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SOLID GROWTH IN BUILDING APPROVALS

Activity in the Territory’s housing sector continues to outstrip the rest of Australia, with the number of Territory residential building approvals rising 34.8% in 2004, compared to a national decline of 6.4%, Treasurer Syd Stirling said today.

According to the ABS, the number of Territory residential building approvals in 2004 was 1345, compared to 998 the previous year.

The corresponding value of these approvals rose by 41.3% to $307.7 million.

“These figures are great news for the real estate industry, the construction sector, contractors and small businesses throughout the Territory who are benefiting from this activity in the housing market,” Mr Stirling said.

“It is a further sign of the Territory’s strengthening economy, along with record low vacancy rates for houses and units; significant increases in home owner/occupier finance; and increased house sales.”

Mr Stirling said non-residential building approvals, including offices, retail outlets and hotels, also rose significantly in 2004, with the value of these approvals up by 69.5%. Australia-wide, they were down in value by 1.1%.

In the Territory the total value of building approvals, both residential and non-residential, went up by more than 50%, going from $355 million in 2003 to $540 million in 2004.

“The level of activity currently in the real estate and housing markets has exceeded all expectations,” Mr Stirling said.

“Not only is this good news for the real estate industry, it also means more money in the economy and more work for builders, contractors and small business people.

“Territory Government stamp duty incentives, as well as the recently revamped HomeNorth scheme, have helped to support the recovery of the housing market in the Territory over the past two years.

“Government will continue to provide assistance to homebuyers to encourage more Territorians to invest in their own homes and keep the Territory moving ahead.”

Contact: Mary Fall  0401 119 770