

We'll all be renters

By BRONWEN GORA

NSW'S dire housing shortage has been exposed by figures revealing the State needs to build an extra 120 homes every week to keep up with population growth.

Each week NSW needs to find homes for more than 2000 extra people, yet only about 630 residences are built in that time.

A study of immigration and population figures by property analyst Residex has found 750 homes are required weekly to keep up with NSW's net population increase.

Those figures, multiplied over time, add up to sky-high property

prices and rents. Almost 86,000 people migrated to NSW from overseas in the year to September 2009, more than offsetting the 16,700 drop in population caused by interstate migration.

Natural population increase added a further 40,000.

Taking into account the average family size and the number of home-seekers, Residex said at least 39,000 new homes are needed in NSW each year.

Housing Industry Association figures show only 32,700 new dwellings were built last year. "The housing shortage in this State is dire," said Chris Freeman, NSW managing direc-

tor of MLG, one of the country's biggest project marketing groups.

"We're building far fewer dwellings in NSW than we were 20 years ago, and the population growth is two and a half times what it was then," he said.

"In 50 to 70 years, we really will be a society of renters."

Residex managing director John Edwards said most Sydneysiders would be renting by 2040.

"The children of the current generation, who've been looking for houses and have given up, will mostly be renters," he said. "And the generation that's being born now are unlikely to own their homes."

About 1000 homes a week were being built in 2002-03, when the economy was more robust, Housing Industry Association (HIA) senior economist Harley Dale said.

NSW faces a shortage of about 50,000 dwellings, with Sydney — including the Central Coast and southwest to Camden — 40,000 short, HIA figures show.

Mr Dale said housing shortages were a problem long before immigration became an issue.

"If NSW was getting land supply right, stopped taxing new building so heavily and got rid of planning delays, there'd be no issue," he said.

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