



# Professionals

news

## May Housing Figures

The Australian housing market continued to cool during May with capital city values increasing a mere 0.6%.

According to global real estate funds management enterprise Rismark International, Canberra was the best performing capital city with home values up 3.7% over the May quarter.

Based on final April figures, the median price for a house in the national capital was \$508,500.

In Perth, house values fell 2.1% to record a median price of \$475,000. Hobart also recorded a fall in prices, down 1.0% to a median price of \$340,000. Sydney values were up 2.4% to median price of \$517,250. Melbourne house prices rose 3.3% (median price: \$480,000). Brisbane values increased 0.8% (median price: \$445,000). Adelaide values rose 2.3% (median price: \$387,500), while Darwin values were up 1.6% (median price: \$481,775).

The markets in the rest of the states fell by 0.9%.

Rismark said the median cost of a home in the national cities was \$468,000.

Figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) showed a fall in the total number of housing loans approved in May.

South Australia went against the trend by recording 30.6 % more dwelling approvals. This was in sharp contrast to Tasmania which recorded a -24.8% fall.

Western Australia's drop in home approvals was also significant at -13.9%.

In NSW the figure was a drop of -9.8%, in Queensland home approvals went down -8.6% and in Victoria they dropped -3.0%.



## Hot Tip:

If you are having an open house or an appointment to show potential buyers through your property make sure you mention this to your neighbours (if applicable). It may be the day that your friends next door were planning on chain-sawing down a tree or planned on using heavy machinery in the yard which may make communication with the potentially buyer difficult.

## Ruthless Inspections

Choosing the right home to buy requires a balance of brain and heart.

The brain tells you what, where, why and how much you can afford while the heart, after an initial feeling that you have found what you are looking for, may be allowed to give you the final, emotional okay.

When you come across the home which you think and feel suits your needs, you have reached the point at which the heart should take a back seat and the brain should be engaged to carry out an objective inspection.

If you feel a professional report would be best, you could call Archicentre, the residential advisory division of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects.

If you prefer to do it yourself, arm yourself with a notebook, pens, ladder, long shank screwdriver, torch and power point tester, don your old clothes, write a list and head off.

Remember to take care as you give each area of the property from roof to base a good going-over.

Aspects to be covered from the outside include the garden, out-buildings, the outside walls, roof, under timber floors, concrete floors and in the roof space.

Inside the house, check timber and concrete floors, walls, ceilings, windows and ventilators, electrical systems and the plumbing. Take an overall look at the place, considering its location in the street, relation to neighbours and traffic.

Examine the house for appropriate room layout, orientation to the sun, heating and cooling, cost to run

including council rates and utilities.

If the house has been renovated or extended, check with the local council that the necessary building permits were obtained. You don't want to take on responsibility for illegal alterations.

It's also a good idea to check with the council if you are likely to want to make changes in the future.

Don't be afraid to take your time, so you can carry out a complete inspection without having to make a return visit.

Feel free to ask the owner, directly or through the agent, about past works on the property.

There is every chance you will be paying for this home for many years to come and you need to be confident you are making the right decision before you sign on the dotted line.

For more information contact Archicentre ([archicentre.com.au](http://archicentre.com.au)).



## Fire Prevention

Not every house fire is the result of incorrectly installed insulation.

According to the ABS there are more than 10,000 house fires in Australia each year, causing more than 1,500 injuries and 70 deaths.

Most house fires are caused by cooking, smoking cigarettes and electrical faults in wiring.

Candles, dryers and electric blankets also contribute significantly to the problem.

Not surprisingly, winter is the most likely time for a fire to break out in your home with more use of heaters, driers and stoves.

About 30 per cent of house fires start in the kitchen where people leave food cooking unattended or forget to switch off an appliance such as a toaster, frypan or stove top burner.

Tips to reduce the chance of a house fire include:

- Never leave food cooking unattended.
- If a pan catches fire smother it with a lid or fire blanket or use an extinguisher. Moving a fire will cause it to burn more fiercely. Never throw water on burning fat or oil.
- Clean the lint filter on your clothes dryer after every use and allow the dryer to complete its cool down cycle.
- Keep clothes airers at least one metre from a heater and check them regularly.
- Keep electrical appliances in good working order.
- Curtains, electrical cords, tea towels and your dressing gown sleeves should be kept well away from a hot plate or gas flame.
- Don't put electrical cords in high traffic areas, as walking on cords can break wiring.
- Make sure there's plenty of air around your TV, video etc so they don't overheat.

If fire breaks out in your home, try not to panic. Remember smoke is a bigger threat to you and your family than flames, so keep your nose and mouth covered and keep low.

Have a family fire plan with escape routes and make sure everyone knows what to do in the event of such an emergency.

Keep your smoke detectors in good working order - they really do save lives.

And of course, if you have had insulation installed recently, ask an accredited professional to check it for safety.



Professionals

[professionals.com.au](http://professionals.com.au)

