

# **PLUTO IN CAPRICORN**

## ***Economic or Astronomic Downturn?***

***Author: Stella Woods (February 2008)***

We are currently witnessing the Astrological Event of the Year – Pluto's shift from fire sign Sagittarius to earth sign Capricorn for a 16-year stint. Pluto will remain on the cusp of these two zodiac signs flitting backwards and forwards for the whole of 2008.

Those born between 21st and 24th December and the 21st-24th June will feel Pluto's transformational effects most strongly this year, experiencing either an increase in personal power and creative output or, for those living an inauthentic life, a loss of power and enforced new direction. Pluto is the ruler of Scorpio and symbolises the destruction of the old to make way for the new.

We could therefore say that 2008 marks a transitional period from the optimism of fire to the pragmatism of earth. The fire hasn't quite gone out, but it's fading fast and with Saturn and Jupiter also in earth signs this year, there are plenty of people ready to jump on the pessimist bandwagon. The Australian stock market dropped 24% in value between November 2007 and January this year (coinciding with the Mars retrograde transit) and recent figures from the Demographia International Housing Affordability Survey show that housing in Australia's cities is among the least affordable in the world with our interest rates some of the highest.

Our friends in the USA are already feeling the pinch after the bottom dropped out of their real estate market last year due to poor lending practices coupled with over-inflated house prices. There are currently 4.7 million unsold properties on the US market with owners in California, Florida and Nevada (affluent states with high levels of investment properties) the worst hit by foreclosures. Elsewhere, millions of US homeowners can no longer finance their lifestyles by using their once inflated, now depreciating home equity. Over a million people have lost their homes, with another two million currently at risk. All this is taking a massive toll on consumer spending and affecting most sections of the US economy.

So could the same thing happen here in Australia? Our Federation chart has a Sun Saturn conjunction at 7-10 degrees Capricorn and transiting Jupiter (bringer of luck, good fortune, optimism, speculation and over-inflated expectations) is right on that conjunction at present. US house

prices are on a downward spiral, whilst ours are skyrocketing. Australia has been protected from recession in 2006-07 by the resources boom in Queensland and WA as Jupiter transited Scorpio (mining) and Sagittarius (international trade) in our 8th house of investment and 9th house of overseas trade. Sales to China by mining giant, BHP Billiton, grew almost 50 percent to \$6 billion in the second half of 2007, compared to the same period in 2006. And China now purchases 12.5 times the amount of resources from BHP that it did in 2003.

So can our luck last? In the short-term yes, but once Pluto reaches those critical degrees of 7-10 Capricorn in 2011-2013, I believe the game will be over. The meltdown could happen in any number of ways and will not necessarily be something our Government has any control over. A recession in the Chinese economy? Reduced demand for our mining resources? Stricter lending practices? Further drought? A stock market crash? An international oil crisis? Growing financial instability in the US leading to increased interest rates and global recession? Who knows exactly?

What we can say from an astrological point of view is that it would be wise to take action throughout 2008-2010 to strengthen our financial position, reduce our exposure to debt and set some realistic and achievable long-term financial goals. We may think the BHP export figures or people losing their homes in the US has very little to do with us, but 12 years ago when Pluto entered Sagittarius, we had no idea how the invention of the Internet or the concept of global terrorism would change our lives forever. Pluto in Capricorn is all about governments, banks, money, business and real estate. There will be upheaval and radical change in all these areas. Forewarned is forearmed.