

Sales pitch levels off

Firmer ground for housing sales is around the corner, writes **Susan Cowen**

STABILITY returns to Melbourne's property market this weekend. REIV boss Enzo Raimondo says the REIV expects clearance rates to hold firm, despite a reduction in auction stock levels.

"The REIV is expecting 590 auctions this weekend," Raimondo says.

"That is more stable compared with the highs experienced during the past two weeks."

Despite there being fewer properties up for auction this weekend, Raimondo says 590 auctions are still twice as many as this time last year and 30 per cent more than the corresponding weekend in 2008.

He says clearance rates are likely to stay constant — at around 65 per cent — for the remaining winter months.

"A rise (in auction numbers) is anticipated when the spring selling season begins."

Buyer advocate Sam Spemat says the current 65 per cent clearance rate is the result of public uncertainty towards the Government and a lack of high-quality property stock.

"The auction clearance rate continues to be in a bit of a rut," Spemat says.

"This is caused by several factors, but the main reasons are lack of high-quality properties and uncertainty in the Government, with both state and federal elections looming."

He says that as the dust settles on the political front, buyer confidence will gradually return to the market.

"More and more properties are being passed in at the moment because not a lot of high-quality stock is around."

"Houses passing in becomes a problem when combined with decreased consumer confidence, in this case because of governmental uncertainty."

"Once we receive clarification on the likely economic decisions of the Federal Government's new leader, we will see restored confidence in the property market and subsequent clearance-rate increases."

MARKET ON THE RISE



SOLD
\$402,000
3/21 Lowe Ave, Altona
Advertised \$350,000 - \$380,000



SOLD
\$1.37m
46 Oban St, South Yarra
Advertised \$1.2m - \$1.3m



SOLD
\$445,000
13/28 Wattle Rd, Hawthorn
Advertised \$380,000 - \$420,000



SOLD
\$670,000
41 Stanley Ave, Mount Waverley
Advertised \$500,000 - \$550,000