

Rentals hit paydirt

\$2000 a week for a run-down weatherboard

Ashlee Mullany

RUN-DOWN weatherboard and fibro homes in the Pilbara are fetching \$2000 a week – six times the cost of similar rentals in Perth.

Even the experts were astounded by the costs when *The Sunday Times* blind-tested three property managers to get their price tags for the homes.

Faye Nurse, from Realty Executives, said a four-bedroom, two-bathroom home in Port Hedland that leased for \$2000 would be lucky to attract \$330 a week in Morley.

"I have been in real estate 27 years and the supply-and-demand term I understand, but \$2000 for such basic accommodation is amazing," Ms Nurse said.

A two-bedroom, one-bathroom unit in Port Hedland is advertised for \$1200 a week, but the same rental in Morley would cost only \$250, according to a survey of agents.

Workers are paying up to 500 per cent more to live in remote mining towns than in an average Perth suburb, with median rents hitting \$1800 in Port Hedland.

A quarterly snapshot of the Pilbara

market paints a picture of record rents and plummeting house stocks. The Pilbara Development Commission survey showed two-bedroom properties leased for up to \$2300 a week and four-bedroom properties for up to \$3500 in the past quarter.

It was a similar story in South Hedland and Karratha, where few homes leased for less than \$1000.

The latest data has sparked a renewed push for land releases from the Real Estate Institute of WA.

REIWA president Alan Bourke said the State Government needed to fast-track its plans for regional land

releases and high-density living to alleviate pressure on prices, but a solution would be years away.

Opposition housing spokesman Mark McGowan said the Liberal-National Government had failed to keep its promise of lowering living costs in the Pilbara.

Since 2006 the median cost of renting a house in the Pilbara has risen 327 per cent – more than anywhere in Australia.

Meanwhile, soaring Perth rents are pushing low-income workers over the poverty line, with families and singles now paying well over 30

per cent of their incomes on housing. The latest national snapshot of rental affordability found the Perth market to be among the most exorbitant in the country.

To rent a standard three-bedroom house in the metropolitan area, a family of four earning \$900 a week would fork out 40 per cent of their income, according to the Private Rental Affordability Bulletin.

The Tenants Union of Victoria report showed Perth's singles on government benefits and pensioners were doing it the toughest, paying more than two-thirds of their income in rent.

Picture: Getty Images

RED EARTH RENTAL SLUG



2x1 unit
Grant Place, Port Hedland

"This looks quite run down and pretty average compared to a well-maintained unit I just leased in Dianella for \$280."

Michelle Dawson, Roy Western, Morley



4x2 house
Pilkington Street, Port Hedland

"Because it's of a fibro construction, it would be one of the last properties people in Morley would consider renting."

Faye Nurse, Realty Executives Morley



3x1 house
Brodie Crescent, South Hedland

"I was surprised it was at \$1300 because it was so run down. I think I would struggle to lease it in Morley."

Amanda Harris at C21 Max Comben

