



News Release

11 March 2009

ACTIVITY RETURNS TO RESIDENTIAL MARKET

There has been a marked increase in activity on the residential real estate market, February sales figures released by the Real Estate Institute of New Zealand (REINZ) today reveal.

Institute president Mike Elford says there has been a significant turn around in enquiry levels and number of sales and median prices are up in all but three out of 12 regions compared with January's figures.

"January was an exceptionally bleak month and there is no doubt the figures were affected by the holiday period. While we must still take a cautious approach, the February figures seem to indicate that lower interest rates and real estate as an investment option are having a positive impact on the market."

The number of home sales nationwide in February was 5,228, a big jump on the record low of 3,706 in January. However, this is still notably lower than the same period in 2008 (6,356) which in turn was a massive drop on the 9,357 properties which sold in February 2007.

There was a rise in the number of sales in all districts apart from Central Otago Lakes which had a minimal drop from 78 to 76 properties in February compared with the January total.

"The bounce back from the horrific January figures is welcome, but we must still acknowledge we're dealing with light volumes compared with recent years," Mr Elford said.

The median house price has also improved on January's figures. The national median house price in February was \$330,000, up \$5,000 on January's \$325,000 and only slightly lower than the \$337,500 median house price in February 2008 and \$335,000 in February 2007. In nine out of 12 districts, higher median prices were recorded in February; the only drops were in Auckland (down from \$422,000 to \$421,500) Taranaki (down from \$266,750 to \$260,000) and Central Otago Lakes which dropped from \$457,500 to \$425,000.

Mr Elford noted that median house prices are currently well above all February median prices from 2000 to 2006.

The length of time it takes to sell a house – a national median of 62 days in February 2009 is consistent with the January figure of 59 days. While this is considerable longer than the 50 days in February 2008 and 32 days in February 2007, Mr Elford said it is pleasing to note there has been a drop in the number of days to sell compared with last month in eight out of 12 districts. Northland and Waikato/Bay of Plenty remained constant on 77 and 78 days respectively while in Canterbury/Westland the figure has climbed from 48 days in January to 57 days in February and from 52 to 56 days in Auckland.

“February figures are certainly an improvement on January. However, there is no doubt these are difficult times, so we must be cautious in our optimism. One month’s results do not form a trend”.Mr Elford said.

