



Smart Moves: Regional Edition

Top 10 Affordable Regional Areas In 2025



HOME AFFORDABILITY

QLD • NSW • VIC • TAS

2025 began with some good news — the Reserve Bank cut the cash rate by 25 basis points in February, bringing it down to **4.1%**. This was the drop buyers had been waiting for since early 2024, and it helped ease the **hesitation in buyer confidence** that had persisted through last year.

The **"time-to-buy-a-dwelling" index rose by 24.9%** in the 12 months to January 2025 — the **first nationwide rise in buyer sentiment** since late 2020 (post-COVID and pre-boom). Leading the uplift were **Victoria (+43.0%)** and **South Australia (+32.8%)**.

However, this initial rate cut had only a **small effect on market activity**. Auction clearance rates in **Sydney and Melbourne** remained steady. That's because **property prices are still high**, and the **cost of living continues to climb**. Simply put:

"One rate cut wasn't enough to move the needle in a meaningful way."

A CONTINUING DECLINE IN AFFORDABILITY

By the end of 2024, **housing affordability had fallen for the third consecutive quarter**, reaching its lowest level in over a decade. **Home loan affordability is now 31.8% worse** than it was 10 years ago, and the national index has fallen to **just 20.0 points**.

State Snapshots:

- **NSW**: Index at 16.7 — the **worst level since 1996**, making home ownership extremely difficult.
- **WA**: Largest annual decline at -13.2%
- **QLD**: Down -8.7%
- **SA**: Down -8.4%
- Most "affordable" regions: **NT (29.1)** and **ACT (27.4)**

From a practical monthly budgeting view, households now spend **50.1% of their income on mortgage repayments**. In **NSW**, that figure climbs to **59.9%**.

TABLE 1.
MEDIAN HOUSE PRICE &
AVERAGE STATE LOAN

Location	Median House Price (Dec Qtr. 2024)	Average State Loan (Dec Qtr. 2024)
Brisbane • QLD	\$910,000	\$635,416
Sydney • NSW	\$1,645,444	\$810,744
Melbourne • VIC	\$894,500	\$631,514
Hobart • TAS	\$745,000	\$473,180

Source: Real Estate Market Facts Report December Quarter 2024 and Housing Affordability Report December Quarter 2024 by Real Estate Institute of Australia. Prepared by PRD Research.

FIRST-HOME BUYER TRENDS

First-home buyer activity **dropped -1.3%** over the year, but the story varies by state:

- Activity **rose** in: **NT (+10.3%)**, **SA (+8.0%)**, **QLD (+5.0%)**
- Activity **fell** in: **NSW (-9.1%)**, **WA (-9.9%)**

New buyers are also taking on **more debt**:

- **Average debt up 5.4% nationally**
- Highest increases in **WA (+13.9%)** and **QLD (+11.7%)**
- More moderate increases in **VIC (+2.1%)** and **NSW (+2.9%)**

These numbers suggest an **opportunity** may be opening up in VIC and NSW.

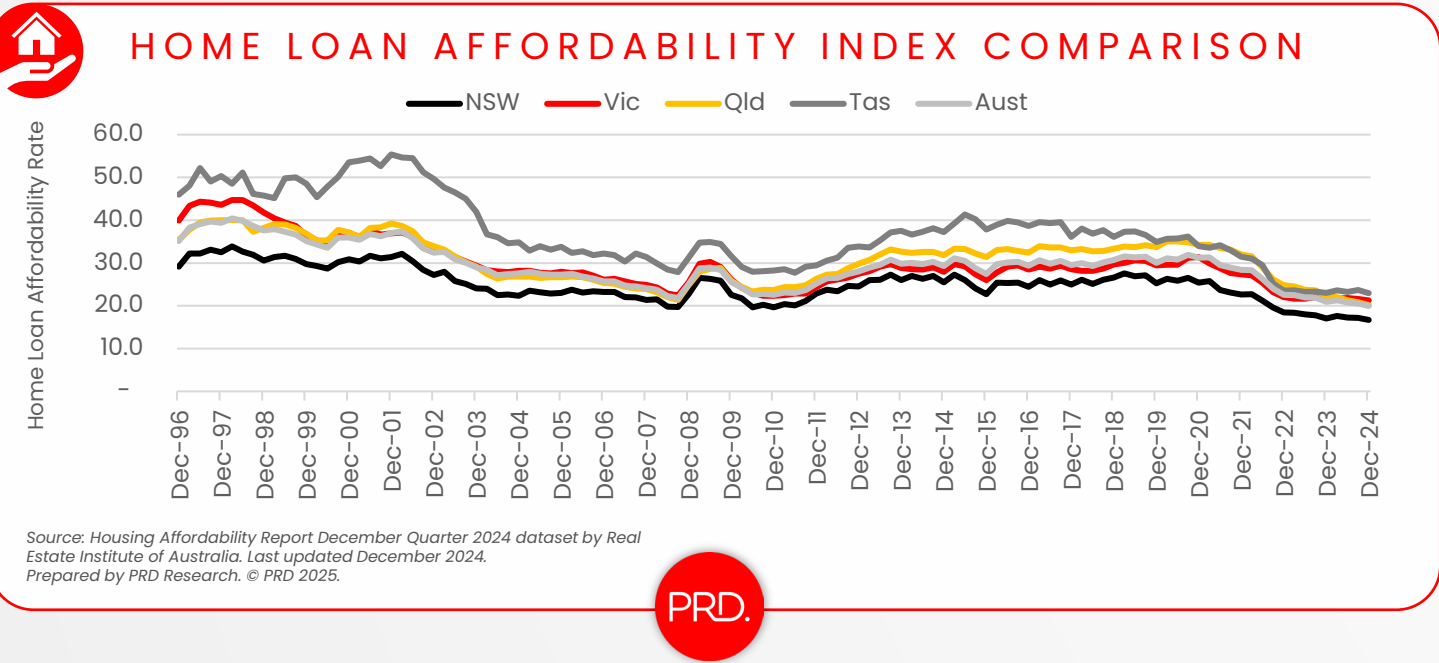
WHY THIS REPORT MATTERS

With capital city markets seeing **further price rises** — especially in **Brisbane (up 10.3%)** — more buyers are looking to **regional areas** for value.

