

# HOME AFFORDABILITY REPORT

QUARTERLY SURVEY SEPTEMBER 2023, VOL 34, NO.3

**OVERALL, HOME AFFORDABILITY HAS DECLINED IN THIS QUARTER. THIS WAS BROADLY DRIVEN BY AN INCREASE IN THE MORTGAGE INTEREST RATE AND AN INCREASE IN MEDIAN HOUSE PRICES IN HALF OF THE REGIONS.**

## QUARTERLY RESULTS:

- At the national aggregate level, affordability has slightly declined in this quarter, attributed in this past quarter by an increase in median house prices in half of the sixteen regions and an increase in interest rate.
- Median house prices decreased in eight regions and increased in other eight regions. The greatest decline in median house prices (in percentage terms) has for the last quarter occurred in Nelson (11% or \$85,000). In contrast, the median house prices increased in Gisborne region by 8.3% or \$50,000.
- At the national level, overall median house prices slightly decreased by 1.7% or \$13,000 in this quarter.
- Overall affordability has slightly declined in this quarter (3.1% nationally). At the regional level, affordability has been declined in eleven regions. In this quarter, the most significant changes being seen in Tasman (14.2% decline) and Nelson (5.3% improvement). The overall decline in affordability is attributed to slight increase in interest rate.
- Interest rate has slightly increased in this quarter, by 0.25% to 7.32% as at July 2023. This is a return to the medium-term trend of increasing interest rate, after started increasing from the previous nine quarters by the Reserve Bank.
- Incomes have slightly decreased by 1.2% in aggregate during the quarter, with twelve regions showing a declining trend in average weekly earnings. The largest changes in income in the quarter occurred in Tasman (4.8% decrease).

## YEARLY RESULTS:

- At the national level, 4.1% annual decline in median house prices (-\$33,000 decreased to \$767,000) is partially supported by a 23.23% increase in two years mortgage interest rates, moving to 7.32% in July 2023 from 5.94% in July 2022. Overall weekly earnings were increased by 4.9%. This increase in earnings has not improved the overall affordability but decreased for the past 12-months period by 12.6%.
- This decline in affordability at the national level in the past 12 months is reflected in all sixteen regions. The greatest decline in affordability for the year are reported in Gisborne by 33.2%. Median house prices decreased in majority of the regions and greatest decrease was recorded in Bay of Plenty (14% or \$125,000 decreased).

## GENERAL TRENDS

- National House price to income ratios have slightly decreased in this quarter with house prices moving from 10.4 to 10.3 times annual wages.

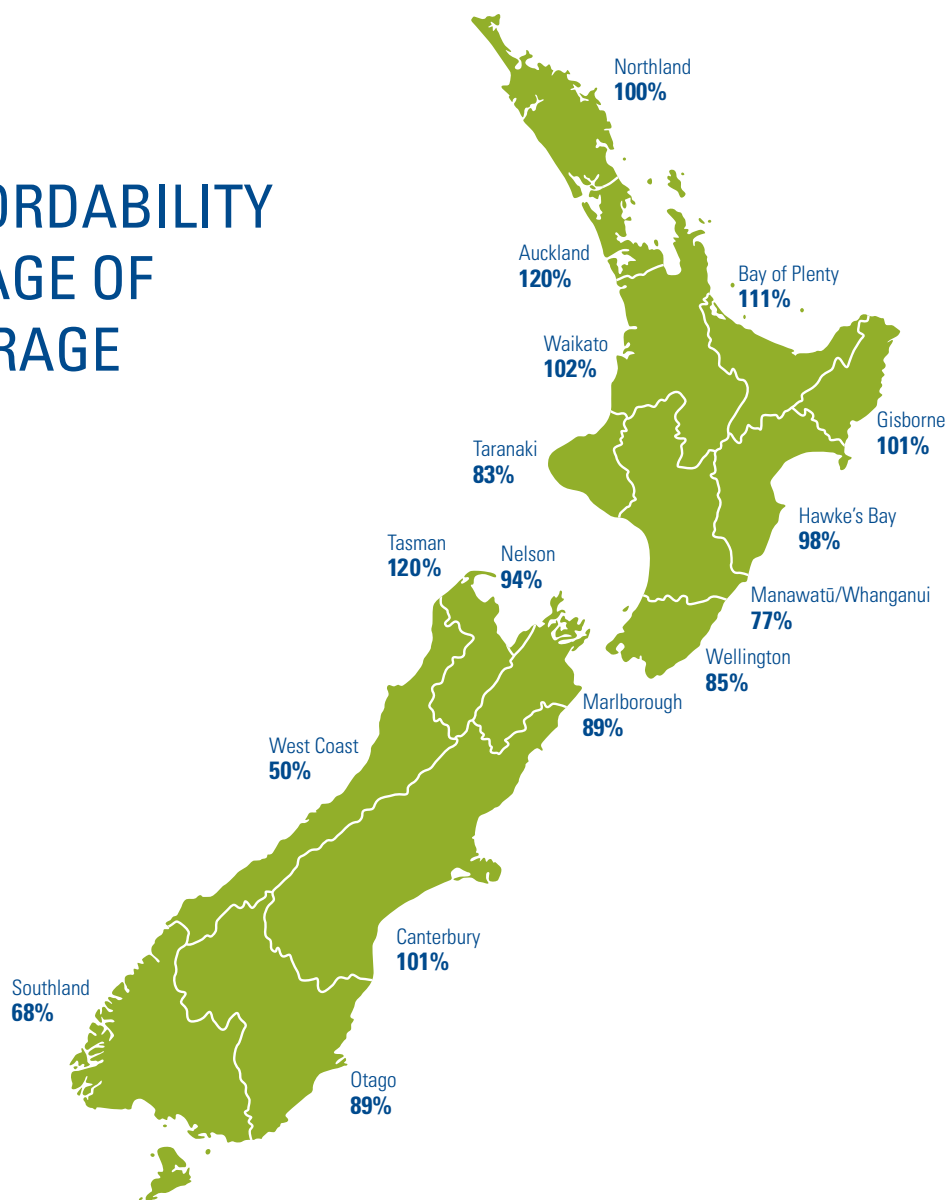
## QUARTERLY RESULTS:

- Affordability this quarter slightly declined nationally by 3.1% with a quarterly decrease in median house prices of 1.7%.
- This quarter, the primary cause of the decline in affordability has been due to increase in median house prices in half of the regions and a slight increase in the mortgage interest rate.