ENDS

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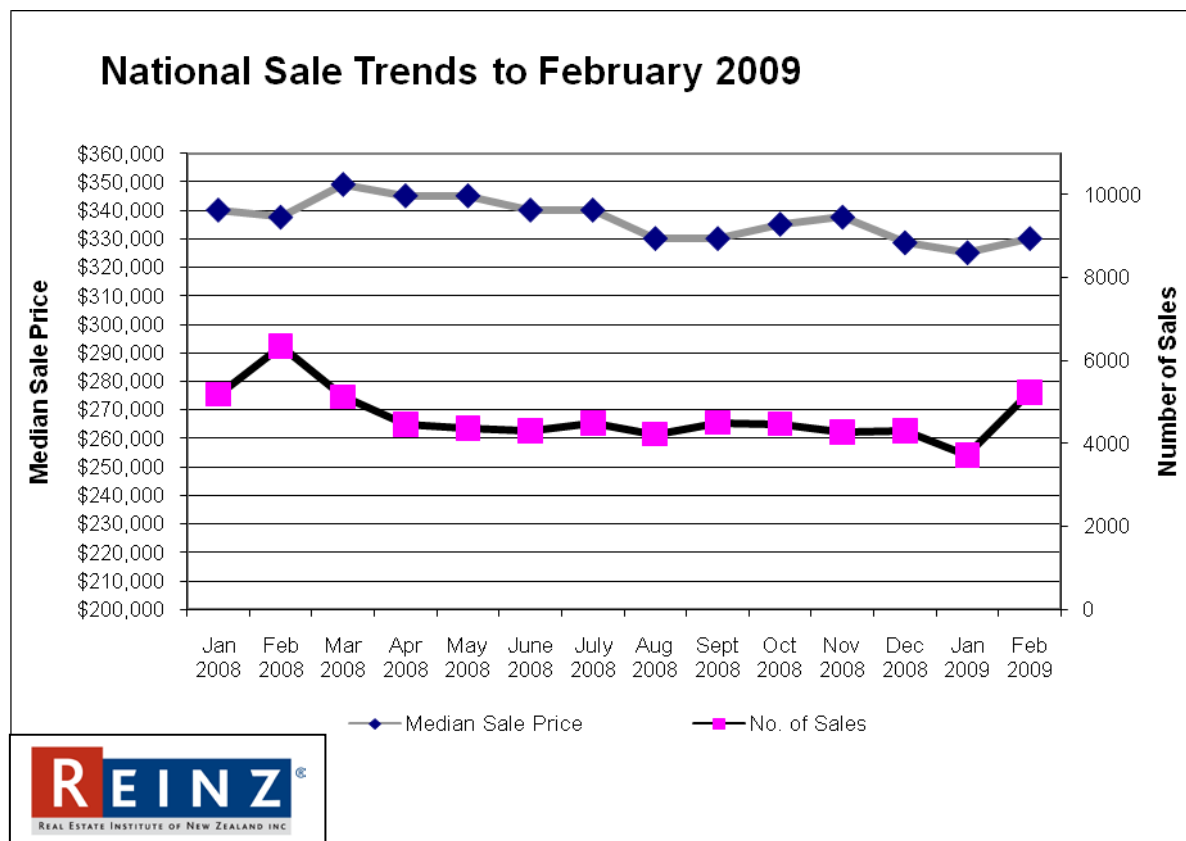
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Explanatory Note:

The monthly REINZ residential sales reports remain the most contemporary and up-to-date statistics on house prices and sales in New Zealand. They are based on actual sales reported by real estate agents. These sales are taken as of the date that a transaction becomes unconditional.

Other surveys of the residential property market are estimates only of property value, based on information from Territorial Authorities regarding settlement and the receipt of documents by the Authority from a solicitor. As such, this information involves a lag of four to six weeks before the sale is recorded by the Territorial Authority.

REINZ sales figures are recorded on the day a transaction is concluded and includes sales as of 5:00pm on the last business day of the month.



Residential Highlights – February 2009

Northland

In total, 139 houses sold in Northland in February (January 2009: 83; February 2008: 184). The median price increased to \$305,000 from \$275,000 in January (February 2008: \$284,000).

24 houses sold in the Whangarei County area (January 2009: eight; February 2008: 13). The median price rose to \$390,000 from \$380,000 in January (February 2008: \$425,000).

51 houses sold in Whangarei City in, up on the 42 sold in January (February 2008: 80). The median was also up at \$282,000 (January 2009: \$261,000; February 2008: \$328,500).

Auckland

The median house price in Auckland eased slightly to \$421,500 in February, from \$422,000 in January (February 2008: \$427,000). 1,590 houses sold in February, compared with 1,149 sold in January (February 2008: 1,772).

The median sale price for a North Shore City home eased to \$500,000 in February. (January 2009: \$507,500; February 2008: \$525,000). 300 houses sold during the month, up on the 246 sold in January 2009. (February 2008: 291).

Sales volume was up in Waitakere City in February with 188 sold (January 2009: 143; February 2008: 246). The median price was also up at \$362,250 (January 2009: \$352,500; February 2008: \$375,000).

The median price for an Auckland City house increased to \$465,000 in February (January 2009: \$458,500 and February 2008: \$439,500). 505 houses sold in February, up on the 344 sold in January 2009 (February 2008: 558).

363 houses sold in Manukau City in February (January 2009: 237; February 2008: 362). The median price was up at \$416,000 from \$408,000 in January (February 2008: \$395,000).