This report spotlights **affordable regional markets** that deliver:

- **Lower house prices**
- **Higher rental yields**
- **Active local economies**

These regions are where **first-home buyers** and **investors** can find **real opportunity** in 2025.



AFFORDABLE REGIONAL AREAS WITH SOLID GROWTH FUNDAMENTALS



METHODOLOGY HOW WE CHOSE THE TOP 10

We assessed each location using five key criteria to ensure both **affordability** and **investment potential**:

1. Affordability: The area's **median house price must be lower than that of the closest capital city**. This helps first-home buyers and investors enter the market at a more realistic price point.

2. Property Market Trends: The area must show **consistent growth** — at least 20 property sales per year in both 2023 and 2024, with rising prices for houses, units, and land.

3. Investment Returns: We looked for places with **rental yields equal to or better than their nearest capital city**, and **lower or similar vacancy rates**.

4. New Developments: To support future demand, the area must have **significant development projects starting in 2025** — with preference given to **ready-to-sell housing stock** over just commercial projects.

5. Employment: To ensure job security for residents, the area must have an **unemployment rate equal to or lower than the national average (4.1%)**.

TOP 10 REGIONAL AREAS FOR 2025

These are the areas that tick every box. They're **more affordable than nearby capital cities**, show **strong investment fundamentals**, and have **new housing projects breaking ground in 2025**.

WHAT'S CHANGED?

In the past 12 months to 2024, **regional affordability trends have shifted** — and they vary by state, for example:

- **In Queensland**, we found areas where the **median house price is under \$650,000**, which is **28.6% cheaper than Brisbane**.
- **In New South Wales**, prices reached as high as **\$850,000**, but that's still **48.3% cheaper than Sydney** — making them more accessible than they appear.

2025'S TOP AFFORDABLE REGIONAL AREAS

QUEENSLAND

Cairns Regional Council

Southern Downs Regional Council

Whitsundays Regional Council

NEW SOUTH WALES

Dubbo Regional Council

Port Macquarie-Hastings Council

Shoalhaven City Council

VICTORIA

Wodonga City Council

Greater Shepparton City Council

Greater Bendigo City Council

TASMANIA

Burnie City Council

CAIRNS, QUEENSLAND

TOP AFFORDABLE MAJOR REGIONAL AREA

KEY FACTS

House median price (2024)	\$650,000
Land median price (2024)	\$325,000
Unit median price (2024)	\$371,000
Vacancy rate (as of Dec-24)	0.5%
House rental yield (as of Dec-24)	4.8%
Unit rental yield (as of Dec-24)	5.0%
Estimated value of developments in 2025	\$1,766,151,110
Total dwellings set to commence construction in 2025	1,604 units 432 lots 37 dwellings 30 townhouses
Unemployment rate (as of Dec qtr. 2024)	2.6%
5-year population growth (from ABS ERP 2023)	5.8% (9,682+ residents)

Cairns, in **Far North Queensland**, continues to stand out for buyers chasing **lifestyle and opportunity**. Famous for its tropical climate, bustling Esplanade, national parks, and relaxed way of life, Cairns is pulling in more people every year. Over the past five years alone, the local **population has grown by 5.8%**, adding almost **10,000 new residents**.

The city's **economy is in good shape** too. At the end of 2024, Cairns recorded an **unemployment rate of just 2.6%**, a figure that has **barely shifted over the past year**. That **stability, combined with lifestyle appeal**, is helping to **fuel stronger housing demand** – and it's showing up in the numbers.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE MARKET

Over the last decade, **house prices in Cairns have jumped by 67.1%**. Land values have also **risen sharply, up 63.3%**.

Between **2020 and 2022**, sales activity soared, as **buyers took advantage of record-low interest rates**. While **sales have eased slightly** since then, 2024 still saw **2,891 houses change hands** – **more than in 2019**, before the pandemic hit.

Despite rising rates, **prices have stayed resilient**. In the past year alone, **median house prices have climbed by 11.5%**, land by **16.3%**, and **units by 12.4%**. Demand has **remained strong** enough to keep the **market moving upwards**.

WHY INVESTORS ARE PAYING ATTENTION

Cairns continues to offer **attractive returns for investors**:

- **Houses** are yielding an average of **4.8%**, well **above Brisbane Metro's 3.2%**.
- **Units** are returning around **5.0%**.
- **Vacancy rates** are **extremely tight**, sitting at just **0.5%** at the end of 2024 – and they've **stayed under 1%** for the **past three years**. This points to a **strong rental market** where properties are snapped up quickly.

WHAT'S COMING

New housing supply is on the way, with about **\$1.8 billion** worth of **developments planned for 2025**. That includes: 432 new land lots, 1,604 new units, 30 new townhouses and 37 new stand-alone houses.

A major contributor will be projects like the **new developments on Hoare Street and Pease Street**, bringing **another 150 units to market**.

Even so, **supply isn't expected to meet demand fully**, especially for freestanding homes. **Buyers who can't secure a house** may turn to **units** instead, putting extra **pressure on unit prices** in the next few years.

IN SUMMARY

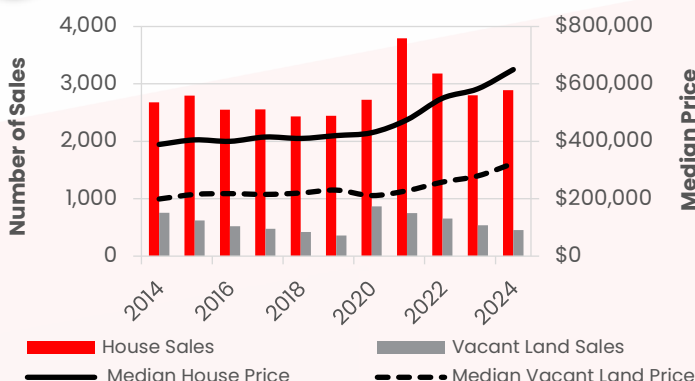
Cairns offers the kind of mix that's getting harder to find:

- **Affordable homes** (compared to Brisbane)
- **Strong rental demand**
- **Low vacancies**
- **Billions of dollars in new development**

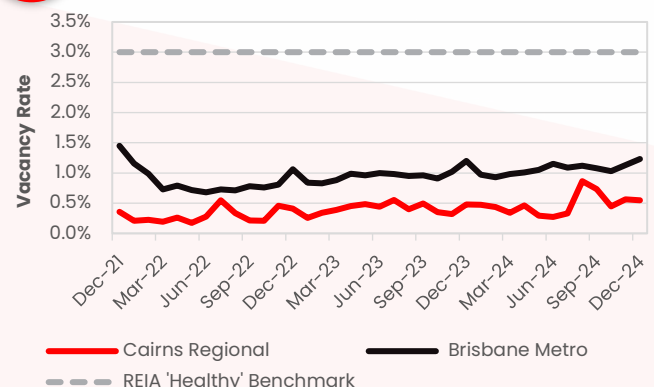
It's a market where **buyers and investors still have room to move** – but not for long.



