

HOME AFFORDABILITY REPORT

QUARTERLY SURVEY MARCH 2014 | VOLUME 24 | NUMBER 1

DETERIORATION IN AFFORDABILITY

The all districts national affordability index deteriorated by 3.0% during the twelve months ending February 2014. This result was due to a \$33,000 increase in the national median house over the year which more than offset a (\$30.41) increase in the average wage rate and a reduction in the average mortgage interest rate from 5.65% to 5.51%. This deterioration in affordability is likely to continue, and may increase, due to projected increases in mortgage interest rates and the “stickiness” of house prices on the down side.

On a regional basis annual changes in affordability showed five regions with improved affordability. These were Central Otago Lakes [5.9%], Manawatu/Wanganui [5.3%], Wellington [2.5%], Northland [1.4%] and Otago [0.7%]. A deterioration in annual affordability was evident in seven regions Nelson Marlborough [5.1%], Canterbury [4.5%], Auckland [4.5%], Waikato [4.2%], Hawkes Bay [4.0%], Southland [3.0%], and Taranaki [2.6%].

On a quarterly basis the all districts national affordability index improved by 2.8% compared with 7.5% deterioration in the previous quarter. This result was due primarily to a \$10,000 decrease in the national median house price since November 2013. Not too much can be read into this quarterly result since the median house price statistic was most likely skewed upwards due to the paucity of first home buyers in late 2013. This was because the Reserve Bank loan to value regulations impacted on house prices and sale volumes at the less expensive end of the market.

Auckland at 134.5% of the all districts national index [100%] was the least affordable region followed by Central Otago Lakes [125.1%] and Canterbury [100.0%]. Southland retained its place as the most affordable region with an index of 51.4% of the national average. Manawatu/Wanganui [57.8%] was in second place followed by Otago [65.9%] third.

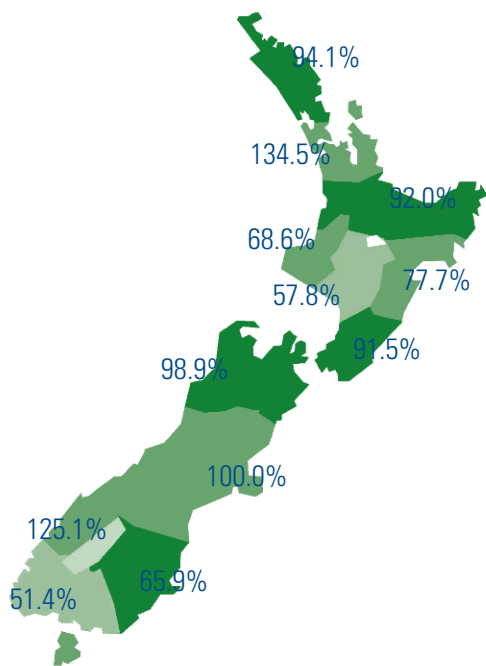
Further details on affordability and the methodology used in this survey are reported on the following pages.

KEY POINTS

- Annual deterioration in National affordability of 3.0%
- Affordability projected to continue to deteriorate in 2014