The number of sales in Papakura rose with 47 houses sold in February 2009. (January 2009: 28; February 2008: 63). The median price also rose to \$310,000 (January 2009: \$303,500; February 2008: \$345,000).

The median price for a Metropolitan Auckland house was up at \$435,000 in February, from \$425,000 in January (February 2008: \$425,500). 1,403 houses sold (January 2009: 998; February 2008: 1,520).

80 houses sold in Rodney District, up from the 65 sold in January (February 2008: 101). The median price dropped to \$410,000, from \$485,000 in January (February 2008: \$485,000).

The median price for a Franklin District home was down to \$355,000 in February, from \$367,000 in January (February 2008: \$350,000). 49 houses sold, up on the 45 sales in January 2009 (February 2008: 70).

58 houses sold in Thames/Coromandel in February, up on the 41 sold in January (February 2008: 81). The median price was down at \$335,000 from \$350,000 in January (February 2008: \$440,000).

The median price for an Outer Auckland home decreased to \$375,000 in February, from \$396,000 in January (February 2008: \$432,500). Sales volume was up with 187 houses sold, compared with the 151 sold in January (February 2008: 252).

Waikato/Bay of Plenty/Gisborne

The median price for a house in the Waikato/Bay of Plenty/Gisborne region rose to \$316,000 in February (January 2009: \$304,250; February 2008: \$333,000). 712 houses sold, an increase on the 458 sold in January 2009 (February 2008: 951).

Sales were up in Waikato Country in February with 116 houses sold (January 2009: 65; February 2008: 187). The median price also up at \$277,500 (January 2009: \$248,000; February 2008: \$290,000).

The median price for a Hamilton City house rose to \$320,000 in February, from \$290,000 in January (February 2008: \$360,000). Sales volume was up, with 197 houses sold in February 2009 (January 2009: 119; February 2008: 209).

Sales volume was also up in Western Bay of Plenty Country with 58 houses sold, an increase on the 28 sold in January. The median price dipped to \$351,000 from \$379,000 in January. In February 2008, 84 houses sold with a median sale price of \$400,000.

The median price for a house in Mt Maunganui/Papamoa increased to \$400,000 in February, from \$375,000 in January (February 2008: \$470,000). 71 houses sold, up on the 40 sold in January 2009 (February 2008: 77).

100 houses sold in Tauranga in February, up on the 66 sold in January (February 2008: 105). The median price decreased to \$340,000, from \$343,750 in January (February 2008: \$354,000).

Rotorua's median price rose to \$256,000 in February, from \$242,500 in January (February 2008: \$266,000). 63 houses sold, up from the 48 sold in January (February 2008: 93).

36 houses sold in Taupo in February, down two on the 38 sold in January (February 2008: 52). The median price also decreased to \$332,500 in February from \$382,500 in January (February 2008: \$425,000).

The median price for a King Country home fell to \$166,000 in February (January 2009: \$182,500; February 2008: \$161,000). Nine houses sold, down one on the 10 sold in January (February 2008: 25).

The median price for a Gisborne City home dropped to \$249,750 from \$255,000 in January (February 2008: \$268,500). Sales volume was up with 30 houses sold, compared with the 26 sold in January (February 2008: 55).

Two sales with a median price of \$405,500 were recorded in Gisborne Country for February (No sales recorded for January 2009 or February 2008).

The median price for a house in Eastern Bay of Plenty Country jumped to \$260,000 in February, up from \$210,000 in January (February 2008: \$291,000). 30 houses sold, a rise in numbers from the 18 sold in January. 64 sold in February 2008.

Hawkes Bay

Sales volume was up in the Hawkes Bay in February with 182 houses sold (January 2009: 155; February 2008: 283). The median price was also up at \$267,000 (January 2009: \$259,000; February 2008: \$270,000).

The median price for a house in Napier City increased to \$310,500 in February (January 2009: \$287,000; February 2008: \$311,250). 84 houses sold in February (January 2009: 79; February 2008: 130).