AREA SALES & MEDIAN PRICE



VACANCY RATE



SOUTHERN DOWNS, QUEENSLAND

TOP AFFORDABLE MAJOR REGIONAL AREA

KEY FACTS

House median price (2024)	\$502,500
Land median price (2024)	\$305,000
Unit median price (2024)	\$302,500
Vacancy rate (as of Dec-24)	0.4%
House rental yield (as of Dec-24)	4.5%
Unit rental yield (as of Dec-24)	5.3%
Estimated value of developments in 2025	\$1,928,963,129
Total dwellings set to commence construction in 2025	575 lots 71 dwellings 24 units 9 townhouses
Unemployment rate (as of Dec. qtr. 2024)	3.2%
5-year population growth (from ABS ERP 2023)	+3.7% (+1,326 residents)

Southern Downs is a **regional inland** area **west of Brisbane**, stretching along Queensland's southern border with New South Wales. Over the past five years, **the region's population has grown by 3.7%**, reflecting **increasing interest in regional living** and local opportunities.

Several major commercial and infrastructure projects are planned to start in 2025, setting the stage for further population growth. As of December 2024, **the unemployment rate in Southern Downs was just 3.2%**, lower than the national average of 4.1%, **pointing to a healthy local economy and steady job market** — both strong drivers of housing demand.

HOW THE MARKET IS PERFORMING

House and land prices in the area have shown **impressive growth over the past decade**:

- **Land prices rose by +95.2%** between 2014 and 2024.
- **House prices grew by +87.9%** during the same period.

Even with this growth, **median house prices remain much more affordable than Brisbane**, making Southern Downs particularly **attractive for first-home buyers and investors**.

Recent momentum has been strong too:

- Over the past year, **house sales increased by 3%**.
- **Median house prices rose by +16.9%**, despite higher interest rates.

This trend points to **a highly active and resilient housing market**.

INVESTMENT SNAPSHOT

Southern Downs is delivering **solid investment returns**:

- **Average house rental yield: 4.5%**, above Brisbane Metro's 3.2%.
- **Average unit rental yield: 5.3%**.
- **Vacancy rates** are exceptionally **low at 0.4%** and **have remained under 1%** for the past three years, highlighting **strong rental demand and quick tenant turnover**.

WHAT'S AHEAD

An **estimated \$1.9 billion worth of new projects is planned to launch in 2025**, including the Toowoomba to Warwick Pipeline (major infrastructure) and the Sugarloaf Road Subdivision (42 new residential lots).

There are also plans for: **575** new land lots, **71** houses, **24** units and **9** townhouses.

Even with this upcoming supply, **it won't be enough to meet current and projected demand**. Based on 2024 house sales (837 houses sold), **undersupply is expected to continue**, pushing up prices across the board.

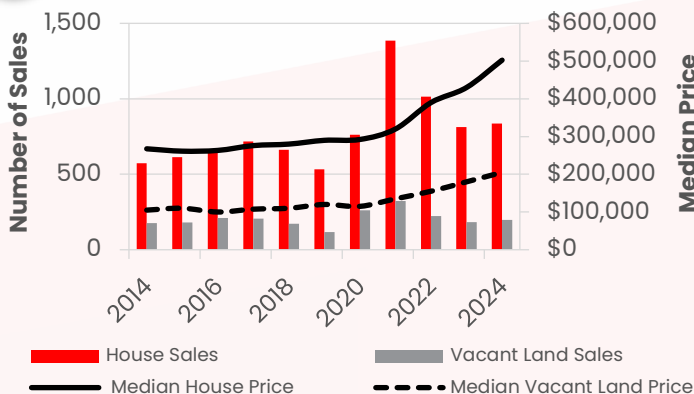
IN SUMMARY

Southern Downs offers a rare combination of:

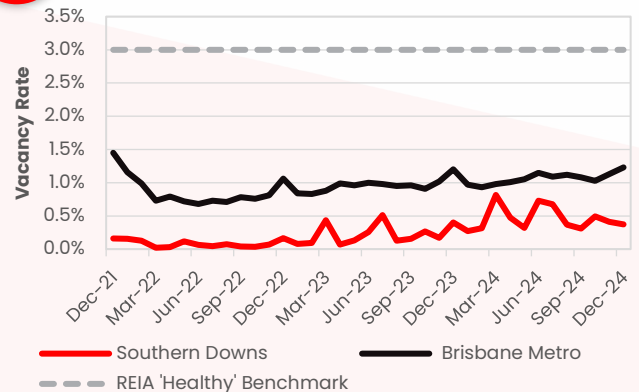
- **Affordable** house prices.
- **Solid rental returns**.
- **Low vacancies**.
- **Strong future growth**

With a **price point still far below Brisbane's**, this is a regional market where **buyers and investors have a strong opportunity** — but competition is rising. **Now is the ideal time to act**.

AREA SALES & MEDIAN PRICE



VACANCY RATE



WHITSUNDAYS, QUEENSLAND

TOP AFFORDABLE MAJOR REGIONAL AREA

KEY FACTS

House median price (2024)	\$570,000
Land median price (2024)	\$240,000
Unit median price (2024)	\$410,000
Vacancy rate (as of Dec-24)	1.3%
House rental yield (as of Dec-24)	3.9%
Unit rental yield (as of Dec-24)	5.3%
Estimated value of developments in 2025	\$792,687,730
Total dwellings set to commence construction in 2025	568 lots 72 units 19 dwellings
Unemployment rate (as of Dec. qtr. 2024)	3.9%
5-year population growth (from ABS ERP 2023)	11.4% (4,061+ residents)

The Whitsundays **isn't just a holiday destination** anymore. Over the past five years, it's quietly become one of **Queensland's strongest growth** stories. Around **4,000 new residents have moved into the region since 2018** — proof that it's more than the beaches pulling people in.