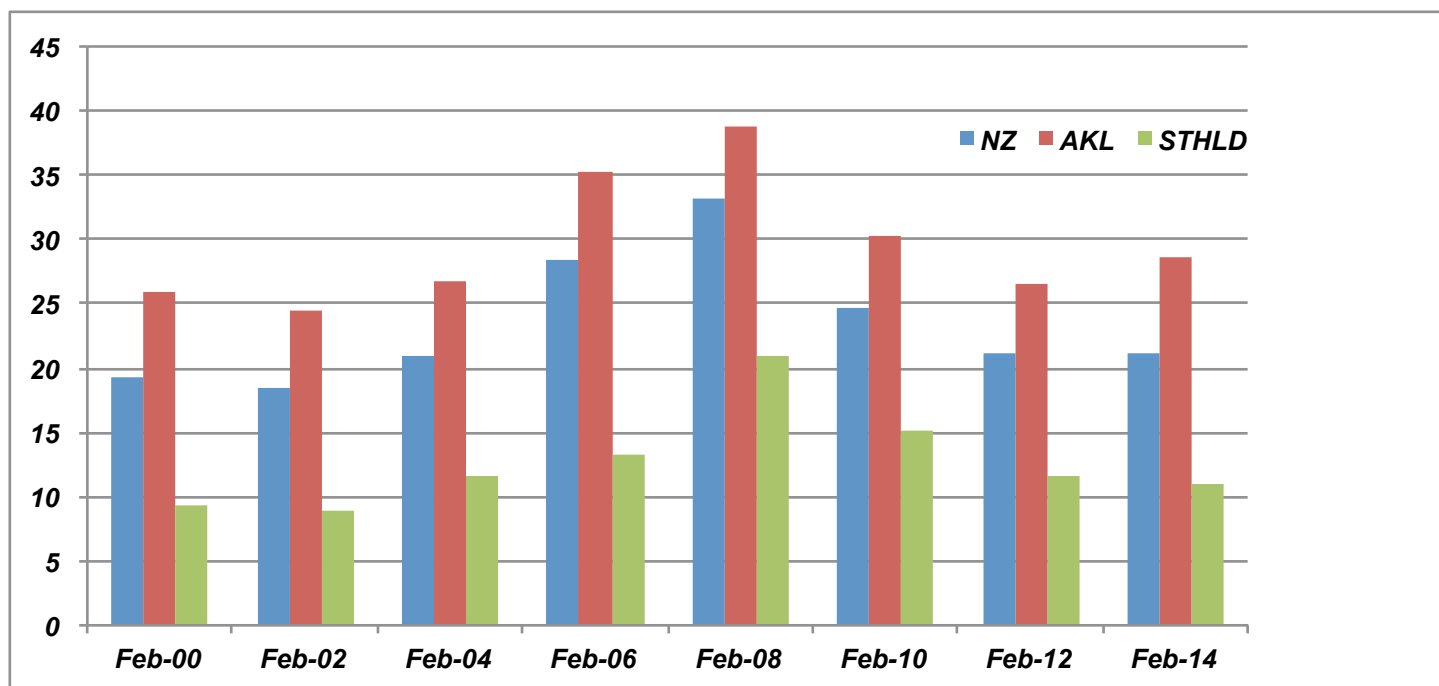


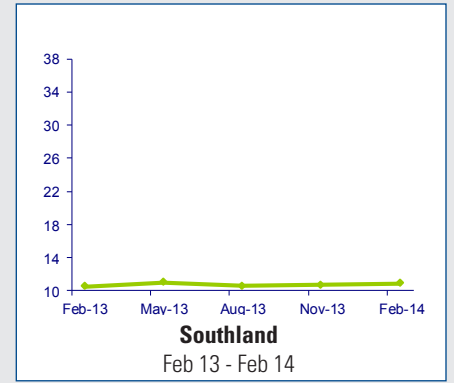
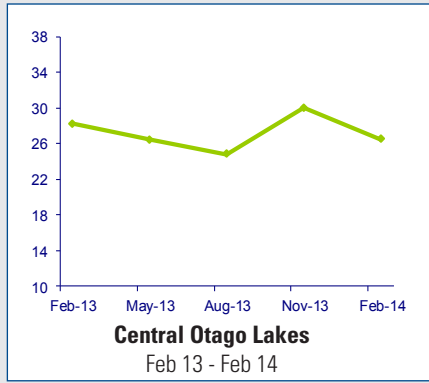
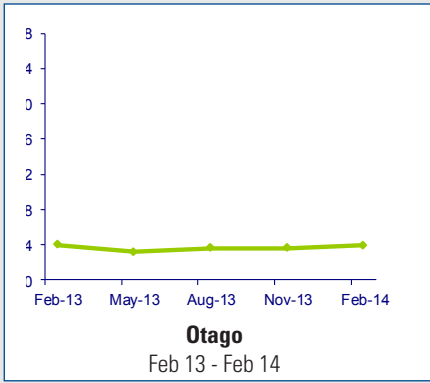
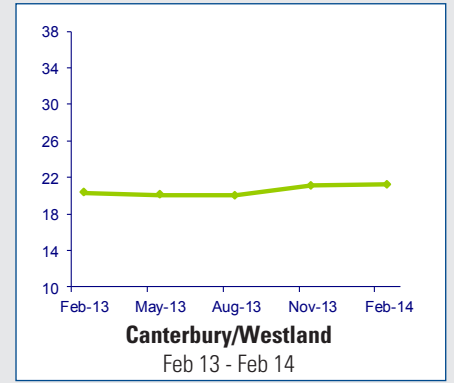
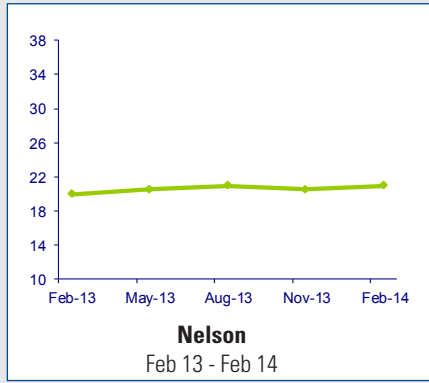
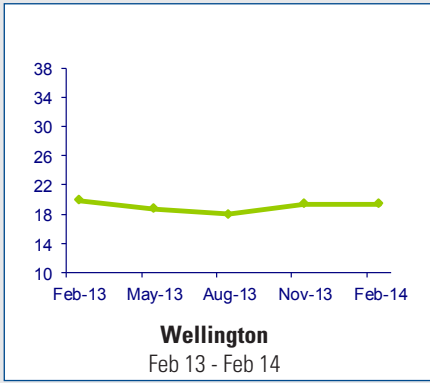
