



Goldminer and builder team up

BETH MUHLING

The rapid expansion of the Boddington Gold Mine 130km south-east of Perth has created a desperate need for more housing in the area.

The mine's expansion is expected to double the size of Boddington's population to 3000 over the next five years and the demand for housing has already put pressure on prices, with the median house price rising from \$110,000 to \$370,000 in the three years to December.

According to information from BGM, the project will include open-cut mining and construction of the infrastructure is under way. Production is expected to begin late this year or early next year and the mine had an expected life of 15 years.

During the production phase, there would be about 675 employees and BGM aimed to create local and regional development with employment, training and business opportunities for local people.

WA Country Builders and Boddington Gold Mine have teamed up to create an affordable housing development to help ease the pressure for rental and established housing in the area.

WA Country Builders general manager Ian Holloway said as the mine developed, the need for more housing was paramount.

"This new development will provide much-needed accommodation and alleviate some of the pressure," he said.

The homes would be built on 58 lots on 6ha of land provided by

BGM. BGM project director Tom McCulley said the joint venture partners, Newmont Mining Corporation and AngloGold Ashanti, were strongly committed to having as much of the workforce as possible living within a 50km radius of the mine.

The mine had owned the land for a number of years and the land initiative was a big step towards achieving that goal.

Mr Holloway said as WA's biggest regional home builder, WA Country Builders also had an ongoing commitment to provide affordable regional housing.

House-and-land packages at the new development, called Banksia Crescent, would be priced from \$360,000 to \$590,000. There would be a mix in density codes from R15 to R25 offering buyers a choice of home sizes.

Most would be four-bedroom, two-bathroom homes on 650sqm of land. Some smaller three-bedroom, two-bathroom cottage homes with minimal garden would be available because after long shifts at the mine, some workers would prefer not to have a big garden to look after.

There would also be five three-bedroom two-bathroom units in the development.

Mr Holloway said site works would start in the next four to six weeks and it was hoped building would start in nine months.

The use of pre-manufactured frames and trusses was expected to speed up building and construction time would be about 26 weeks.

Brick veneer would be among the construction styles and finishes used to create a modern look that was in tune with the environment.

He said they had picked up a trade base in the local area to work on the development.

"We are taking a micro-market attitude, employing local people to create a strongly local feel and ensure the greatest benefits are derived for the community," Mr Holloway said.

The reasons for using tradespeople based in the region were twofold. Not only had it been difficult to attract builders to the rural project but WA Country Builders also took a localised approach and wanted to employ local people to build, sell and manage the development.

For example, the main building supervisor lived in Wandering, about a 30-minute drive away.

The local focus would also involve putting strict covenants on home purchases to lock speculators out to create a stronger affinity with the local area.

Mr Holloway said a caveat would be placed on each purchase that the home could not be sold for two years.

Expressions of interest in a home at Banksia Crescent could be made by phoning 1800 227 161.

Ian Holloway



An artist's impression of the streetscape in the new Banksia Crescent development in Boddington

