

Real estate industry sees highest annual volume increase in 23 months

The number of properties sold in April 2018 across New Zealand increased by 6.6% compared to the same time last year, the highest year-on-year increase the real estate industry has seen in 23 months.

In April, 6,368 houses were sold across the country in comparison to 5,973 in April 2017 with the number of properties sold in New Zealand excluding Auckland, increasing by 8.4% year-on-year (from 4,163 in April 2017 to 4,514 in April 2018).

Regions with the largest increase in sales year-on-year were:

- West Coast – up 50.0% from 22 sales to 33 – the highest number of sales for the month of April in 5 years
- Southland – up 36.1% from 119 sales to 162
- Marlborough – up 30.8% from 65 sales to 85
- Nelson – up 30.1% from 73 sales to 95
- Manawatu/Wanganui – up 22.7% from 326 sales to 400.

Price Bands

Between April 2017 and April 2018, the number of homes sold for less than \$500,000 across New Zealand fell from 44.6% of the market (2,664 properties) to 43.1% of the market (2,747 properties) which is reflected by the overall increasing median price.

The number of properties sold in the \$500,000 to \$750,000 bracket increased from 26.9% in April 2017 to 28.3% in April 2018. At the top end of the market, houses sold for more than \$1 million decreased from 14.2% of the market in April 2017 to 13.8% of the market this year.

April Breakdown - Number of properties sold:

• \$1million plus	• 879	• 13.8%
• \$750,000 to \$999,999	• 941	• 14.8%
• \$500,000 to \$749,999	• 1,801	• 28.3%
• Under \$500,000	• 2,747	• 43.1%
• All Properties Sold	• 6,368	• 100%

REINZ reports that the last time there was an annual increase in the number of properties sold that was this strong, was in May 2016 suggesting that the market is in a good position.

Across the country, 12 out of 16 regions saw a year-on-year increase in the number of properties sold, with 7 of those regions seeing double digit growth highlighting what a strong month April was.

The only regions not to see an annual increase were Gisborne, Taranaki, Wellington and Otago - this is likely down to the fact that all four regions saw a decrease in the availability of listings rather than being a result of a subdued market.

House prices across NZ continue to climb

The median house price for New Zealand rose 1.9% in April 2018 to \$550,000 up from \$540,000 in April 2017 and median prices for New Zealand excluding Auckland increased by 5.7% year-on-year to \$460,000 – the exact same figure as the previous month.

April also saw three regions achieved record prices:

- Manawatu/Wanganui – up 19.4% to \$305,000 (up from \$255,500)
- Nelson – up 15.8% to \$550,000 (up from \$475,000)
- Otago – up 19.5% to \$460,000 (up from \$385,000).

Other regions that saw strong increases in price during April were Southland (up 19.0% to \$250,000), Gisborne (up 14.3% to \$320,000) and Hawke's Bay (up 12.0% to \$431,250).

Prices increased in 14 out of 16 regions across New Zealand showing the continued demand for good properties particularly as listings continue to remain low in many parts of the country. The only exceptions to the price increases were Auckland and Canterbury – down 0.6 and 0.9% respectively – but these are only very small decreases and actually suggest that these markets have stabilised now.

Inventory

The number of properties available for sale nationally increased by a marginal 1.1% (from 25,988 to 26,269) compared to 12

months ago.

Regions with the biggest falls in inventory were:

- Southland – down 16.2%
- Marlborough – down 11.9%
- West Coast – down 11.7%
- Manawatu/Wanganui – down 10.8%.

Highlighting the lack of inventory across the country, the Wellington region still has the lowest level of inventory across the whole country with only 8 weeks' inventory available to those looking to purchase in the area. The Hawke's Bay again only has 9 weeks' inventory; however, this is the first positive annual inventory change since July 2014.

Days To Sell

The median number of days to sell a property nationally increased by 2 days from 34 days in April 2017 to 36 days in April 2018. This is 2 days more to sell a property than it took in March this year.



Auckland saw the median days to sell a property increase by 2 days to 37 (up from 35 in April 2017) and the same number of days as in March 2018.

Source: REINZ.co.nz

It's getting cold out and as winter's icy grasp draws nearer, there are several simple things Kiwis can do to keep their homes warm and themselves healthy. It's important for your family's health. Cold and damp homes are linked to poor health, especially for babies and small children, people who are ill, and older people.

Insulation, moisture levels and decent curtains were the three things people should focus on to stay warm and dry over winter, they were all key in keeping heating at the "magic number" of 18C.

Taking measures to keep heat in and moisture out will also reduce bills as winter drives up energy use. When temperatures dip below 18C, the chances of developing respiratory illnesses rises. Keeping temperatures at or above that magic number could be helped by making sure there are proper insulation in the walls, ceilings and under floors.

Insulation covering the timber in the ceiling is a priority. If your home is without insulation, get a couple of quotes and get it done, or ask your landlord to get it done.

Curtains should be in place, lined curtains are the best as they trap the hot air between the two layers and stops heat escaping out of the windows so quickly. Make sure they are closed off at the top as much as possible and make sure they reach all the way to the floor.

Moisture. Finally, mould, this should be kept in check by keeping moisture levels down as we head into winter. If you have an area underneath the flooring and with exposed soil, put a ground sheet down. Black polythene, which is available at any hardware store, is a good option for laying directly over soil in the gap beneath the house, as it is impermeable and will help stop moisture rising into the floor. Using extractor fans and airing the house are also important in the fight against moisture.

HEATING YOUR HOME - WHICH KIND OF HEATER IS BEST?

Only heat the room that you are in. Try and keep the temperature between around 18 degrees especially if you have babies, people with illnesses, or older people living in your home. Dress warmly for bed and make sure your bedroom is warm enough - it is very important to stay warm during the night. Block up unused chimneys and stop draughts around doors and windows. You can make your own draught 'snakes' by stuffing rugby socks or pantyhose with newspaper or cushion filling. Up to 20% of heating can be lost through draughts.

Consumer NZ has tested a range of heaters and, using a temperature-controlled room, found that fan-powered heater raised temperatures the fastest and the most evenly. Heaters were not the best option for every kind of space however.

Here's what Consumer NZ recommended to heat each part of your home:

Lounge/family room areas need background warmth. Heat pumps are the best long-term choice, but panel and other convection heaters are also suitable.

You might also want some specific spot heating, say if you're watching TV or standing at the kitchen sink. A portable fan or radiant heater will do the job.

Bedrooms require less heat than living areas: You only need to keep the chill off. Choose from a panel or oil-filled column heater with thermostat and maybe a timer. A night-store heater in the passage is also an option.

Service or workshop areas are best heated by portable fan or radiant heaters.