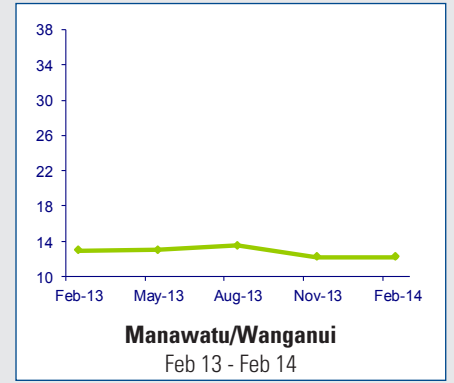
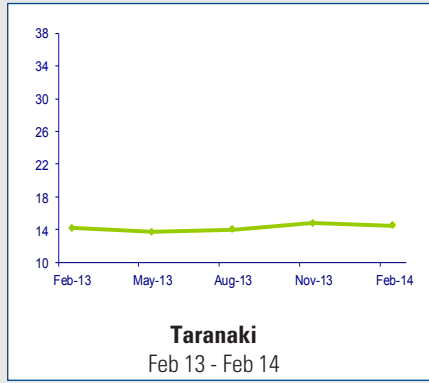
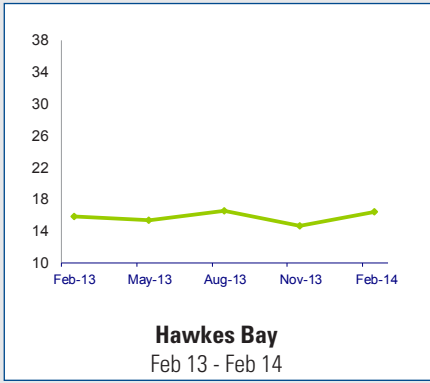
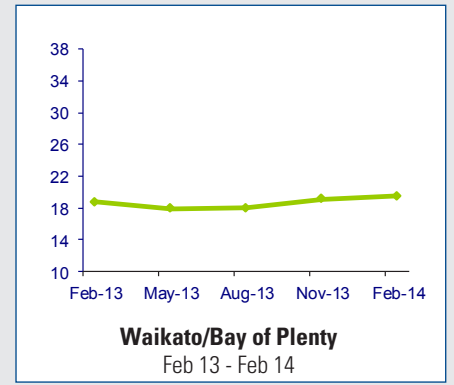
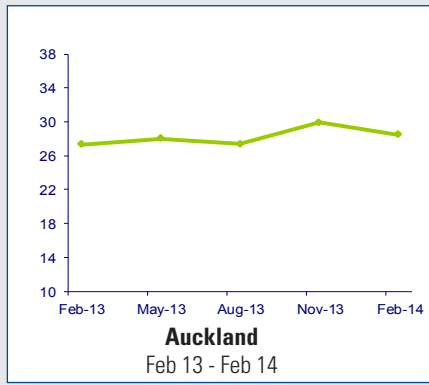
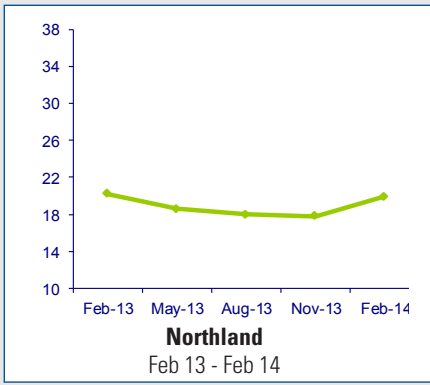
REGIONAL AFFORDABILITY AS A PERCENTAGE OF NATIONAL AVERAGE