69 houses sold in Hastings City in February 2009, up from 46 in January 2009 (February 2008: 105). The median price was up at \$253,000 from \$240,000 in January (February 2008: \$260,000).

Hawkes Bay Country's median price increased to \$230,000 in February, from \$134,000 in January (February 2008: \$251,250). 12 homes sold in February (January 2009: six; February 2008: 18).

Manawatu/Wanganui

The median price for a house in the Manawatu/Wanganui districts was up at \$230,000 in February (January 2009: \$220,000; February 2008: \$225,000). 308 houses sold in February, up on the 217 sold in January (February 2008: 376).

The median sale price for a house in Palmerston North City decreased to \$252,750 in February. (January 2009: \$260,000; February 2008: \$262,000). 144 houses sold (January 2009: 99; February 2008: 131).

Sales volume was up in Manawatu Country with 21 houses sold (January 2009: 17; February 2008: 38). The median price rose to \$220,000 from \$190,000 in January (February 2008: \$225,500).

The median sale price in the Manawatu was up at \$245,000 in February (January 2009: \$235,000; February 2008: \$240,000). The number of sales was up with 233 houses sold (January 2009: 164; February 2008: 251).

53 houses sold in Wanganui City in February, up from the 35 sold in January (February 2008: 89). The median price was also up at \$193,500 from \$178,000 in January (February 2008: \$170,000).

The median sale price in Wanganui rose to \$180,000 in February, from \$160,000 in January (February 2008: \$175,000). 75 houses sold, up on the 53 sold in January 2009 (February 2008: 125).

Taranaki

The median price for a house in Taranaki decreased to \$260,000 in February (January 2009: \$266,750; February 2008: \$265,000). 147 houses sold, up from the 130 sold in January (February 2008: 188).

22 houses sold in the Taranaki Country area in February (January 2009: 13; February 2008: 25). The median price fell to \$250,000 from \$255,000 in January (February 2008: \$220,000).

The median sale price for a New Plymouth City house dropped to \$271,000 (January 2009: \$307,500; February 2008: \$320,000). The number of sales increased with 75 houses sold in February (January 2009: 66; February 2008: 101).

Wellington

Wellington's median price increased to \$375,000 in February from January 2009's \$362,500. (February 2008: \$375,800). The number of sales was up at 639 for February, compared with 396 sold in January 2009. (February 2008: 748).

53 houses sold in the Wairarapa in February (January 2009: 32; February 2008: 59). The median price was up to \$241,500 from \$231,000 in January (February 2008: \$258,000).

The median price for an Upper Hutt house rose to \$321,250 (January 2009: \$300,000; February 2008: \$325,000). 54 houses sold, up on the 34 sold in January (February 2008: 97).

99 houses sold in the Hutt Valley (January 2009: 78; February 2008: 152). The median price rose to \$350,000 from \$345,000 in January 2009 (February 2008: \$340,000).

The median price for a house in Otaki/Paekakariki jumped to \$352,500 in February (January 2009: \$315,000; February 2008: \$326,500). 92 houses sold (January 2009: 65; February 2008: 86).

61 houses sold in Pukerua Bay/Tawa in February, an increase on the 39 sales in January (February 2008: 67). The median price also decreased to \$354,000 from \$364,000 in January (February 2008: \$360,000).

Sales numbers in Central Wellington increased to 49 from 45 in January 2009. (February 2008: 78). The median price eased slightly to \$395,000 from \$397,500 in January (February 2008: \$405,000).

Nelson/Marlborough

The median price for a Nelson/Marlborough house increased to \$323,000 in February (January 2009: \$306,000; February 2008: \$351,750). 222 houses sold (January 2009: 173; February 2008: 236).

86 houses sold in Nelson City in February (January 2009: 68; February 2008: 86). The median price remained steady at \$320,000 (January 2009: \$320,000; February 2008: \$350,000)

The median price for a Nelson Council zone house increased to \$330,000 in February (January 2009: \$316,500; February 2008: \$355,000). 160 houses sold (January 2009: 114; February 2008: 137).

