

# The national median dwelling price declined by 1.8% in April but price movements were mixed around the country

13th May 21 by Greg Ninness



A cooling breeze blew across the housing market in April, with sales well down compared to March and the national median price also easing.

The latest data from the Real Estate Institute of New Zealand shows that 7218 residential properties throughout the country were sold in April, down 28% compared to March. However, that was not unexpected because March is usually the busiest month of the year and sales start to drop away in April as the market heads towards the quieter winter months.

And April's sales were at still their highest level for that month in five years, suggesting the market remains relatively buoyant.

The decline in sales was evident in almost all parts of the country, with Marlborough the only region where sales increased in April compared to March (+10.7%).

All other regions posted double digit declines ranging from -11.8% in Taranaki to -41% on the West Coast.

In the main urban districts, sales were down -34.7% in Auckland, -18.2% in the Wellington Region, -23.6% Canterbury and -33.9% in Otago (see the sales chart below for the full regional sales trends).

Prices also eased overall, with April's national median selling price of \$810,000 down by 1.8% compared to March.

However, there were big regional differences in price movements with median prices declining compared to March in: Northland -6.9%, Bay of Plenty -3.6%, Wellington -1.4% Tasman -4.2%, Canterbury -1.6%, West Coast -8.3% and Southland -3.1%.

Median prices in all other region were up in April compared to March, with the median price for all of New Zealand excluding Auckland up 1.6% for the month.

In Auckland the median price was up 0.4% compared to March (see the median price chart below for the price trends in all regions).

"While the national picture represents the busiest April in five years, the reality is that we've seen the number of sales decrease when compared to March," REINZ Acting Chief Executive Wendy Alexander said.

"While in part this is what we expect to happen when moving from March to April, there is definitely a wait and see approach from a number of investors and also some first time buyers," she said.

"Some of these falls in sales volumes are likely to be early signs of the LVRs slowing the market, some will be attributed to the [tax] changes announced on 23 March and some are likely to be the fact we have the lowest level of inventory for an April month since records began."