Even with more people calling it home, **jobs are keeping up**. By the end of 2024, **unemployment was sitting at 3.9%, the same as the year before**. More locals, more jobs, and plenty of sunshine. It's not hard to see why **demand for homes has taken off**.

Property Market Snapshot

- **Prices have been moving steadily.**
- **Houses are up by 46%** over the past decade.
- Land is **rising 45.7%**.

But it's units that tell the real tale. With **fewer houses available**, buyers turned to units instead, **pushing up unit prices by nearly 48%**. Supply simply couldn't keep pace.

If you look back at 2021, house sales exploded. It was a record year, **with more than 1,100 homes sold** — **double** what was normal before COVID hit. Things have eased a bit since then, but **2024 still ended with 841 house sales**, far ahead of pre-pandemic levels.

Even as interest rates climbed, **prices kept creeping upwards** across all property types.

Rental Yields and Occupancy

Investors haven't missed the memo either. **House rental yields sat around 3.9%** by late 2024, beating Brisbane Metro's average.

Vacancy rates stayed tight at 1.3%, barely different from Brisbane's, and well below what's considered healthy nationally (3.0%). There's been a **slight uptick in vacancies lately**, but **not enough to shift the balance**. Rentals are still snapped up quickly.

What's Next for the Whitsundays?

Big things are on the cards. **About \$792 million in new development** is expected to start construction during 2025.

Among what's planned: **568 new land lots**, **72 new units**, and **19 stand-alone homes**. One of the headline projects is the 422 Shute Harbour Road Subdivision, **adding another 16 residential lots**.

Even with this fresh stock coming through, **it won't be enough**. House supply will stay tight, and **as more buyers miss out on houses, they'll likely shift their focus to units**, pushing unit prices higher.

IN SUMMARY

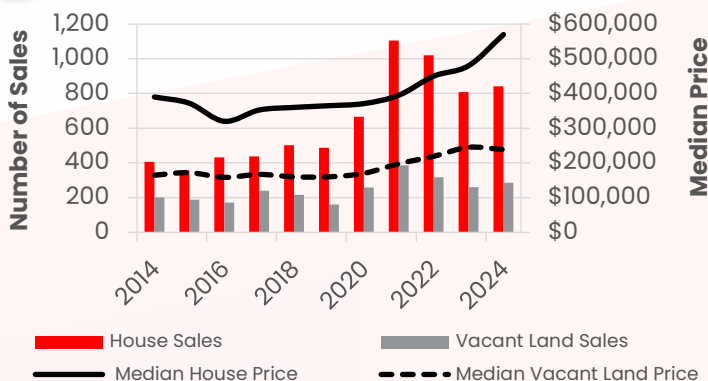
The Whitsundays is **offering a rare mix** right now:

- Strong **lifestyle appeal**.
- Decent **affordability** (compared to Brisbane).
- **Low vacancy rates**.
- **Steady returns**.

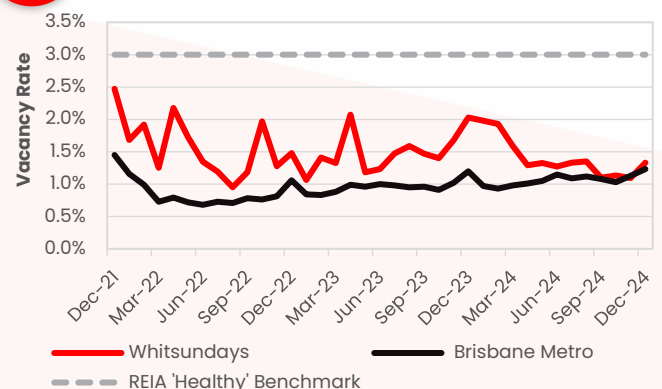
But **the window of opportunity is narrowing**. If you're looking for a place where growth still has room to run, **it's worth moving sooner rather than later**.



AREA SALES & MEDIAN PRICE



VACANCY RATE



DUBBO, NEW SOUTH WALES

TOP AFFORDABLE MAJOR REGIONAL AREA

Dubbo might be best known for the Western Plains Zoo and its historic old Gaol, but these days, **it's also making a name for itself in the property world**. Sitting west of Newcastle in NSW's Orana Region, **Dubbo's population hit around 56,500 in 2023, after a 5.6% rise** over the past five years. And **it's not slowing down either**. Over the next decade, **Dubbo's population is tipped to keep growing by nearly 1% a year**, meaning more housing will be needed.

Economically, the city's in good shape too. By the end of 2024, **unemployment had fallen to just 2.1%**, well below the national average. The result? **Stronger buyer demand and a property market that's still on the move**.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE MARKET

Over the past ten years, **house prices in Dubbo have risen by a healthy 77.3%**. Even so, **buying a home here is still far more affordable** than Sydney prices.

The local market **had a huge run between 2020 and 2022**, with record numbers of homes changing hands. Although **sales dipped slightly in 2023, they bounced back in 2024** — with **1,129 homes sold**, almost matching the boom levels of 2020.

Despite rising interest rates, **house prices managed a steady 2.3% growth** over the past year. This consistency makes Dubbo **a more sustainable choice for first-home buyers** — although with the local economy heating up and listings running short, **it's unlikely to stay that way for long**.

INVESTOR INSIGHTS

Investors have found good returns here too:

- **House rental yields are sitting at 5.5%**, well ahead of Sydney Metro's 2.7%.
- **Units offer yields around 3.8%**, keeping pace with Sydney's numbers.

Vacancy rates have edged up slightly over the past 12 months, mainly due to more investors jumping back into the market. Even so, **at 2.6%, Dubbo's vacancy rate remains below the national "healthy" benchmark of 3%**, which means rental properties still get snapped up quickly.

