



Grants spark interest



The Rudd Rescue

DAVID CAMPBELL

BIG boosts to first-home buyer grants as part of Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's \$10.4 billion rescue package for the struggling economy sparked a mixed reaction in the Macarthur region property market.

Under the new scheme, which runs until the end of June, first-home buyer grants will double to \$14,000 for existing homes and treble to \$21,000 for new homes.

The Cornish Group, developer of Camden's new Spring Farm estate, reported "massive" interest after the grants were announced.

Of the 12 deposits lodged for Spring Farm house and land packages at the weekend, eight were from first-home buyers.

Cornish Group sales manager

Colin Lake said people had been quick to respond to the grants.

"We've had an instant response since the change, with an increase in people coming into our offices looking to buy," he said.

"There's been quite a few young men coming in to buy properties, which is a very good sign for the market because normally they are the ones that sit back and wait."

Ingleburn Gardens developer – Monarch Investments Group's chief executive officer Peter Icklow said the government needed to do more to help home buyers. "Everything helps but when a new house and land has around \$150,000 in taxes these measures only tinker at the edges," he said.

Combined Real Estate Camden

manager Greg Copeland said the new grants could damage the rental market.

"I think the new grants will help but I don't think they go far enough," he said.

"To get the first-home buyers grant you actually need to live in the property you're buying which will turf out many renters.

"If the government changes it so you don't have to live in the property then tenants can go in and that would be better."

Federal Werriwa Labor MP Chris Hayes said the new grants were all about assisting those who needed it. "This strategy goes to the heart of the global financial crisis by strengthening our economy," he said.