

Going, going, gone! Hobart's yours for just \$30

By **MICHAEL STEDMAN**

MOVE over Rob Valentine — Hobart has a new mayor.

Canadian Seth Carlson bought the city to add to his burgeoning property portfolio of assets which also includes two Canadian towns, Apollo Bay in Victoria and the Casa Rosada (the Argentine version of the White House).

He is just one of 31,000 subscribers to the internet



WATCH OUT, ROB: There's a new mayor in town... virtually.

property game weblo.com, which has been aptly described as "monopoly on steroids".

Hobartians may be a little injured to know that their

city was bought for just \$30, but they can take heart from the fact its new owner is not willing to part with it for less than a \$1 million profit.

"I guess the extravagant price means I am not willing to part with Hobart — it is definitely my prized possession," said Mr Carlson, 27.

People are making real money on Weblo, buying and selling virtual copies of cities, states, countries and even celebrities. California

was recently sold for \$62,500 — and that's not monopoly money.

Tasmania was bought for \$684 and local towns such as Deloraine, Scottsdale and New Norfolk have also been snapped up.

Users are provided with profile pages for each of their assets and share in a cut of the revenue generated from advertising on their site.

The more popular the page, the more revenue is

generated. Mr Carlson has so far made a whopping 22 cents from Hobart, but said he was more interested in the status that owning a city brings.

He has never been to Tasmania.

"I have always been fascinated by Hobart, from its amazing beauty to its rich history," he said.

"It has such a wealth of natural beauty and I would love to help improve the

tourism industry, not only for Hobart but the whole of Tasmania."

Mr Carlson said he planned to visit his new dominion soon, but it seems he won't seize the mayoral robes so easily.

"If he thinks he is going to waltz in here and ride roughshod over the locals tell him he's dreaming — he better be prepared for some hard yakka," real-life mayor Rob Valentine said.

Town's road to chaos

By **NICK CLARK**

A ROSSARDEN family could face eviction from their home because a legal mix-up in land titles means four residents in the town legally own the house next door.

Sonja Blair is just one of four residents of Baker St, Rossarden, who are confused and upset.

The mix-up appears to mean that the four residents of the former tin-mining town in Tasmania's North-East have titles to their neighbour's house rather than the one they have been occupying for decades.

For Wendy Milgate it could mean that instead of the house she carefully renovated she owns a vacant block.

Ms Blair, who has been living with her husband and three children in their home for 13 years, technically has title to the house next door occupied by Carol Moore.

Mrs Moore, who has lived for 34 years in Rossarden, officially owns the house recently bought by Pat Lake.

Mrs Lake officially owns Mrs Milgate's house.

The confusion became apparent in March when Queensland developer Paul Smith came to inspect land he bought in 2005.

Mr Smith believed he had bought five vacant lots but found Ms Blair's house appeared to be on his land.

The situation has been exacerbated by variation between official maps and a renumbering of houses by Australia Post.

Ms Blair said she had no funds to pay Mr Smith for the house she bought for \$4750.

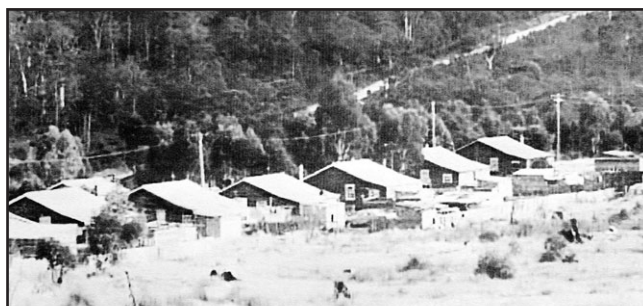
She has had a letter from Mr Smith's lawyer telling her to move out.

She is in a catch-22 situation because without the house she has no collateral to get a loan.

"To us the house has sentimental value and we would not want to move Carol out — she has been there 34 years," she said.



PROPERTY DILEMMA: Neighbours in arms, Wendy Milgate and Sonja Blair, with the houses in question. Picture: ROSS MARSDEN



HISTORY: Baker St, Rossarden, in the 1950s.

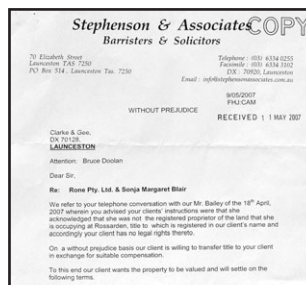
Ms Blair said the situation had taken a toll.

"The last few days have been very hard but my husband Joe has been my backbone," she said.

Information and Land Ser-

vices general manager Stephenson Godfrey said a preliminary investigation had shown no errors regarding the transfers of any of the parcels involved.

"The ILS has concluded



WORRYING: Sonja Blair's eviction letter.

that the documentation lodged in the 2005 sale was correct, making the purchaser [Mr Smith] the rightful owner of number 16," he said.

"The residents of number

16 [Ms Blair] actually bought and own number 18 in 1995.

"I will continue to investigate the history of the land ownership and transfers in order to discover how the current situation has occurred and try to assist in resolving the issue."

It is understood no government surveyor or official has actually visited Rossarden.

Mr Smith said that while everybody was saying it had to be fixed, no one was doing much about it.

"I am happy to help out but it appears I could lose a block of land and I want fair and adequate compensation for it," he said.

Meanwhile a Baker St res-

ident since 1959, Klaus Kobylinski, believes anecdotal evidence provides a solution.

"I believe that the five lots Mr Smith bought at the auction are there and any discrepancy would only be a matter of a couple of metres," he said.

"I have looked at old photographs, fencelines and driveways which show that in the past there were five houses on that piece of land."

Some residents believe the mix-up with titles could go back to 1982, when Rossarden Mines sold many of the houses in the town for as little as a dollar.

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