



Lifestyle market warms up

Evolving life stages and a stabilising market are prompting many lifestyle owners to make their next move.

Lifestyle living offers space, privacy, and a calmer pace that many people value, keeping property owners at arm's length from the intensity of the city while still connecting them to strong local communities. For most, a lifestyle property delivers exactly what they hoped for, but life moves in stages, and changing needs often determine when it is time to sell.

"Lifestyle property ownership has a natural cycle," explains Bayleys national lifestyle manager Raymond Mountfort. "People do not typically sell lifestyle properties because they stop loving them, they sell because their needs evolve."

"A property may work beautifully for a period of life, then things change."

"For families with young children, lifestyle living offers freedom, space

and a taste of how life used to be. But once those children hit their teen years, the daily commute to school, sport and social activities can become increasingly demanding, so many families find themselves drawn back toward the city to streamline timetables and keep kids connected."

DATA SIGNALS

Around the country, the lifestyle market is showing positive signs. Mountfort says Bayleys continues to dominate lifestyle sales nationwide, with the team posting record volumes last year and seeing sustained demand across key regions.

"The broader economic backdrop is noticeably steadier, buyers are showing more confidence, and sellers are becoming more



“My message to prospective vendors is, if you have been waiting to sell, now is the time to get your ducks in a row as the window of opportunity is open, and buyers are active.”

RAYMOND MOUNTFORT
BAYLEYS NATIONAL
LIFESTYLE MANAGER

motivated. We are also seeing clear signs that the residential market is starting to gain ground, so for anyone planning a move into suburbia and wanting to get ahead of the curve, that becomes an important driver," he says.

"People have stopped waiting for interest rate shifts and are getting on with life. Yes, prices have softened in places, but vendors are pragmatic and prepared to consider genuine offers."

"We are not hearing scary stories about inflation anymore, and people aren't in panic mode over interest rates, so there is more stability in the market, and that stability is giving people confidence to make decisions."

Pointing to the latest data, Mountfort says Auckland's lifestyle sector has been one of the strongest improvers this year, after a decidedly sluggish 2025.

"However, regional New Zealand has emerged the market hero. Waikato and Bay of Plenty saw a significant upswing in sales last year, and that trend is

continuing.

"The upper end of the lifestyle market has also been especially active, and Bayleys continues to dominate that aspirational space. In Otago, established lifestyle hubs like Queenstown and Wānaka are outperforming the rest of the country, while halo areas such as Cromwell and Alexandra are attracting strong enquiry from buyers seeking value."

OPEN WINDOW

Spring and summer are traditionally strong selling seasons for lifestyle property, and Mountfort expects interest to lift even in an election year.

"History shows us that real estate goes on during a general election cycle and there's usually no meaningful pause in transactional behaviour."

"Lifestyle inventory is expected to rise before the year winds up, giving buyers more choice, so those who list early will be well-positioned to benefit from an expected surge in activity."

"My message to prospective vendors is, if you have been waiting



Map of New Zealand Lifestyle Sales

1 July 2025 - 30 June 2026

Northland

\$865,000 | 555
\$440,000 | 182

Auckland

\$1,634,000 | 628
\$1,060,000 | 124

Waikato

\$1,200,000 | 866
\$560,000 | 179

Taranaki

\$1,030,000 | 235
\$350,000 | 49

Manawatū-Whanganui

\$858,000 | 437
\$310,000 | 110

Tasman/Nelson/Marlborough

\$1,190,000 | 221
\$450,000 | 59

West Coast

\$727,500 | 70
\$240,000 | 53

Southland

\$870,000 | 198
\$297,500 | 84

NEW ZEALAND

\$1,111,000 | 5,261
\$460,000 | 1,348

Bay of Plenty

\$1,200,000 | 439
\$700,000 | 57

Gisborne

\$1,125,000 | 57
\$465,000 | 14

Hawke's Bay

\$1,100,000 | 221
\$320,000 | 81

Wellington/Wairarapa

\$1,140,000 | 319
\$400,000 | 83

Canterbury

\$1,139,500 | 744
\$500,000 | 175

Otago

\$1,230,000 | 271
\$560,000 | 98

MAP KEY

FARMLET

BARELAND

Median price by region

Median price by region

Total numbers sold

Total numbers sold

Data: REINZ Lifestyle.
Sales metrics are for
the 12 months to 30
June 2026.

to sell, now is the time to get your ducks in a row as the window of opportunity is open, and buyers are active.”

Selling and buying in the same market is an advantage, especially when the residential market feels poised for improvement. Residential values typically lift faster than lifestyle values, so moving before that upswing can be a strategic decision.

Mountfort says for many, the decision to move to a lifestyle area is not simply a balance sheet consideration, but a chance to do life differently.

“Hybrid work patterns have opened the door for people to live further from the city without

sacrificing career progression, and roading and infrastructure upgrades are helping too.

“When we look at the South Auckland lifestyle market, new train stations serving Drury, Paerātā and Franklin are opening up commuter pathways and supporting amenity in surrounding lifestyle areas, and when access improves, demand follows.

“For some, lifestyle living is an experiment. For others, like retiring farmers, it is a logical next step when suburbia simply does not appeal after a lifetime of wide open spaces and nature. Intergenerational living is also easier with space, and in a world that feels increasingly chaotic, many people crave the

grounded, back-to-basics feeling that lifestyle properties offer.”

Mountfort is quick to credit Bayleys’ multi-sector strength in getting lifestyle deals over the line.

“Our crossover between rural, residential, and lifestyle gives vendors a genuine advantage. We make connections that other agencies simply can’t, and those connections make deals happen.

“Prospective vendors are encouraged to start conversations early, to explore their options, and lean into the expertise available.

“Let’s have a discussion about what comes next, because when life shifts, selling can be the start of something exciting.”