

Home firm to expand north

By **PENELOPE GREEN**
Business Reporter

HUNTER-based new homes builder McDonald Jones is taking on the Sunshine State as part of its long-term plan to dominate the eastern seaboard.

The firm, which has been a force in NSW since its inception more than 25 years ago, cited a recovering housing market in Queensland as the catalyst for its decision to tackle the Brisbane market.

Company founder Bill McDonald said the company was performing strongly in NSW despite the construction slump and was keen to gain northern exposure.

"The Queensland market is about to happen because they have been restricted for so long, whether by rain or floods or legislation, and there has been a new release



PLAN: Bill McDonald, founder of McDonald Jones Homes.

of land packages that make it fertile ground for new home builders," he said yesterday.

McDonald Jones recently started building two of its four display homes in North Lakes, in the Moreton Bay area about 25 kilometres north of Brisbane. These are expected to be open to the public by September.

Mr McDonald said that despite a tough economy, people were looking to build affordable homes in convenient locations, and the North Lakes growth area was attractive to prospective homeowners.

He said the Queensland

housing market needed a projected 471,000 homes in the next 10 years to house an estimated population of 8.7 million people by 2056.

But though government regulations and red tape were always a challenge in the industry, he was disappointed that the NSW government had not been able to stimulate the market as quickly as hoped since Barry O'Farrell's election.

Twenty full-time staff will be employed at the North Lakes office and about another 180 local subcontractors are expected to work with the company on the site.

McDonald Jones's Queensland business development manager, Anthony Kirby, said the company had chosen Moreton Bay because it was a fast-growing catchment area with excellent transport links and amenities.