



Feeling the stress: Magdalena and Nicholas Murphy with their children, Teddy and Alex, at their Point Cook home. Picture: ROB LEESSON

Cost of living here

State to rate and compare suburbs' affordability

Annika Smethurst and Michelle Almsworth

HOMEOWNERS and prospective buyers will be able to compare levels of mortgage stress, average incomes and the cost of living across Victorian suburbs in a new index to be released by the State Government.

The affordability index will allow Victorians to compare where their suburb ranks on cost of living measures including average monthly household income, mortgage repayments and council rates.

Planning Minister Matthew Guy said the index would form part of the Metropolitan Planning Strategy — the State Government's planning blueprint for the next 40 years.

"What we want to do is to plan for our future and as part of that to see how different suburbs rate," Mr Guy said. "We want to ensure we

THE MORTGAGE GAP ACROSS MELBOURNE

SUBURB	AVERAGE MONTHLY INCOME	AVERAGE MONTHLY MORTGAGE	MORTGAGE % OF INCOME	MORTGAGE 30%+ OF INCOME
Point Cook	\$9771.70	\$2280	23.3%	19.3%
Hawthorn	\$11,661	\$2750	23.6%	6.8%
Cranbourne	\$6773	\$1614	23.8%	15.7%
Carlton	\$8532.30	\$2168	25.4%	3.2%
Broadmeadows	\$5585.70	\$1453	26.0%	10.5%

have an index such as affordability, which will give examples of different suburbs and the positives and negatives of living there."

The data would be used to identify areas where the cost of living put pressure on residents and also help the Government target future housing developments for areas in need.

The index would include figures from the 2011 Census and council rates, and

also look at how commuter behaviour, such as driving or catching public transport, affected living costs. Preliminary findings found 10 per cent of Broadmeadows yet paid more off their mortgage.

Despite the difference, the percentage of income Carlton residents spent on their mortgage was almost the same as those in the traditional working-class suburb of Broadmeadows. The Murphy family from

Point Cook say the cost of living causes stress daily.

Scientist Nick Murphy and wife Magdalena follow a strict budget to cover the cost of raising their two boys, Alexander, 2, and nine-month-old Teddy.

The family is left with \$80 a day after they pay the mortgage, mobile phone and internet bill.

"That \$80 still has to include the water, gas, rates, petrol, all of the food, my wife's mobile telephone... and so being able to literally look at a coffee as being 3 per cent of your daily budget is quite a unique thing," Dr Murphy said.

"It's a wonderful place to live, and very well maintained, so we're very lucky, but I think there are maybe 25 per cent of the people here that possibly struggle like us," Dr Murphy said.

Data on rental costs will also be included in the final index, which is expected to be complete next year.



Peter Slipper

Slipper case gets technical

Lanai Scarr

GEOSPATIAL experts have been called in to give evidence on Peter Slipper's alleged misuse of taxpayer-funded taxi vouchers to four restaurants and wineries around Canberra.

The science of analysing geographical information is generally used in criminal cases to track the movement of serial killers and gangs, but is being used in the fraud case against the former parliamentary Speaker.

Karen Musgrove, from the Director of Public Prosecutions, told the ACT Magistrates Court yesterday the DPP was waiting on "an expert on geospatial material" to complete its brief of evidence.

Mr Slipper, who was not at yesterday's hearing, had a plea of not guilty entered on his behalf after his Queensland-based lawyer, Peter Russo, failed to secure a further five-week adjournment. Magistrate Bernadette Boss entered the plea for Mr Slipper to "progress this matter".

The former Liberal MP, now independent for the Sunshine Coast electorate of Fisher, will be required to front court on May 23 for a case management hearing.

Dr Death's Senate bid

EUTHANASIA advocate Dr Philip Nitschke is planning to run for the Senate to put pressure on the major parties to address the controversial practice.

Dr Nitschke has twice run unsuccessfully as a Lower House independent, but he said this time he would be running with the Voluntary Euthanasia Party.

He said that the party needed 500 Australians on the electoral roll to endorse it before it could be registered.

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