



Home on the range

Uptick in the residential market generally will support greater interest in lifestyle property, as buyers look for value beyond urban confines.

Backdropped by a slowly recovering wider residential market, with independent forecasters typically predicting house prices will rise over the next two years, the lifestyle sector is performing well around the country, albeit with activity levels fluctuating between regions.

Bayleys Insights & Data analyst Eos Li says high stock levels continue to give buyers plenty of choice, reducing urgency. However, serious buyers are quick to move on well-presented, well-located, and well-connected lifestyle properties.

“Transparent, evidence-based appraisals remain critical to setting prices that generate engagement and offers,” says Li. “More sellers are aligning expectations with current market realities, although some still benchmark against peak values.

“The lower interest rate story will likely drive the market in the short-term, while upgrades to rural broadband and transport links, combined with ongoing flexible work patterns, are also a consideration.”

Li says touted government changes

to planning regimes should ultimately make development easier by unlocking more lifestyle land on the edges of urban areas, which could further change market dynamics.

Bayleys national country manager and general manager Auckland residential & lifestyle, Raymond Mountfort says it is encouraging to see the high activity levels in the Waikato and Bay of Plenty.

“They’re outperforming other regions for sales volumes, in some instances, quite significantly. That speaks to the desirability of the golden triangle economic zone, and the connectivity advantages these regions have.

“There’s been quite a lot of inventory being worked through nationwide as the general market improves, but as many vendors target spring to list lifestyle properties, now we’re focusing on gathering new stock.”

Mountfort says landbankers and developers are back in the market, with government moves to remove red tape from land adjacent to already developed areas likely to generate fresh activity.

Auckland

Mountfort says activity in the Auckland lifestyle market has been somewhat subdued from March to August this year, with the 7.7-percent increase in volumes year-on-year well behind the increase noted in other parts of the country.

“The fairly strong upswing in Auckland’s residential sales volumes, especially in the higher value brackets, has likely diverted some activity away from lifestyle sales.

“That said, when central suburban prices improve, properties on the city fringes suddenly look like great value, and buyers for lifestyle properties in the region tend to be Auckland-based rather than from other parts of the country.”

The majority of lifestyle buyers are simply seeking a nice place to live and raise a family, says Mountfort, rather than chasing productive income streams.

“Properties in areas where there are smaller primary schools with strong connections to the community are very appealing,” he says. “The sweet spot is still around the 2ha mark, or even slightly less, with a substantial home and improvements. Bonus points if it’s also relatively close to town.

“People moving from suburban locations do still want a reasonable standard of amenity nearby so that’s why Franklin remains one of the largest and most popular areas for lifestyle buyers, as townships like Pukekohe are growing and flourishing.”

Bay of Plenty

Bayleys Bay of Plenty lifestyle and country sales manager, Matt

Clutterbuck says there’s been a strong uptick in buyer enquiry on lifestyle properties in the five months to the end of August.

“Numbers at open homes have increased, we’re seeing more offers on properties, and there are cash buyers in the market actively looking to purchase.

“The latest ASB regional economic scorecard has Bay of Plenty top of the list, with a robust kiwifruit season contributing to the region’s good fortunes. People love the Bay, and buyers for lifestyle properties are predominantly local townies looking to get out into the country.

“But we’re starting to see buyers from New Zealand’s bigger metropolitan areas visit and enquire on our properties again, and some of them are quick to act purchasing BOP lifestyle properties.” Clutterbuck says buyers are a mix of those wanting to escape the city lights, and those wanting to leverage land to have an income, with a broad range of lifestyle property available.

“People are increasingly looking for properties with a second dwelling to allow multi-generational living, and opportunities with good shedding to allow work from home businesses. “Lifestyle properties right across the region are in high demand, with the immediate Tauranga surrounds remaining popular, along with anywhere offering water views, and proximity to schools and amenities.”

Marlborough

Bayleys Marlborough director Glenn Dick says lifestyle property in the region continues to attract steady enquiry, and supply is also consistent.



“We don’t tend to get peaks and troughs of activity on the listing or sales side,” he says. “It just ticks along nicely.

“The hot price point is around \$1.3m to \$1.5m and, while overall enquiry tends to be evenly split between local and out-of-town buyers with the occasional offshore buyer, we surprisingly seem to be seeing more interest coming from the top of the North Island and we’re unsure what is driving this.”

Dick says given the challenges the wine industry is currently facing due to US tariffs and falling global demand for wine, buyers looking for Marlborough rural property are opting for straight lifestyle opportunities, without the pressure of needing to drive income.

“While all areas of Marlborough have something special to offer, lifestyle areas within around 15-minutes’ drive of Blenheim are the ones most likely to resonate with family buyers.”

BAYLEYS LIFESTYLE SALES

18%

More lifestyle deals in 2025



In the five months to 31st August 2025, Bayleys’ deals are up more than 18% YOY. This is an impressive lift given listings are only up 3%, highlighting that stock that had been sitting on the market is being cleared.

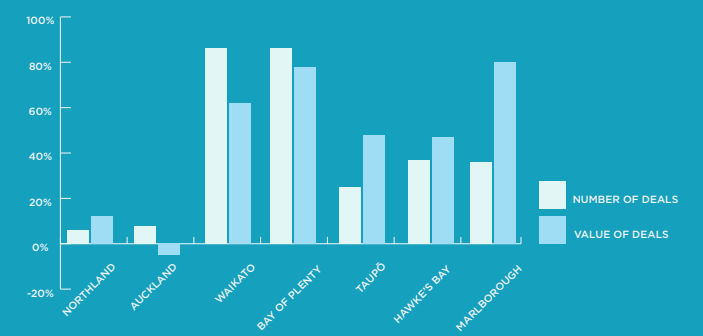


Lifestyle sales activity lifted across several regions including Northland, Auckland, Marlborough, Hawke’s Bay, Bay of Plenty, Waikato and Taupō – highlighting strong growth in the lifestyle sector.



Bayleys’ average days on market have dropped more than 60% year on year, which shows the market is turning and property is moving faster with stronger buyers confidence returning.

VOLUME AND VALUE OF BAYLEYS LIFESTYLE DEALS



Source: Bayleys data from 1st April 2025 - 31st August 2025