

gional NSW.
The report's authors attribute the rise to city dwellers fleeing the coronavirus-infested capitals in search of a tree change in regional Australia where community spread is minimal.

Wagga's median house price now sits at \$385,000, which is up from \$315,500 in March of 2019.

"From a real estate point of view, I can see us coming out of this with zero collateral damage in my opinion, and we'll continue to see the Wagga market grow as it has done in the last couple of years."

Although prices remain high, sales enquiries have suffered a drastic downturn,

"Wagga is a place people are interested in if they're looking for a tree change," Mr Irvine said. "There are strong industries around here, good jobs, it's a great place to live and bring up children and, as we've discovered through COVID-19, it's a pretty safe environment too."

Fitzpatrick's Real Estate

HOPEFUL: Professionals director Paul Irvine says a housing crash are unwarranted. **Picture:** Kenji S

director Shaun Lowry took a more cautious view, saying it is still too soon to tell what the long-term impacts of coronavirus would be.

However, Mr Lowry said Wagga had historically been fairly well insulated from

price shocks felt in cities, with price a reliably slow growth curve over

"If you look at the drought or missions we've been previously, Wagga



FAMILY HELP: John Nixon, president of Wagga's Can Assist, has welcomed a partnership with greenslip.com.au.

Charity's challenge as revenue takes a dive

BY EMMA HORN

WAGGA'S primary cancer care charity has seen a sizeable downturn in its revenue stream following the cancellation of fundraising events due to COVID-19.

John Nixon, the president of Wagga's Can Assist branch, told *The Daily Advertiser* the charity was seeing around \$4000 less coming through per month since the health restrictions were announced.

"We're not able to run our raffles or barbecues, we've had to reschedule the Bradley Nixon Memorial Ride and Show, that's been postponed until November when it would normally be in April," Mr Nixon said.

"We're hoping that by November things will be back to normal," he said.

The event - named in honour of Mr Nixon's own son - represents a large part of the or-

ganisation's yearly fundraising targets.

"We really need to just keep the donations coming, that can be done online," Mr Nixon said.

"Everyone's doing it tough. No one's got a lot of money at the moment.

"We're lucky, we do have money stored that we've saved for a rainy day, but who knows how long that will last?"

Families in need of cancer care in Wagga have been given a helping hand though as Can Assist enters a partnership with CTP insurance provider greenslips.com.au.

By way of sponsorship, the insurer has donated \$3000 to each branch of the charity to help their clients meet transport costs.

"People don't really know that we've got this going on with the greenslips, so we are really trying to get the word out," Mr Nixon said.

With 120 families in Wagga aided by Can Assist, Mr Nixon said it has come down to some creative means of making the money stretch.

"We've been giving \$100 to each family's greenslips when they apply, to help it spread out a little," Mr Nixon said.

It comes after community and patient transport services were forced to scale down due to the COVID-19 restrictions.

"Lilier Lodge has a bus to take people to their appointments, but that has had to stop to keep the volunteers safe [from coronavirus]," Mr Nixon said. "So people are really relying on their own cars or taxis much more.

"There's no other transport option in regional areas.

"That's a huge issue especially when people have to travel all over the state for treatment."