WHAT'S COMING

Looking ahead, Dubbo's economy is set for another boost, with **around \$3.3 billion worth of new projects locked in for 2025**. These include: A major expansion at the Taronga Western Plains Zoo, with a new Serengeti Function Centre and the new Dubbo Firing Power Station, designed to support local jobs and future energy needs.

On the housing side, plans are underway for **944 residential lots, 147 new units, and 84 stand-alone homes**. Even with all this new stock coming through, **it won't be enough to meet demand**. A shortage of ready-to-sell houses is expected to keep upward **pressure on prices** — not just for houses, but for units and townhouses as well.

KEY FACTS

House median price (2024)	\$532,000
Land median price (2024)	\$265,500
Unit median price (2024)	\$352,000
Vacancy rate (as of Dec-24)	2.6%
House rental yield (as of Dec-24)	5.5%
Unit rental yield (as of Dec-24)	3.8%
Estimated value of developments in 2025	\$3,364,669,228
Total dwellings set to commence construction in 2025	944 lots 147 units 84 dwellings
Unemployment rate (as of Dec. qtr. 2024)	2.1%
5-year population growth (from ABS ERP 2023)	+5.6% (+2,983 residents)

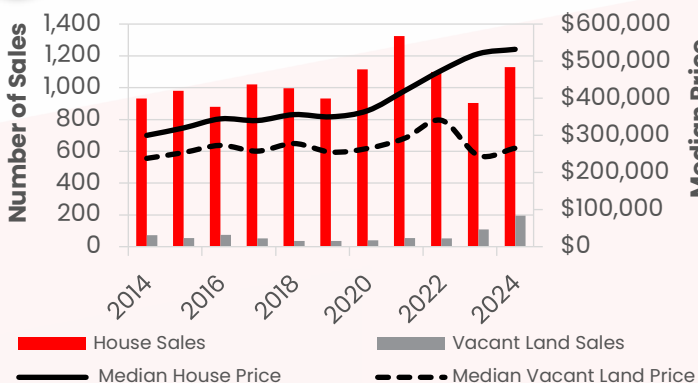
IN SUMMARY

Dubbo's combination of **strong rental returns, affordability** compared to Sydney, and **steady economic growth** makes it **a standout choice** for buyers and investors looking outside the city.

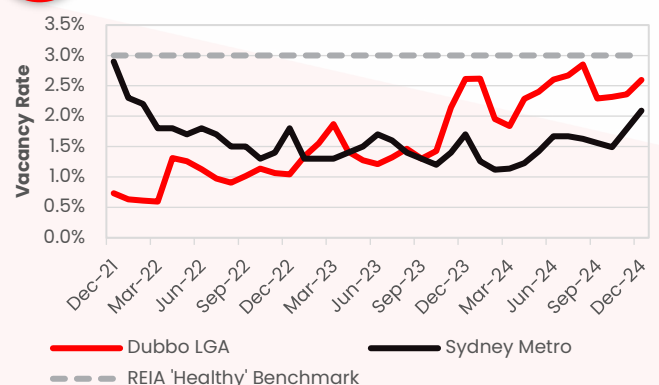
But with **low stock and rising demand**, **time might be running out** to secure the best opportunities.



AREA SALES & MEDIAN PRICE



VACANCY RATE



PORT MACQUARIE-HASTINGS, NEW SOUTH WALES

TOP AFFORDABLE MAJOR REGIONAL AREA

Sitting north of Sydney, **Port Macquarie-Hastings** is proving to be **one of regional New South Wales' strongest performers**. Over the past five years, **its population has grown by 8.2%**, reaching almost **90,000 people** by 2023.

At the same time, **the local economy has held up** well. By December 2024, **the area's unemployment rate was just 2.6%** — well below the national average. This kind of resilience makes **Port Macquarie an attractive option** not just for lifestyle buyers, but for **those seeking long-term opportunity** too.

PROPERTY MARKET OVERVIEW

Property prices across the region have told a strong story over the past decade:

- **Land values soared by over 108%.**
- **Median house prices climbed by 97%** across the same period.

After **peaking in 2021**, the market eased slightly — as it did across many regional areas — but **2024 saw signs of a solid recovery**:

- **House sales were up 11%** compared to the previous year.
- **Median house prices grew by 1.3%.**
- **Units saw a 1.7% price increase** during the same time.

While **the pace of growth has slowed** compared to the “boom” years, **this creates a rare window for first-home buyers**. For once, buyers aren't racing against runaway price surges — and that gives **more room to negotiate and enter the market**.

INVESTMENT SNAPSHOT

Investors have been quietly reaping rewards here:

- The average **house rental yield stood at 3.5%** by the end of 2024 — noticeably better than Sydney Metro's 2.7%.
- **Vacancy rates were extremely tight at 0.8%**, down from previous years and well below Sydney's 2.1%.

With a vacancy rate so far below the Real Estate Institute of Australia's healthy benchmark (3.0%), **rental properties in Port Macquarie-Hastings are still being snapped up fast**. For investors chasing stronger rental returns and lower tenant turnover, **Port Macquarie offers a very real alternative to city markets**.

DEVELOPMENT PIPELINE

Looking ahead, the region is set for another wave of investment. **In 2025, around \$703.7 million worth of projects will begin construction**. Key developments include the Thurmster Wastewater Scheme, aimed at **supporting future growth**, and new additions to the Port Macquarie Private Hospital.

From a housing perspective, **241 new units, 149 dwellings, and 28 townhouses** are planned. Still, when you **compare that to current demand levels**, it's clear **supply will fall short** — especially for detached houses. As a result, **continued upward pressure on prices is expected** across all property types.

