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MORE TERRITORIANS INVESTING IN HOMES

More Territorians are continuing to take out housing finance at a faster rate than anywhere else in Australia, Treasurer Syd Stirling said today.

Mr Stirling said in 2004, the number of Territory owner-occupier housing finance commitments increased by 24%. The Territory was the only Australian jurisdiction to record an increase in 2004.

The corresponding value of Territory commitments increased by more than 49% - going from $663 million in the year to December 2003 to $989 million in the year to December 2004.

In the month of December, the number of housing finance approvals grew by 1.2% in trend terms, rising to 578.

Owner-occupied finance includes finance for the purchase of established dwellings, as well as the purchase and construction of new dwellings.

“The Territory housing market is going ahead at a great rate, which is a sign of a strong economy and growing consumer confidence,” Mr Stirling said.

“Excitingly, much of the activity in the market can be attributed to first home owners. The number of housing finance commitments for first home buyers increased by 48.9% in 2004, compared to a fall of 6.1% nationally.

“The significant increase in first home ownership can be largely attributed to the Government’s revamped HomeNorth scheme which has made the dream of owning a home a reality for many Territorians.

“As well as improvements to HomeNorth, Government has also reduced stamp duty for first home owners, as well as Territorians buying a principal place of residence.

“It’s clear that the Territory Government’s efforts to make home ownership more affordable for all Territorians are having a positive impact.

“Those positive effects are flowing through to the construction and real estate industries and the wider economy, helping to keep the Territory moving ahead.”

Contact: Mary Fall  0401 119 770