

# Long hunt for home has a happy ending



**Handover:** (From left) Guildford residents Matthew Purkiss and his partner Terrie Lee received the keys to their new home in Guildford from Community Housing Limited managing director, Steve Bevington. An aerial view of Parramatta. Picture: Parramatta Council.

## New owner in charge

HOUSING Minister David Borger welcomed new legislation which he said would revolutionise the future of public housing in NSW.

Mr Borger said the Community Housing Bill would see ownership of federal stimulus-funded social housing worth almost \$2 billion, go to not-for-profit housing providers.

The transfer includes 90 per cent of the 6000 stimulus-funded homes and 500 homes already being managed by community housing providers.

"Ownership will give community housing providers a balance sheet providing an asset base that can be used to secure finance from banks for investment in new housing," Mr Borger said.

Community housing provides homes for people in need as well as households on moderate incomes whose housing needs cannot be met in the private rental market.

Mr Borger said a strong affordable housing market was essential for a strong economy.

By Alison Mills

WITH Sydney's median house price nudging the \$600,000 mark and affordable rental properties in short supply, it's little wonder couples like Matthew Purkiss and Terrie Lee struggled for more than six months before finding a place to call home.

Thanks to the intervention of an organisation called Community Housing Limited (CHL), which provides affordable and sustainable housing for people in need, the couple and their 17-month-old daughter recently moved into their new rental apartment in Guildford.

CHL tenants pay less than 75 per cent of the

"We were looking around western Sydney for over six months and no one would give us a go. We had no luck at all," Mr Purkiss said.

"We really needed to make a start in our lives and getting our housing arrangements stabilised on a low income has made an enormous difference.

"Since we moved into this new place we just love it. I'd like to be in a position one day to buy it from CHL."

Part of the couple's problem in securing accommodation was that Mr Purkiss was employed on a casual basis, although working almost full-time as a landscaper.

They came into contact with CHL through the

which Ms Lee had previously been a client.

Moving into their brand new two-bedroom apartment on Woodville Road was not only a significant improvement in the young family's quality of life, it also represented a milestone for CHL.

The property became the 2000th in CHL's portfolio, which has experienced dramatic growth from some 750 properties just three years ago.

The organisation's managing director, Steve Bevington, said major social housing stimulus funding from both the state and federal governments would ensure growth of community housing properties would continue to