

SE Domain
HD **Doncaster rising**
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WC 1,372 words
PD 1 November 2014
SN The Age
SC AGEE
ED First
PG 8
LA English
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Once the home of orchards and rural living, Doncaster is quickly gaining a reputation for **apartment** living that is superior to the small apartments available in the CBD.

Doncaster Hill is becoming a beacon for downsizers from the neighbouring eastern suburbs which are increasingly closed off to high-rise developers under new planning restrictions. **Apartment** sales in Doncaster have benefited from a perceived oversupply of CBD apartments that are often criticised for being too small.

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Driven by the Manningham City Council's strategy to create 5000 apartments over the next 15 years, developments on Doncaster Hill take advantage of panoramic views of the city and the proximity to Westfield Doncaster.

Domain **Group** senior economist Dr Andrew Wilson says downsizers from Hawthorn, Camberwell and Balwyn were more inclined to move further out east.

"I think Doncaster has been particularly popular because it is betwixt and between the higher-priced inner east and the more moderately priced outer east," Wilson says. "That's the beauty of Doncaster as there just aren't a lot of properties in those inner-eastern suburbs for downsizers.

"There are more restrictions now from Boroondara and Stonnington on medium-density development, so that's going to make it even more of a task to find **property**, which I think will push more growth into Manningham and particularly into Doncaster."

The median price for units in Doncaster is \$498,000, while the house median has climbed to \$860,000, according to the Domain **Group**. Dominated by fruit orchards until the 1970s, Doncaster first attracted a strong Italian and Greek population and now has a large **Chinese** population.

"If you understand feng shui, Doncaster is the highest suburban point in Melbourne and it's viewed by the **Chinese** as a good luck spot," says Paul Kounnas, the director of Hudson Bond Real **Estate** in Doncaster.

The Eastern Golf Course alongside Westfield is moving to Yering, making way for a \$1 billion Mirvac community on the 47-hectare **site** featuring up to 800 houses and apartments.

"The **apartment** market in Doncaster has strengthened over the past year with greater community acceptance towards this style of living and there is also a trend towards larger two and three-bedroom apartments," Manningham council chief executive Leigh Harrison said.

The council is working with developers to encourage innovative design and features such as green roofs and walls and shared entertainment areas.

The Magnolia development by Stanleyfield, in Hepburn Road, is set to become the suburb's tallest building at 14 levels. It features larger two and three-bedroom apartments.

Director of project marketing for Marshall White, Leonard Teplin, says demand from downsizers from the eastern suburbs would continue to drive prosperity in Doncaster.

"When you start looking at all the new-car dealerships that are popping up there and all the new homes that are being built and the fact you are now seeing people spend \$3 million to \$5 million on family homes in Doncaster, it shows you that it has certainly become a very established suburb," he says.

WHAT DONCASTER HAS TO OFFER

- Downsizers looking for larger two and three-bedroom apartments get much more space for their money at Doncaster than in the CBD or inner city.
- Many of the new developments are springing up within walking distance of the massive Westfield Doncaster Shopping Centre.
- At a height of 120 metres, Doncaster Hill has spectacular panoramic views over the inner-eastern suburbs to the city skyline.
- Ruffey Lake **Park** at Doncaster was a former orchard that is now a green oasis, with native bushland around the Ruffey Creek and some remaining fruit trees from its orchard heritage.
- Fourteen kilometres from the CBD, Doncaster has easy access to the Eastern Freeway, although public transport is limited, with no trains or trams. There is a **Park** and Ride bus service from Doncaster Road.
- Under the traditional **Chinese** principles of feng shui, Doncaster Hill's elevation is considered to be lucky.

CASE STUDY

SUBURBAN GROWTH A STRONGER PROSPECT

Concern about an oversupply of apartments in the CBD prompted Effie Zhang to look further afield for an **apartment** in a suburb with strong growth.

Zhang, an accountant, and her partner, decided on a three-bedroom **apartment** to live in at the Magnolia development on Doncaster Hill and she's confident it will prove to be a strong investment for the future.

"I have some friends and relatives who bought apartments in the city and the potential increase of price is terrible so I was worried about that, which is why I chose this area," she said.

"In this building, there are not many one-bedrooms and you've got three bedrooms, which is good news because not all the occupiers are investors and I want to live with owners, not tenants."

The spaciousness of the apartments and the opulence of the lobby convinced her to sign on the dotted line.

"I chose this **apartment** because there is a big open area in the kitchen and a large benchtop for when I cook, and the living room is big enough for a dining table for six or eight," she said.

"The building entrance is like the Crown Casino design and not cheap like other apartments so if I bring my friends here, they are like 'oh wow'."

COVER **PROPERTY**

MAGNOLIA, 20-24 Hepburn Road, Doncaster

PRICE GUIDE: \$476,000-\$3.68 million

The developer of what will become Doncaster's tallest building believes that size matters when it comes to apartments and has opted not to include any one-bedroom apartments in the project.

The 179-**apartment** Magnolia development by Stanleyfield at 20-24 Hepburn Road, Doncaster, was designed by CHT Architects with landscaping by renowned Melbourne garden designer Jack Merlo.

Perched on a **residential** street on Doncaster Hill with spectacular views of the city, the project, over 14 levels, will have 102 two-bedroom apartments, 76 three-bedroom apartments and a four-bedroom penthouse.

The two-bedroom apartments, from 60 to 85 square metres, are selling for \$476,000 to \$645,000, including a car **park** and storage.

Three-bedroom apartments, from 90 to 328 square metres, are selling for \$749,000 to \$1.18 million, with two car spaces and storage. The penthouse is \$3.68 million. There are 96 apartments remaining.

Marshall White director of project marketing Leonard Teplin said the kitchens rivalled those found in bigger family homes, and the fixtures and fittings of luxury Toorak homes had been used as a template.

"The developer has seen what the top end of town put in their homes and apartments and has basically taken that out to Doncaster, where it's almost unheard of," he said.

Many of the early buyers were choosing the spacious apartments on Doncaster Hill as a backlash against small apartments in the CBD, he said.

Magnolia's communal facilities include a stone lobby with fireplace, a rooftop garden and a second outdoor retreat on another level.

The Magnolia display suite on **site** is open Thurs 5pm-7pm and Sat-Sun 11am-3pm.

DONCASTER

101 TRAM ROAD

\$298,000-\$1 million

Those who shop till they drop will be able to stumble home across the street from Westfield Doncaster to the Panorama development. Designed by Peddle Thorp architects, the 210-**apartment** building on 12 levels has one, two and three-bedroom apartments with 70 per cent **sold**. Agent Hudson Bond Real **Estate**, 9840 7700

DONCASTER

5 SOVEREIGN POINT COURT

\$499,000-

\$3.5 million

Another project opposite Westfield Doncaster is the Imperial, designed by Buchan **Group**, with 96 apartments over 10 levels. All apartments come with integrated technology that allows residents to control the lighting and entertainment from an iPad. There are eight two-bedroom apartments and one three-bedroom **apartment** left for **sale**. Agent ASX **Property**, 8680 4888

DONCASTER

8 HEPBURN ROAD

\$414,000-\$999,000

Half of the 67 apartments in one to three-bedroom sizes are still on the market in this five-level development designed by Artisan Architects. Perched on Doncaster Hill, 8 Hepburn Road offers magnificent views of the city and is walking distance from Westfield Doncaster. Agent Knight Frank Marketing, 0413 508 866

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AN Document AGEE000020141031eab10006q