

Packed to rafters

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GOLD Coasters will be packed into highly populated suburbs, with more low-rise apartments, more highrises and fewer people in each house in 20 years.

The latest State Government statistics predict the city will have an extra 115,000 homes by 2031.

It will be outstripping growth in Brisbane, which is only expected to have an extra 102,000 homes in the same time.

Housing and social impact analysis warn the city's roads and public transport will be struggling to keep pace without big investment from all tiers of government.

Urban centres like Burleigh, Robina, Coomera and Palm Beach would be packed with people in three-storey low-rises, townhouses and duplexes, while Southport to Broadbeach along the light rail could expect to see more highrises and commercial enterprises.

Whether there will be jobs will be up to how governments manage the

growth, and property prices will be up again.

Urban Development Industry Association Gold Coast boss Steve Harrison said most of the growth would be redevelopment at places like Southport, Broadbeach, Burleigh, Palm Beach and Robina.

But he said the biggest demand would be for undeveloped sites in the north around Coomera, Ormeau and Pimpama where there would still be space for a good-sized backyard. "In essence, you (will) have 80 per cent of the market wanting

20 per cent of the future product."

Social analyst David Chalke said there would be fewer people living in houses, and one and two-bedroom homes would become more popular.

He said demand for smaller homes would be created by an increase of professional couples, broken homes and empty-nesters – a shift away from the traditional two parents with two children scenario.

Mr Chalke said without significant investment in public transport, roads and other public services to support growth, the Gold Coast could face

becoming a "dysfunctional society" in 20 years.

But Gold Coast property expert Bill Morris said the State Government had underestimated the growth and there would be closer to 150,000 homes with property prices up 150 per cent by 2031.

Mr Morris said while the Government was planning for people to move into smaller houses, there was no guarantee it would happen.

"People still want a back yard and a dog," he said. "The Aussie tradition will never die."