KEY FACTS

House median price (2024)	\$845,000
Land median price (2024)	\$427,500
Unit median price (2024)	\$610,000
Vacancy rate (as of Dec-24)	0.8%
House rental yield (as of Dec-24)	3.5%
Unit rental yield (as of Dec-24)	4.8%
Estimated value of developments in 2025	\$703,637,408
Total dwellings set to commence construction in 2025	241 Units 149 Dwelling 28 Townhouses
Unemployment rate (as of Dec, Quarter 2024)	2.6%
5-year population growth (from ABS ERP 2023)	8.2% (6,816 residents)

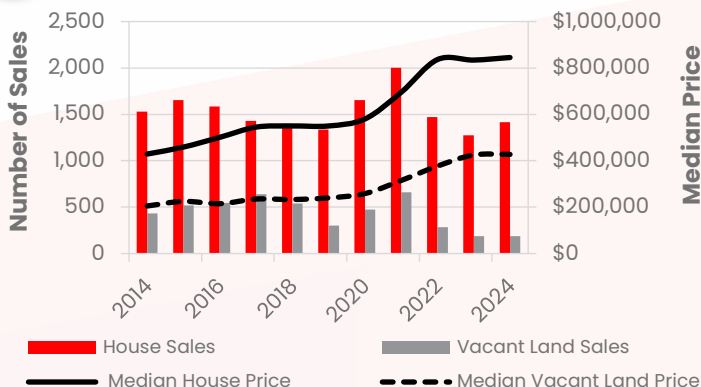
IN SUMMARY

Port Macquarie-Hastings **combines strong population growth, solid investment returns, and affordable property** compared to Sydney.

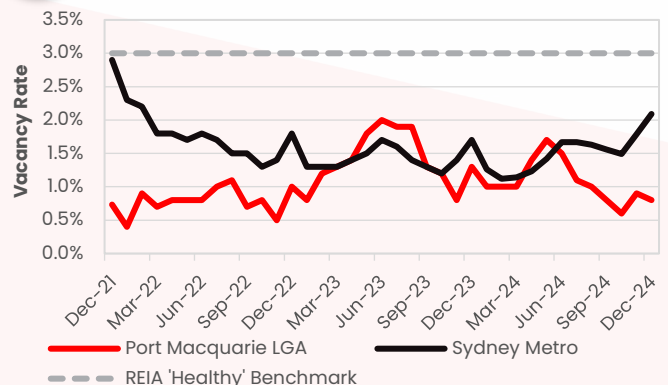
But with **stock remaining tight and prices already nudging higher**, first-home investors will **need to move quickly** if they want to **secure the best opportunities**.



AREA SALES & MEDIAN PRICE



VACANCY RATE



SHOALHAVEN, NEW SOUTH WALES

TOP AFFORDABLE MAJOR REGIONAL AREA

If you know Shoalhaven, **you know it's a place that sells itself.** With its string of beaches, national parks, and easy-going lifestyle, it's **no wonder more people are packing up and heading there.** Over the past five years alone, **the population has grown by 5.2%**, bringing more than **5,400 new residents** to the area.

What's even more telling is **the strength of the local economy.** At the end of 2024, **the unemployment rate sat at just 2.9%** — comfortably lower than the national average. Shoalhaven isn't just beautiful; **it's busy, it's growing, and it's offering real opportunities** for work and living.

PROPERTY MARKET TRENDS

It's been a big decade for Shoalhaven's property market. **House prices have more than doubled, rising by 118%** over the last 10 years. Land values are **up an impressive 200%**. Even **units have jumped by 125%**, showing there's real depth across the market.

2021 was the standout year for sales, as it was across much of regional NSW. **Things slowed in 2022** when interest rates started climbing, but **they've been picking up again.** In fact, by 2024, house sales were almost back to where they were before COVID.

In the past year alone, **house sales rose 9%**, and median **house prices nudged up 2.5%** — proof that **buyer demand hasn't gone anywhere.**

RENTAL MARKET OVERVIEW

If you're thinking about **investing**, Shoalhaven is **worth a close look.** By the end of 2024:

- **House rental yields averaged 3.3%**; comfortably above Sydney's 2.7%.
- **Vacancy rates sat at 2.1%**; right on par with Sydney, but still under the 3% level that's considered "balanced" by industry standards.

Interestingly, **vacancy rates have been dropping steadily over the past six months.** It's another sign that **rental demand is tightening** — and properties aren't sitting empty for long.

WHAT'S NEXT?

There's a lot of **money flowing into the region.** In 2025 alone, about **\$1.4 billion worth of projects are set to kick off.** Among them the Shoalhaven Hydro Power Station, and major upgrades along the Princes Highway between Jervis Bay Road and Sussex Inlet.

On the housing front, around **939 land lots, 394 units, and 107 townhouses** are expected to come onto the market — but with **over 2,360 houses sold in 2024**, it's clear this **new stock won't be enough to satisfy demand.**

It's not hard to see where this is heading:

- **House buyers will face more competition**
- More **people will likely turn to units** instead, **driving up those prices** too.

KEY FACTS

House median price (2024)	\$820,000
Land median price (2024)	\$465,000
Unit median price (2024)	\$607,500
Vacancy rate (as of Dec-24)	2.1%
House rental yield (as of Dec-24)	3.3%
Unit rental yield (as of Dec-24)	3.7%
Estimated value of developments in 2025	\$1,460,445,955
Total dwellings set to commence construction in 2025	939 lots 394 units 107 townhouses 2 dwellings
Unemployment rate (as of Dec. qtr. 2024)	2.9%
5-year population growth (from ABS ERP 2023)	5.2% (5407+ residents)

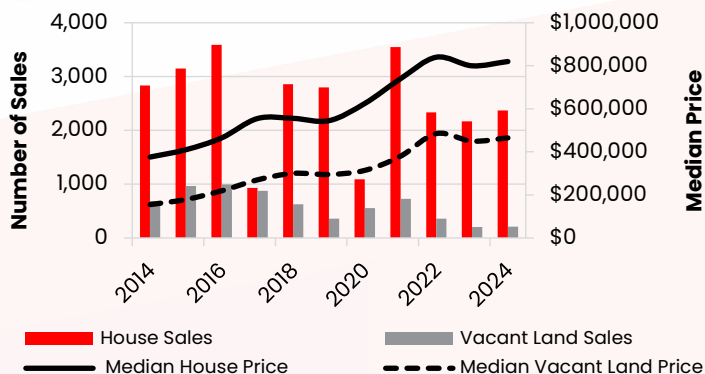
IN SUMMARY

Shoalhaven's always been loved for its beaches and lifestyle. But now, it's also becoming **one of the smartest places to invest** outside Sydney.