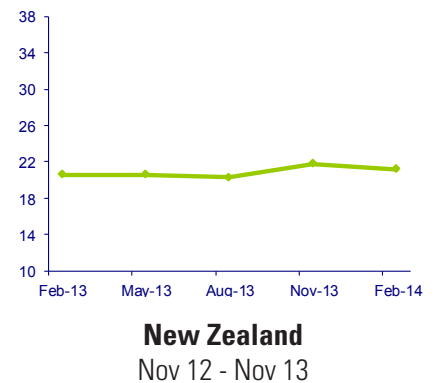
HOME AFFORDABILITY INDEX	PERCENTAGE CHANGE IN HOME AFFORDABILITY IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS			
	Region	Nov 2013	Feb 2014	improvement
Northland	17.8	19.9	1.4%	-
Auckland	29.9	28.5	-	4.5%
Waikato/Bay of Plenty	19.1	19.5	-	4.2%
Hawke's Bay	14.6	16.4	-	4.0%
Taranaki	14.8	14.5	-	2.6%
Manawatu/Wanganui	12.2	12.2	5.3%	-
Wellington	19.4	19.4	2.5%	-
Nelson/Marlborough	20.5	20.9	-	5.1%
Canterbury/Westland	21.1	21.2	-	4.5%
Otago	13.6	13.9	0.7%	-
Central Otago Lakes	30.0	26.5	5.9%	-
Southland	10.7	10.9	-	3.0%
New Zealand	21.8	21.2	-	3.0%

NATIONAL HOME AFFORDABILITY INDEX
(A LOW INDEX EQUALS IMPROVED AFFORDABILITY)





REGIONAL AFFORDABILITY INDEX



DATA SOURCES

The average weekly earnings and mortgage interest rate figures are drawn from Statistics New Zealand and Reserve Bank data. Housing prices are released by the Real Estate Institute of New Zealand (REINZ). The combination of this data provides the opportunity to calculate a reliable and useful summary index. The lower the index the more affordable the housing. The index allows for comparisons over time and between regions of relative housing affordability in New Zealand.

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 publishes a range of data on mortgage interest rates. The Reserve Bank series selected for the affordability index is based on end of month floating and fixed rates for existing borrowers. Weighted by volume, loan type and term from each lending institution, the rate used is effectively the weighted average interest rate earned by lenders (and paid by borrowers) for more than 90 per cent of the residential mortgage market.

This mortgage rate provides an indication of the interest which is payable on new mortgages entered into in the quarter under consideration. While there are various levels, as a percentage of the house price which a mortgage may represent, in general most new home buyers are up to the maximum percentage of approximately 80 percent.

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MASSEY UNIVERSITY 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 established a Real Estate Analysis Unit to operate out of both MasseyUniversity's Palmerston North andAlbany campuses.

The Foundation works closely with the Property Studies Group at MasseyUniversity.

SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND FINANCE MASSEY UNIVERSITY

MasseyUniversity 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 BusinessStudiesCollege. Professor R.V.(Bob) Hargreaves, directs the Massey University Real Estate Analysis Unit (MUREAU).

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