## YEARLY RESULTS:

- The yearly results show a decline in affordability at the national level by 12.6%, reflected in all regions.
- The yearly driver of this change is an increase in residential mortgage interest rates, now at 7.32% compared to 5.94% a year ago.

# REGIONAL AFFORDABILITY AS A PERCENTAGE OF NATIONAL AVERAGE



HOME AFFORDABILITY INDEX				PERCENTAGE CHANGE IN HOME AFFORDABILITY IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS		PERCENTAGE CHANGE IN HOME AFFORDABILITY IN THE LAST 3 MONTHS	
Region	Aug 2022	May 2023	Aug 2023	Improvement	Decline	Improvement	Decline
Northland	32.1	39.7	39.2		22.1%	1.4%	
Auckland	43.3	44.4	47.2		9.1%		6.3%
Waikato	36.3	38.3	40.2		10.8%		5.0%
Bay of Plenty	43.1	42.3	43.6		1.2%		3.0%
Gisborne	29.8	35.8	39.7		33.2%		10.8%
Hawke's Bay	34.7	37.0	38.4		10.7%		3.6%
Manawatu/Whanganui	27.0	27.9	30.3		12.2%		8.3%
Taranaki	32.0	29.4	32.7		2.2%		11.3%
Wellington	29.8	34.3	33.2		11.6%	3.2%	
Tasman	42.1	41.3	47.2		12.1%		14.2%
Nelson	31.4	39.0	37.0		17.8%	5.3%	
Marlborough	33.0	34.3	34.9		5.9%		1.8%
West Coast	17.4	20.3	19.5		12.0%	3.9%	
Canterbury	33.5	38.4	39.7		18.4%		3.4%
Otago	33.9	36.9	35.1		3.4%	5.0%	
Southland	22.3	24.6	26.6		18.8%		7.9%
All Regions	34.8	38.1	39.2		12.6%		3.1%

Overall, home affordability has declined in this quarter. This was broadly driven by an increase in the mortgage interest rate and an increase in median house prices in half of the regions.

## DATA SOURCES

The Massey Home Affordability Index takes into account the cost of borrowing (mortgage interest rates) as well as house prices and wage levels.

Note that the regional breakdown within this report and the March report has changed from earlier editions. The regional breakdown in this current report is unable to be fully compared to reports prior to March 2019. The regional breakdown contained herein for the 3 month and 12 month periods are unable to be directly compared with earlier reports. Please contact the authors for comparisons with earlier editions of this report. Waikato/Bay of Plenty/Gisborne district is now 3 separate districts: Waikato; Bay of Plenty; Gisborne. Nelson/Marlborough/Kaikoura district is now comprised within Tasman; Nelson; Marlborough districts. Kaikoura is now contained within Canterbury district. Canterbury/Westland district is now 2 districts: Canterbury; West Coast. Central Otago Lakes district is now contained within Otago district.

## TERMINOLOGY

Housing affordability for housing in New Zealand can be assessed by comparing the average weekly earnings with the median dwelling price and the mortgage interest rate. The earnings figure represents the money available to the family, or household unit, and the median dwelling price combined with the mortgage interest rates provide an indicator of the expense involved.

## MEDIAN DWELLING PRICES

Median dwelling prices for various regions within New Zealand are released monthly by the REINZ. The figures are obtained from a survey of member agencies' sales during that specific month. There may be irregularities in the data resulting from errors in the returns or processing, but when individual returns are combined with those of other agencies the distortion is likely to be small. In some months there may be very few transactions and this can result in somewhat non-representative median prices. The REINZ continues to research ways of improving the quality of the data. The research, and other continuing action by the REINZ to monitor and improve data quality, should minimise data errors.

## AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS

Average national and regional weekly earnings data is provided directly by Statistics New Zealand.

## AVERAGE MONTHLY INTEREST RATES

The Reserve Bank New Zealand (RBNZ) publishes a range of data on mortgage interest rates. Some interest data provided by the Reserve Bank has been discontinued in

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April 2017 (E5.10 Total Monthly yield weighted average % on balance sheet).

The Reserve Bank series selected for this quarter's home affordability index is based on a 2-year fixed new residential average mortgage interest rates at the end of month for registered banks (B20). This quarter's interest rate was 7.07%, which was increased from 5.55% last year in April 2022.

## THE PROPERTY FOUNDATION

The Foundation is established to sponsor research and education in property related matters in New Zealand. Funding is obtained through sponsorship from corporations and firms within the property industry. The Foundation has also established a Real Estate Analysis Unit.

The Foundation works closely with the Property Studies Group at Massey University.

## SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND FINANCE MASSEY UNIVERSITY

Massey University has three campuses, located in Palmerston North, Wellington and Auckland, in New Zealand. The University has an enrolment of 33,000 students with approximately 13,000 business students. There are five schools within the Massey Business School.

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