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Through the keyhole

>>Taking banks head on

Australia's first mortgage broker-owned home loan brand 1300 Home Loan recently launched on the Sunshine Coast, linking brokers to a 1300 number and their geographic area. 1300 Home Loan managing director John Kolenda said more than 300 brokers attended the introductory roadshows in Sydney, Melbourne, Gold Coast, Brisbane and Sunshine Coast, and more would be held across Australia before their official launch. "We are targeting 400 brokers to have registered with the new brand before we launch nationwide, most likely in the first or second quarter of 2011," he said. Mr Kolenda said the new company had the potential to enhance the industry and provide more competition. "Consumers have been treated with disdain in the latest round of interest rate movements," he said. "The best way to improve the situation for consumers is to create a more competitive environment in the financial services area and 1300 Home Loan will certainly help strengthen and invigorate that market."

>>Urgent action needed

The State Government needs to develop an urgent joint rescue plan for Queensland's housing and property industries before property passes the tipping point, according to independent property analyst Michael Matusik. At a recent Urban Development Industry Association (UDIA) function in Brisbane, Mr Matusik said the jobs of tens of thousands of Queenslanders hinged on a kickstart to the home-building industry. He said Premier Anna Bligh's Building Revival Forum to be held early in the New Year would evolve into a talkfest unless the State Government took urgent steps to speed up approvals and scale down the bureaucratic process. "We have seen it all before: talkfests that produce all talk and no action," Mr Matusik said. "Let's hope this one is different. Without serious action, and I mean now, we cannot really wait for the planned forum next year. 2011 is going to be a very bleak year for home builders in this state; more jobs will be lost and with them end values are likely to continue to fall."