

SE News  
HD **EXTREME drought may be gripping much of Queensland a**  
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EXTREME drought may be gripping much of Queensland and NSW, but there are encouraging signs emerging from the rural **property** market.

For the first time since 2009 Ray White Rural (RWR) has topped \$1 billion in rural **property** sales, driven in large part by resurging interest in irrigation properties in NSW.

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RWR chairman Paul White will tell

the annual RWR conference in Coolumb, Queensland, on Friday that 2221 rural properties were **sold** through the RWR system in 2013.

"What we are noticing is that there is a renewed confidence, particularly coming out of the Sydney investment market that is flowing into **property** interest particularly in country NSW," Mr White said.

"In recent years we have often seen only one or two buyers in the auction room. Now a lot of interest is being generated and we are seeing six or seven potential buyers come forward. Confidence certainly appears to be improving."

Queensland remained relatively flat because of extreme drought conditions in many areas and the subsequent impact on the buoyancy of the cattle industry.

He said receiver sales were primarily affecting cattle properties in Queensland, which had been **purchased** during the boom prior to the global financial crisis. NSW was less affected.

Mr White will also tell the annual RWR conference of two major appointments to the **company's** corporate ranks.

Firstly, Tenterfield-based Bruce Birch has taken on the role of Ray White Rural livestock coordinator.

Secondly, marketing expert Mark McBarron has taken on a role as business development executive based in Sydney to further develop RWR's rural **property** business.

Mr Birch's new role followed the tragic death of popular RWR identity Paul 'Charlie' Maher who was killed in an aircraft crash at Roma in March last year.

His role will focus on growing RWR's livestock business and to support all of the RWR livestock offices in NSW and Queensland

"Bruce's expertise will be of great assistance to younger people to grow their livestock businesses under the Ray White Rural brand," Mr White said.

Mr McBarron had a long association with RWR while working with the agency Publicis Mojo and said he was excited at how RWR would further develop the NSW rural **property** market.

"I am certainly excited to be working to grow the business," Mr McBarron said.

Part of the growth is expected to come from **China**.

Ray White Rural is in the process of installing a '**China** desk' in its Sydney headquarters to handle rural and **commercial** business following from its new office in Beijing.

Mr White said RWR was focused on growth.

At present the network has 80 offices. By the end of 2014 he was expecting another 20 offices to be opened.

He also hinted RWR was interested in growing the brand in Western Australia where Ray White already had strong **commercial** and **residential** networks.

"The real strength of Ray White Rural is that its agents are part of the local community and part of a much wider community in which they do business," Mr White said.

"They live in the town, they shop in the same shops, live in the same weather conditions, their kids go to the same schools as their clients.

"Their life in the district and they don't get transferred out and, more importantly, they are always working to get the best prices for their clients."

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