



Location, Location, Location

If you're a landlord, a renter, or you're thinking of investing in residential property, knowing the vacancy rates in your city can be an invaluable asset. So which cities are in highest demand, and where do renters have the upper hand?

Across the country, 2.2% of all available rental properties were untenanted in May 2017, according to data from SQM Research. In Sydney and Melbourne, sky-high house prices have helped push rents up, and demand remains strong as first home buyers are forced to rent long-term while they struggle to save that elusive deposit. By contrast, the decline of the mining boom has seen vacancies soar across Perth.

Here's a snapshot of rental vacancy trends to give you an idea of which are the best cities for renters:

Melbourne

In Melbourne, the median rent in May 2017 was \$420, and vacancies sat at 2.2%, a slight drop of just 0.1% from the previous month. The CBD area recently recorded its lowest vacancy rate in almost 10 years, with just 1.7% of properties untenanted. This is despite speculation that apartment over-supply would lead to a cooling in the rental market. In Hawthorn in the inner east, a three-bedroom home will set you back around \$700 per week in rent. Meanwhile the same home in the western suburb of Sunshine rents for just \$345 per week. However, Sunshine has a vacancy rate of 2.2%, compared to Hawthorn's 1.3% percent – this is most likely owing to Hawthorn's proximity to the CBD and leading universities, making it popular with students and young professionals.

Sydney

In beachside Manly, a two-bed dwelling could cost as much as \$960 per week to rent, and the 2.6% vacancy rate is higher than the Sydney average of 1.8%. Yet in Mount Druitt in Sydney's West, landlords can expect to charge just \$350 per week for a two-bedroom home. While rents here are low compared to the Sydney median, a vacancy rate of just 1.2% means your property is unlikely to be empty for long between tenants.

Brisbane

Prospective tenants looking to rent in upmarket Ascot can expect to pay up to \$1000 per week for a four-bedroom home.

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Popular cities for Renters!

However, with a vacancy rate of 8.7%, the suburb is not so sought after with investors. If you head south to Logan Central, you can snap up a four-bedroom family home for under \$400 per week, with vacancies sitting at just 2.2%.

Hobart

The rental market in Hobart is the strongest in the country, with just 0.6% of properties vacant in May this year. Median weekly rents for three-bedroom homes in Hobart hover around the \$360 per week mark, providing healthy yields and making the city an attractive option for both local and interstate investors. A four-bed property in Sandy Bay, close to Tasmania's world-class university, can command upwards of \$600 per week – and with just 0.5% of properties vacant, it seems students and families can't resist.

Adelaide

The rental market in Adelaide is holding steady, with 1.9% of homes across the City of Churches vacant in January this year. Leafy Malvern in Adelaide's inner south, where the median rent is \$495 per week, recorded a vacancy rate of 2.7% in May 2017. To the north in Elizabeth, median rents sit at just \$268 per week, with a mere 0.9% of properties vacant.

Perth

The Perth metro area has the highest vacancy rate of the major capitals, with 4.7% of rentals across the city sitting unoccupied. In riverside Mount Pleasant, \$330 a week is the average rent for a two-bed home, and there shouldn't be too much competition with other prospective tenants as 4.8% of properties are currently vacant. Meanwhile in Midland, vacancies remain around 5.4% despite affordable rents to the tune of \$280 for 2 bedroom dwellings.

Refresh your rental property

Depending on your tenants, rental properties can take a serious hammering, and often require an update every few years to keep them appealing. A freshly updated property can attract a higher quality tenant – even a higher rental price! Try this to-do list to update your property.

1. Do a deep clean

A big clean in between tenants can make a huge difference when it comes to the appeal of a property. Your checklist should include items such as clearing and repairing gutters and downpipes, dusting and washing light fittings and skirting boards, cleaning the exterior walls and fences, and washing windows, both inside and out. Clean bathrooms and kitchens are especially important to prospective tenants, so have shower screens and stoves professionally cleaned, and if they're past their use-by date, replaced.

2. Repair and replace the little things

A tell-tale sign of where a fitting or fixture needs fixing – or replacing – is if they squeak, rattle or hum. There's nothing more off-putting to potential tenants than opening a cupboard door that has a hinge missing, or a handle that comes off in your hand.

3. Update the paint and the flooring

These are the two cosmetic fixes that add maximum visual appeal to a potential tenant's eye. Keep the colour palette completely neutral to appeal to the widest market. White paint is the way to go to maximise light in the property and give a fresh look, while dark carpet or floating floors are low maintenance.

5. Upgrade your storage

Storage is a big drawcard for potential tenants, and it can be added in such a way that it contributes to the aesthetic appeal of your house.

Are you a landlord? Contact us today we currently have end of year rates saving you money on your investment property.....



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Is it really getting harder to buy property?

A controversial commentator has slammed Generation Y's "self-entitlement" about property prices, sparking a war of words and once again raising the issues of home ownership, investment and affordability.

In his recent blog titled *Owning a home is a privilege, not a right!* Buyer's agent, property investor, and director of wHeregroup Todd Hunter addressed the claim that Generation Y can't get onto the property ladder due to houses being unaffordable.

"I have to say, I am sick of all the whining," he wrote. "This sense of self-entitlement is simply sickening. Apparently, things are so much tougher than they were 10, 20 and 30 years ago. But were they?"

Mr Hunter went on to tell his own property investment story, emphasizing his initial low income and stringent budgeting, and contrasting the buying conditions to the luxuries of buyers today.

"There weren't the loan products available like there are today, where you can have just a 5 per cent deposit," he wrote. "Mum and Dad couldn't borrow against the equity in their home to give me a deposit either. We had to save. Yes, it's a nasty word."

Mr Hunter then rattled off a list of Millennial privileges, which he pointed to as a reason for their lack of savings for home deposits.

"We didn't drink \$4 coffees every day, we didn't have Foxtel, Netflix, Spotify," he wrote. "Our mobile phones lasted for many years. We had one TV in our house, not four. We didn't have lavish weddings for \$60,000

nor travel overseas for 12 months on a gap year, partying 24/7 whilst deciding what we wanted to do in life."

The blog post has sparked outrage among the first home buyer community.

"Just look at the intelligent comments on this feed and you'll see it's NOT the same as it was when you were young," they wrote. "It's your generation and the Baby Boomers that have ruined the whole world for future generations. You should be ashamed."

Some readers took to the wHeregroup Facebook page to voice their disgust. "This is the worst pile of trite non-reasoning I've ever seen pop up on my feed. By every sensible metric on earth, home ownership is harder now than 30 years ago. That is an indisputable fact," one commenter wrote.

"The condescending assumptions in this article are nauseating. I am a Generation Y with a great job and I don't own an expensive car or more than one TV. Still I struggle with a rental market that makes saving for a deposit hard. Faced with a 35-50 year mortgage. I work 50 hours a week. This article makes out I'm lazy for not completely sacrificing my entire life for capitalism," another wrote.

Some readers, however, shared Mr Hunter's sentiment, commenting "Love it. Well said Todd", and relating to his story. "Totally agree! I saved my butt off to build a house when I was 21 and lived with my parents' old hand-me-down furniture on concrete floors for years till I could save up enough cash to afford to buy my own furniture, carpets and tiles! We all survived!"

What are your thoughts? Is it really becoming harder to buy property?