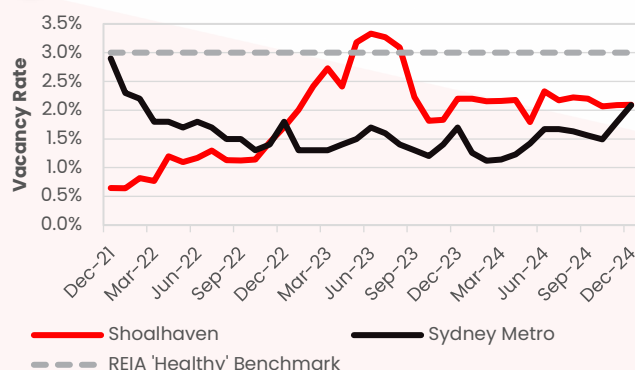
If you're **thinking about making a move** — whether it's buying your first home, investing, or finding a better lifestyle — **waiting might cost you.**



AREA SALES & MEDIAN PRICE



VACANCY RATE



BENDIGO, VICTORIA

TOP AFFORDABLE MAJOR REGIONAL AREA

Bendigo has always had a reputation for being a bit of a hidden gem — and over the last few years, it's really started to show why. Sitting about an hour and a half northwest of Melbourne, the **city's been growing steadily, adding around 6.9% more residents** since 2018. By 2023, the local population tipped **over 124,000**.

The best part? **It's not just more people; it's more opportunity too. Unemployment dropped to 3.3%** by late 2024, a sign that Bendigo's economy isn't just coasting — it's kicking along nicely.

A LOOK AT THE PROPERTY MARKET

Property values have had a good run across the board:

- **House prices have lifted over 73%** in the past decade.
- **Vacant land** has done even better, **jumping more than 130%**.
- **Units** have kept pace too, **growing by around 79%**.

2021 was the real standout year, with buyers rushing in and pushing **the median house price past \$500,000 for the first time**. Sales cooled off a little in 2022, like everywhere else, but by 2024, **activity had picked back up. House sales were up by over 20%** compared to the year before — and interestingly, even with all that movement, **prices stayed steady**.

That stability says a lot about Bendigo's resilience. It's not a boom-and-bust town. It's a city where **demand is solid, but still affordable** enough for regular buyers to get in.

HOW THE RENTAL MARKET STACKS UP

For investors, Bendigo has been offering plenty to smile about. At the end of 2024:

- **House rental yields were sitting at 3.8%**, better than Melbourne Metro's 3.1%.
- **Units offered an even stronger return of 5.9%**, compared to Melbourne's 4.6%.

Vacancy rates tell the same story. By December, **Bendigo's vacancy rate had dropped to 1.7%**, lower than Melbourne Metro's 2.2%, and far under the Real Estate Institute's healthy benchmark of 3%. In simple terms: **properties aren't sitting empty for long**, and that's great news if you're renting out.

WHAT'S ON THE HORIZON

Bendigo's not slowing down anytime soon. **Around \$889 million worth of projects are expected to kick off in 2025**, including two major solar farms (Derby and Axedale) that should bring new jobs and more infrastructure to the region.

On the housing side, there's a lot planned: Over **1,100** new lots, around **65** new units, and more than **300** houses and townhouses combined. But, with **construction facing all sorts of delays lately, it's likely we'll still see shortages** in available stock. **Demand is there. Supply's taking longer to catch up.**

KEY FACTS

House median price (2024)	\$570,000
Land median price (2024)	\$284,950
Unit median price (2024)	\$420,000
Vacancy rate (as of Dec-24)	1.7%
House rental yield (as of Dec-24)	3.8%
Unit rental yield (as of Dec-24)	5.9%
Estimated value of developments in 2025	\$889,982,000
Total dwellings set to commence construction in 2025	1,183 lots 323 dwellings 65 units 35 townhouses
Unemployment rate (as of Dec. qtr. 2024)	3.3%
5-year population growth (from ABS ERP 2023)	6.88% (+7,988 residents)

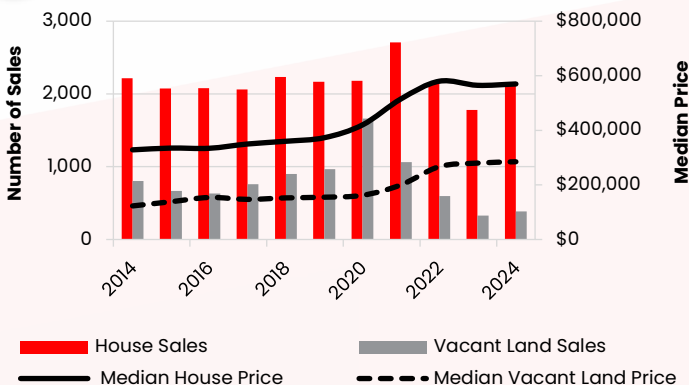
IN SUMMARY

Bendigo is still sitting about 36% cheaper than Melbourne Metro — which, given its **steady demand, rental returns, and growing economy**, feels like a smart move right now.

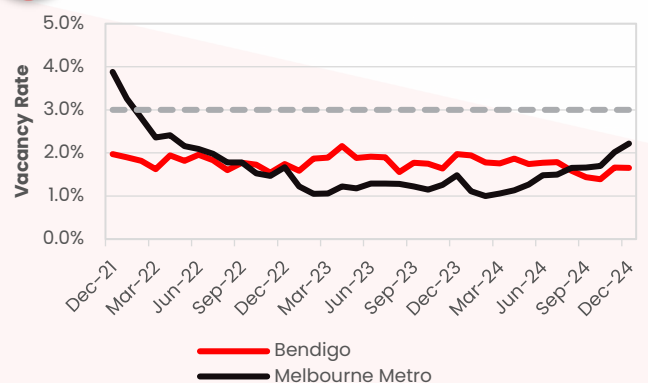
If you've been **thinking about buying, investing, or even relocating**, it's the sort of place where **waiting could cost you a lot more** six months down the track.



AREA SALES & MEDIAN PRICE



VACANCY RATE



GREATER SHEPPARTON, VICTORIA

TOP AFFORDABLE MAJOR REGIONAL AREA

Known as the food bowl of Australia due to the large number of agriculture production occurring there, **Greater Shepparton has been quietly building momentum**. Located about two hours north of Melbourne, the region saw just **over 2,300 new residents between 2018 and 2023 — a 3.5% population rise**; showing more people are seeing the appeal of life outside the big cities.

