

## 'Can-do' attitude puts city on top

Elizabeth Tilley

Brisbane has been catapulted onto the world stage as one of the hottest luxury property markets on the planet alongside Miami, Mumbai, and Abu Dhabi.

The Queensland capital has been singled out as one of the world's emerging global luxury hotspots in a new report by Knight Frank, which found it is one of only a handful of cities globally experiencing unprecedented luxury appeal among the mega-wealthy.

Top-end apartment values have smashed through their longstanding ceiling of \$9 million to more than \$15 million in just 12 months, as developers race to deliver ultra-luxury projects, according to Knight Frank's 20th edition of The Wealth Report.

Super-prime stock now exceeds \$48,000 per square metre — reflecting intense demand for turnkey, high-end apartments.

"Brisbane's rise is part of a wider story about Queensland's appeal to wealth — from its cities through to its coastal lifestyle markets," McGrath's head of international and private clients Adam Ross said.

"The city's emergence as a global luxury market has happened remarkably quickly.

"What we're seeing is the convergence of major infrastructure investment, a favourable planning environment and growing international awareness ahead of the Olympics, which is creating more supply and demand.

"There's a real can-do attitude in the city. You can get an 80-storey tower approved in less than a year. Anywhere else in Australia, that's simply not happening."

Luxury prices in Brisbane climbed 2.1 per cent over 2025, while the Gold Coast rose 2.8 per cent — with prestige homes above \$22.5m becoming increasingly common.

But buyers are getting less for their money, with US\$1 million now buying about five per cent less luxury property in Brisbane than it did five years ago, while the Gold Coast has seen buying power plunge 14 per cent.

The surge comes as Australia's wealth boom accelerates.

The number of ultra-high-net-worth individuals — those with a net worth of about \$42m — is forecast to jump almost 60 per cent over the next five years, while the billionaire population is set to surge 77 per cent by 2031.

Knight Frank Queensland managing director Justin Bond said Brisbane had all the fundamentals for long-term growth.

"In recent years Brisbane has been prioritised as an investment location for global capital, with the city's excellent growth prospects increasingly being acknowledged," Mr Bond said.

## The world's second-most common



# INSIDE THE COMMUNITY LIVING WITH PARKINSON'S



Joe Chalmers was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease over 15 years ago. His wife Carol Chalmers has become the co-ordinator of the Toowoomba Parkinson's disease Support Group.

Bella Munro

Kim Godfrey knows when the time comes, he wants to live out his final months in the comfort of his home, tending to his garden, and surrounded by family.

While Parkinson's disease won't kill him, it did change the trajectory of the remaining years of his life.

Parkinson's disease is the second-most common neurological condition in the world, yet still remains one of the least understood.

While everyone living with the disease suffers differently, the Toowoomba Parkinson's disease Support Group brings together those living with the condition, and beneath the surface the degenerative disease is far more than just shakes and tremors.

**A gradual loss of independence**

About 10 years ago, Kim started struggling with his balance and had issues swallowing, symptoms which were not uncommon for someone in their 80s or 90s.

But Kim was only in his mid-50s at the time.

"Things like just falling over randomly with no reason, it's just kind of scary," he said.

"One of the choking episodes happened when I was at dinner with a friend, and they thought I was having a heart attack because I couldn't breathe.

"After I was diagnosed, I had some explanations to some of these things."

He was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease about three and a half years ago and has since gone into early retirement and moved into a more accessible home.

"It was unsettling," he said.

"I think I was also going through those stages of loss and grief.

"My everyday function is now relying on other people, so it's hard."

Kim worked for the Depart-

ment of Child Safety and Youth Justice and had spent his career helping vulnerable children living in challenging households.

He said it was hard to step away from the job he loved, years earlier than he had planned, and his wife stepped away from her job to become his full-time carer.

**Hidden behind a mask**

Looking at her husband after decades of living together, Carol Chalmers was used to the lines that creased when he smiled, but something had changed.

"I just didn't know exactly what it was that made me feel that, but he's not the same Joe as he always was," she said.

When her husband was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease in 2009, Carol realised what she had noticed, was her husband slowly losing the expression in his face.

Hypomimia, also referred to as facial masking, is a common symptom of Parkinson's disease, where people struggle to move the muscles in their face, making it difficult to express emotions.

"I just thought of it (Parkinson's) as a disease where men, mainly, sort of shuffled when they walked and had a tremor in their hands," Carol said.

Joe started having issues walking, his writing became illegible, his voice became soft, and his thought processing slowed down.

"He was finding that the discussion was leaving him behind," she said.

"He would be ready to say something, but by the time his thought processes and his mouth and everything could co-ordinate together, the time for him to have said it had passed by.

"We started doing a bit of travel and making sure we had done the things that we wanted to do because we didn't know exactly how quickly the Parkinson's would advance or what the future would be like

# neurological condition still misunderstood



One day it might get me, but I'm not going to start looking for that day."

