

Rental vacancies ease as landlords and tenants respond to the new “COVID-19 normal”

For immediate release

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After the extraordinary disruption brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, the REINSW Vacancy Rate Survey results for August 2020 reveal that the worst may be over.

Vacancies across Sydney overall decreased for the first time in August, after five consecutive months of increases, and now sit at 3.7% – a drop of 1.3% from July. Similarly, vacancies in the Inner, Middle and Outer Rings of Sydney all recorded easing rates, with drops of 0.6%, 0.8% and 1.9% respectively.

“The Sydney market is showing the first signs of a turnaround,” REINSW CEO Tim McKibbin said. “But even with these drops in August, vacancies across Sydney are still markedly higher than they were at the start of the year.”

Similarly, the metropolitan hubs of Newcastle and Wollongong both saw a slight easing of vacancies in August, as did many regional areas.


“Vacancies across most of regional New South Wales remain extremely tight,” Mr McKibbin said. “The Central Coast, Northern Rivers, Orana and Riverina regions were the only areas to record an increase in vacancies over the last month.

“Anecdotal feedback from our members indicates that the easing of vacancy rates across much of New South Wales may be attributable to landlords responding to the changed market conditions brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.

“With so many people experiencing job losses or reduced pay, many tenants have had to relinquish properties and go in search of more affordable options. Landlords faced with vacant properties are now, in turn, reducing weekly rents to entice tenants.

“The result? Tenants have the opportunity to secure a rental property that suits their budget, landlords are not faced with vacant properties, and vacancies across the state have reduced.

“It’s all part of the new ‘COVID-19 normal’ for the residential rental market.”

REINSW CEO, Tim McKibbin is available for comment. 

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About REINSW

The Real Estate Institute of New South Wales (REINSW) is the peak industry body for real estate and property professionals in NSW. It represents more than 2000 agencies across residential sales, property management, commercial, strata management, buyers’ agency, agency services and auctioneering. Established in 1910, REINSW works to improve the standards, professionalism and expertise of its members to continually evolve and innovate the industry. It lobbies the government and industry on behalf of members, develops new products and services to benefit agencies and professionals, and offer training and ongoing professional development. For more information, visit reinsw.com.au.

Residential vacancy rate percentage

The REINSW Residential Vacancy Rate Report is based on the proportion of unlet residential dwellings to the total rent roll of REINSW member agents on the 15th of each month. Carried out monthly, the research – a survey of REINSW member agents conducted by Survey Matters – collects the total properties on agency rent rolls, the number of properties that were vacant on the 15th of the month, and the postcode in which a majority of agents’ rental properties are located. The suburb-level rates reported by agents are weighted based on ABS Census 2016 Dwelling Characteristics. The August 2020 report is based on survey responses covering 128,574 residential rental properties.

	Aug-20	Jul-20	Jun-20	May-20	Apr-20	Mar-20	Feb-20	Jan-20	Dec-19	Nov-19	Oct-19	Sep-19
SYDNEY												
Inner	4.7%	5.3%	5.8%	5.0%	4.3%	2.5%	2.8%	3.1%	3.4%	2.4%	2.7%	3.1%
Middle	4.6%	5.4%	5.2%	4.6%	4.4%	3.6%	3.9%	3.6%	3.4%	3.7%	4.2%	3.0%
Outer	2.4%	4.3%	2.6%	2.7%	3.1%	3.0%	3.5%	3.3%	3.4%	3.6%	3.9%	2.7%
Total	3.7%	5.0%	4.5%	4.1%	3.8%	3.0%	3.4%	3.3%	3.4%	3.2%	3.6%	2.9%
HUNTER												
Newcastle	1.2%	1.3%	1.7%	2.4%	2.1%	1.6%	2.5%	2.0%	2.5%	2.6%	2.5%	1.2%
Other	0.8%	1.3%	1.9%	2.4%	1.8%	1.2%	2.0%	0.9%	1.7%	1.1%	1.4%	1.0%
Total	0.9%	1.3%	1.8%	2.4%	1.9%	1.3%	2.1%	1.2%	1.9%	1.6%	1.8%	1.0%
ILLAWARRA												
Wollongong	2.6%	2.9%	3.2%	3.9%	3.2%	3.5%	2.0%	2.9%	2.6%	4.3%	2.5%	2.8%
Other	1.1%	2.6%	2.9%	2.9%	4.3%	4.3%	2.3%	2.3%	2.9%	1.5%	2.1%	1.5%
Total	2.0%	2.8%	3.1%	3.6%	3.6%	3.8%	2.1%	2.7%	2.7%	2.9%	2.4%	2.2%
REGIONS												
Albury	0.4%	1.1%	0.6%	1.2%	1.2%	0.6%	1.6%	1.8%	1.1%	1.3%	0.9%	1.0%
Central Coast	2.0%	1.5%	2.1%	2.3%	3.0%	2.4%	3.0%	4.3%	5.1%	3.5%	4.4%	3.0%
Central West	0.6%	1.1%	1.5%	2.0%	2.0%	1.0%	1.4%	2.1%	2.2%	2.0%	1.9%	2.3%
Coffs Harbour	0.8%	2.1%	2.4%	3.0%	3.4%	3.1%	5.4%	3.3%	2.5%	3.1%	3.6%	2.9%
Mid-North Coast	1.1%	1.2%	2.0%	3.2%	2.6%	1.7%	2.5%	2.4%	2.2%	2.3%	2.1%	2.8%
Murrumbidgee	0.7%	0.9%	0.8%	2.0%	1.1%	1.4%	1.5%	1.9%	1.8%	-	0.5%	1.2%
New England	1.6%	2.8%	3.1%	3.9%	3.4%	3.0%	3.8%	4.1%	3.3%	2.4%	2.8%	2.4%
Northern Rivers	1.5%	1.1%	2.6%	1.8%	2.7%	1.7%	1.7%	2.2%	1.5%	1.3%	1.5%	1.6%
Orana	1.5%	1.0%	1.9%	2.4%	2.7%	0.7%	1.2%	2.4%	1.8%	1.8%	1.8%	1.4%
Riverina	0.9%	0.6%	1.2%	2.5%	1.8%	1.5%	1.9%	1.7%	1.2%	0.8%	1.1%	1.2%
South Coast	0.9%	1.4%	2.7%	2.0%	1.7%	4.8%	3.9%	2.7%	3.4%	2.4%	3.1%	3.1%
South Eastern*	0.8%	-	0.8%	1.8%	0.7%	3.5%	2.5%	1.8%	1.2%	0.3%	0.8%	1.2%