62 houses sold in Marlborough in February (January 2009: 59; February 2008: 99). The median price rose to \$306,000 from \$287,500 in January (February 2008: \$350,000).

Canterbury/Westland

Sales volume was up in Canterbury/Westland with 815 houses sold in February (January 2009: 562; February 2008: 953). The median sale price increased to \$290,000 from \$285,000 in January (February 2008: \$320,000).

The median price for a house in Christchurch City increased to \$305,000 in February, from \$300,000 in January (February 2008: \$330,000). 549 houses sold (January 2009: 379; February 2008: 656).

The median price for a home in Rangiora fell to \$264,000 in February (January 2009: \$323,000; February 2008: \$326,500). Sale numbers increased with 27 houses sold. (January 2009: 20; February 2008: 42).

The median price for a North Canterbury house was up to \$260,000 in February, from \$247,000 in January (February 2008: \$285,000). 27 houses sold, up on the 19 sold in January (February 2008: 23).

The median price for a Canterbury Country home fell to \$317,500 in February, from \$360,000 in January (February 2008: \$399,000). 28 houses sold (January 2009: 30; February 2008: 45).

The number of houses sold in Mid Canterbury in February was up with 53 sales recorded. (January 2009: 45; February 2008: 45). The median price was down at \$240,000 from \$245,000 in January and \$280,000 February 2008.

Sales volume rose in Timaru in February, with 46 houses sold (January 2009: 21; February 2008: 43). The median price decreased to \$202,500 in February, from \$225,000 in January (February 2008: \$218,000).

The median price for a house on the West Coast rose to \$225,000 in February from \$172,500 in January (February 2008: \$204,500). 31 houses sold, up on the 18 sold in January (February 2008: 42).

266 houses sold in Outer Canterbury in February (January 2009: 183; February 2008: 297). The median price fell to \$244,000 in February from \$259,000 in January (February 2008: \$285,000).

Central Otago Lakes

76 houses sold in February, down two from the 78 sold in January (February 2008: 99). The median price was also down at \$425,000. (January 2009: \$457,500; February 2008: \$515,000).

The median price for a house in Central Otago fell to \$332,000 in February (January 2009: \$382,000; February 2008: \$378,500). 36 houses sold (January 2009: 35; February 2008: 60).

Sales volume was down three in Queenstown with 40 houses sold in February, compared with the 43 sold in January (February 2008: 39). The median price was also down at \$508,000 (January 2009: \$560,000; February 2008: \$565,000).

Otago

265 houses sold in Otago in February, up on the 194 sold in January (February 2008: 334). The median price was also up at \$223,000 from \$210,000 in January (February 2008: \$231,500).

Sales volume was up in North Otago with 30 houses sold (January 2009: 20; February 2008: 58). The median was down at \$189,500 from \$205,000 in January (February 2008: \$202,000).

The median price in Dunedin City increased to \$235,000 in February from \$231,000 in January (February 2008: \$240,000). 212 houses sold (January 2009: 152; February 2008: 244).

The number of sales was down two in South Otago with 15 houses sold (January 2009: 17; February 2008: 29). The median price rose to \$135,000 from \$120,000 in January (February 2008: \$145,000).

Eight houses sold in East Otago in February, with a median price of \$180,000 compared with five sales in January with a median of \$145,000. (February 2008: three sales with a median of \$325,000).

Southland

Sales volume was up in Southland with 133 houses sold (January 2009: 111; February 2008: 232). The median price increased to \$180,000 from \$175,000 in January (February 2008: \$201,000).

Sales volume was up in Invercargill at 92 for February (January 2009: 67; February 2008: 150). The median price was steady at \$185,000 (January 2009: \$185,000; February 2008: \$211,000).

The median price for a house in Gore dipped to \$129,100 in February from \$166,000 in January (February 2008: \$168,500). 19 houses sold during the month, compared with the 21 sold in January 2009 (February 2008: 44).