Gail Cope

Gail Cope, 72, was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease just months before her scheduled retirement in 2018. She tries to stay active in every way she can to manage the progressive neurodegenerative disorder. BELOW: After struggling with symptoms for the past 10 years, Kim Godfrey was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease in his early 60s, changing the direction of his early retirement. Pictures: Bella Munro



I just thought of it (Parkinson's) as a disease where men, mainly, sort of shuffled when they walked and had a tremor in their hands.

Carol Chalmers

"It was a bit of a shock and you go into this immediate 'why me?' and everything becomes blurred," she said. "When you've planned the retirement date two years prior and you're getting close

for us." After years of going to the Toowoomba PD Support Group with her husband, Carol stepped up to co-ordinate the group a few years ago. Carol said the community was growing in Toowoomba and at the past few group meetings they have had between 90 and 110 people come along. They also host dance classes to help with mobility, ping pong to work on co-ordination, and choir to reduce loss of voice. **Fear of the future** Walking into neurologist waiting rooms, Gail Cope looked around and saw all the ways her chronic condition could progress. She saw people's shaky

tremors, shuffling feet, hunched shoulders, and heard the whisper of hushed voices. For years, meeting other people with Parkinson's disease only reminded her of the incurable condition she lived with, but now it was a reminder of what they were still capable of. Now 72, Gail was diagnosed with Parkinson's about eight years ago. She said she started noticing her handwriting change, she had lost the strength in her arms and hands, and got a tremor in her index finger and thumb. Gail had planned her retirement two years in advance and had a date set in October 2018, but she was diagnosed in August the same year.

and then all of a sudden the diagnosis of Parkinson's is confirmed." Gail spent the last few years of her nursing career in management for a rehab program, and now found herself as the patient. "I was worried about my mobility and what that would look like in the coming years," she said. "In the rehab program we had a number of Parkinson's clients come through, so I was aware of what it could look like for me." **Heavy weight of the everyday** Kim said he had felt a real decline in his condition in just the past six months. "My walking's getting more stunted. My balance and co-ordination," he said. "A lot of the challenges of living with Parkinson's are not about the disease itself, but about what you've lost." As his Parkinson's progressed, Kim said he had a constant struggle of relying on others for help. "You lose control of yourself, and that's really hard," he said. "I'm really lucky I've got re-

ally good family support, really good support from my friends, really good government support, but still by the same token, I wish I didn't have Parkinson's." "I've been lucky to be diagnosed when I was, the diagnosis made all the difference in my world. I still wish I didn't have it though." Kim said there was so much more to living with Parkinson's that wasn't spoken about. "There are so many parts of my life that are impacted, like doing up shoelaces or going to the toilet," he said. "There's things I used to be able to do that I can't do anymore in terms of self care and toileting and showering." Kim said being involved in the support group and a Fitlab program called PD Warrior had made a huge difference to living with the disease. **Parkinson's doesn't have me** While the condition had brought on many challenges for Gail, she was determined to keep living her life as normal. Every Thursday she takes her 99-year-old mum grocery

shopping, she still lifts weights, and exercises most days. "I've got Parkinson's, Parkinson's doesn't have me," she said. "Yes, you can sit and focus on the chronic condition, or there's no cure for Parkinson's, but you've got to have a different mindset." "One day it might get me, but I'm not going to start looking for that day." Most days of the week, Gail does some form of exercise incorporating physical and cognitive activities, including weightlifting, boxing, hydrotherapy, and walking. Gail credited consistent exercise as the thing that helped her manage her symptoms the most. "Through my research I realised that exercise was non-negotiable, it had to happen every day," she said. "Parkinson's doesn't go on holidays." **Making peace with the path ahead** Carol said she used to look at other people with Parkinson's and hope her husband wouldn't experience that. "I would think Joe will never get like that ... that won't be as difficult for Joe surely," she said. "Then suddenly sort of 18 months later, I'd find myself in that situation with Joe." "We just take every day as it comes, and as things get worse and things obviously become more difficult, then we sit down and try to problem solve how we can make the best out of that situation," Carol said. "Certainly the last seven years, as more and more dopamine has been lost in the brain, it just very slowly deteriorates and becomes much more difficult." Carol said it was hard watching that deterioration over the years. "We just think to ourselves, well this is our path and we'll just make the most of it," she said. Kim said his life wasn't over by a long way, but living with a degenerative condition reminded him of his mortality. "There is life with Parkinson's, but it's not always going to be easy, in fact often it can be quite challenging," he said. "Focusing on the fact that I've had a really good life." "I've still got plenty in me, and certainly my family and friends make sure that I'm still getting the most out of life." Living at home with his wife, son, and daughter, Kim said he felt the weight of being a consideration in their plans. "I don't want to be a burden on my children," he said. "Certainly my wife would have liked to have done other things in her retirement." "My daughter and son deserved to be able to do more." Kim said there was government support for people who wished to die at home, and something he already planned to use. "If this is the house I'm living in when my time comes, I'd like to pass away here," he said. "If I've got gardens and plants around me, I'm happy."