectly) the issue was the responsibility of the Environment Minister.

Deputy Mayor and Central Ward Councillor, David Hinchliffe, said he could "see both sides," i.e. that mangroves had apparently encroached up river due to human intervention, but that they also perform important stabilisation and environmental functions.

He was "prepared to see the science and take the advice of experts," but reminded us it was "a State, not Council responsibility." Cr Judy Magub (Toowong Ward, Shadow Environment spokesperson) said: "I am very interested in the issue, but advise that this is entirely a State Government matter."

Cr Helen Abrahams (Dutton Park Ward, Chair Environment Committee) went to the trouble of investigating BCC's role. After receiving advice from council officers, she concluded: "I am sorry, but there appears little support where (sic) Council to assist your campaign."

Her advice noted council officers were: "... aware of some small scale research being undertaken on the responses of mangroves to pruning, to assess the possibility of using such techniques as an alternative to mangrove removal for essential infrastructure projects. There have been no results to date of such trials, nor has this research been given a high priority by Council or DPI & F"

*Note: If you would like full copies of letters from MPs, Councillors and public servants on the mangrove issue, please contact my office.*

# CLEAN SWEEP OF THE RIVER

... waterborne waste busters



*Plastics and packaging, fast food and snack wrappers – the flotsam and jetsam of everyday life – find their way into our waterways. There it might stay, floating on the tide, fringing our foreshores, if not for the Healthy Waterways Clean Up programme.*

These days the Clean Up is run by the SEQ Healthy Waterways Partnership, a collaboration that sees governments, industry, research institutions, traditional owners and the community working together to improve the health of waterways and catchments throughout Southeast Queensland.

But the waterway warriors who actually get down and dirty, waging war on waterborne waste, are from Maritime Care, an organisation contracted to do the clean-up work. If it hadn't been for one man's love of the Brisbane River, Maritime Care may never have existed.

A decade ago, former council vegetation control officer, John Hinds, should have been relaxing, enjoying his retirement. But, while riding our CityCats, he would hear tourists comment on rubbish in the river. He didn't just get mad, he got motivated, and launched a crusade to clean up the river.

It took countless meetings with bureaucrats and mountains of paperwork, but John Hinds was determined to make a difference. Finally, the Government agreed something had to be done. But John's idea of mobilising a community action group wasn't feasible. For the project to be funded, he literally had to form a business and meet workplace health and safety standards.

That was 1999. Now Maritime Care has a fleet of boats and is contracted to clean up not only the Brisbane River, but the Bremer River and several Logan and Gold Coast waterways. The Healthy Waterways Clean Up crews have become a familiar site in their bright blue boats.

Sadly, they collect debris at the staggering rate of more 10,000 items a month. That's over a million items of rubbish since it all started. Plastics are most common, but there is the occasional wheelie bin, shopping trolley,

fridge, washing machine or car body, more than a few chairs and the odd party keg.

These waste warriors make a huge difference, not just by cleaning up the river, but by being visible, pricking people's consciences. And, on top of beating littoral litter, Maritime Care is a monitoring and reporting agency, keeping detailed logs that pinpoint trash trouble spots and hazardous waste. Authorities are informed of silt from building sites, dangers to navigation and pest plants.

They also assist with community education by attending local events and participating in school programmes. Find out more about the range of opportunities for community groups, individuals, schools and businesses to get involved in the Clean Up, revegetation, water quality monitoring and a host of other initiatives at: [www.healthywaterways.org](http://www.healthywaterways.org)



## The Final Word

2007 Capital Growth - a hard act to follow...? Or is it?

The unprecedented growth we have witnessed on the river in recent times may well be just the tip of the iceberg.

With individual waterfront sales in Sydney and now Perth pushing the magic \$50 million mark, Brisbane still appears remarkably affordable by comparison, particularly with predictions of a further million people coming to Southeast Queensland over the next 20 years.