Better still, **the local economy is keeping pace**. By the end of 2024, **unemployment had dropped to just 2%, down from 3.1% a year earlier**. For **buyers and investors**, that's a strong sign: **when jobs are growing, housing demand usually follows**.

MARKET TRENDS

Greater Shepparton's property market has been on a **steady climb over the last decade**:

- **House prices have risen by over 90%.**
- **Vacant land surged by more than 120%.**
- **Units are up by 82%.**

After a dip in sales during 2022 and 2023 — when interest rates rose — 2024 saw the market roar back to life.

- **House sales jumped nearly 31% over the past year.**
- **Median house prices grew by 3.2% during the same time.**

Buyers who couldn't secure houses turned to units, **pushing unit sales up by 8.8% and unit prices by 7.6%**. It's clear **there's strong confidence here** — both for **short-term buying and long-term capital growth**.

RENTAL YIELDS AND VACANCY

Investors have plenty to smile about too:

- **House rental yields averaged 4.6%** by the end of 2024; well above Melbourne Metro's 3.1%.
- **Units offered even stronger returns, with yields of 6.5%**, compared to Melbourne's 4.6%.

Vacancy rates paint a similar story:

Greater Shepparton recorded a vacancy rate of 0.9%; much tighter than Melbourne's 2.2%. Low vacancies plus strong yields? That's a combination investors dream about — especially when **the buy-in price is around 45% cheaper than Melbourne**.

LOOKING AHEAD

2025 looks set to bring even more growth. Major projects like the Goulburn Valley Highway Shepparton Bypass and the Acenergy Battery Storage System are set to kick off, **driving jobs and boosting economic activity** across the region.

On the residential front: **1,557 new lots, 53 new units, 33 townhouses and 16 standalone dwellings** are all in the pipeline. It's a good start — but **with demand already surging**, it likely won't be enough. **An undersupply is expected to persist**, which will keep upward pressure on prices well into the future.

KEY FACTS

House median price (2024)	\$490,000
Land median price (2024)	\$260,000
Unit median price (2024)	\$355,000
Vacancy rate (as of Dec-24)	0.9%
House rental yield (as of Dec-24)	4.6%
Unit rental yield (as of Dec-24)	6.5%
Estimated value of developments in 2025	\$1,451,070,000
Total dwellings set to commence construction in 2025	1557 Lots 53 Units 33 Townhouses 16 Dwellings
Unemployment rate (as of Dec. qtr. 2024)	2.0%
5-year population growth (from ABS ERP 2020)	+3.5% (+2,309 residents)

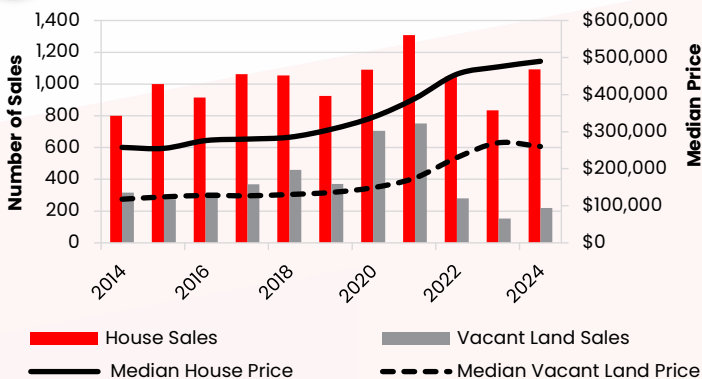
IN SUMMARY

Greater Shepparton still offers great value, strong rental returns, and solid growth prospects — all at a much lower cost than Melbourne.

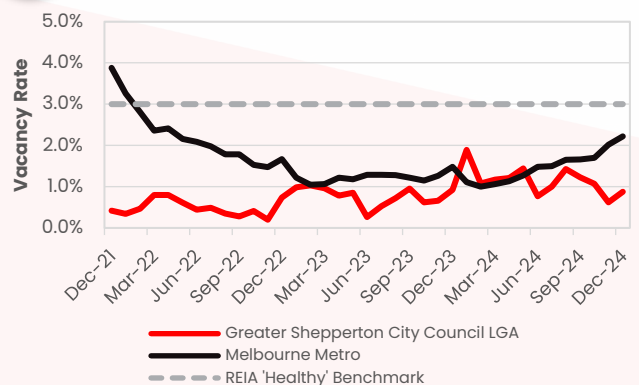
If you're thinking about **getting in before prices climb even higher**, now might just be the time to act.



AREA SALES & MEDIAN PRICE



VACANCY RATE



WODONGA, VICTORIA

TOP AFFORDABLE MAJOR REGIONAL AREA

Sitting on the Victorian side of the Murray River, right next to New South Wales, **Wodonga's the kind of city that's close to everything** — about 320km to Melbourne and 345km to Canberra.

Over the last five years, **the population's grown by 6.6%** — not explosive, but solid. What's more impressive is that by late 2024, **the local unemployment rate had dropped to just 3%**. When you see **job growth holding up** like this, you know **demand for property isn't far behind**.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE MARKET?

Property prices in Wodonga have been doing what you'd hope: **rising steadily**. Over the past decade:

- House values climbed **nearly 94%**.
- **Land prices lifted 80.9%**.
- Units — a surprise performer — **grew by almost 94%**.

Things peaked in 2021 when sales volumes hit a high. The next two years got a bit bumpy, thanks to rising interest rates, but **2024 pulled a comeback — house sales were up 23.9%, and units rose 18%**.

Even better? **Median prices kept moving upward too, gaining 2.7% for houses and 7% for units**. It's not a market overheating — it's one quietly **building value year after year**.

WHY INVESTORS ARE PAYING ATTENTION

Rental returns tell the real story. By the end of 2024:

- **Houses were yielding about 4.3%**; easily beating Melbourne Metro's 3.1% and Canberra's 3.5%.
- **Units offered 4.9%**; slightly ahead of the Melbourne average.

Vacancy rates are practically non-existent at 0.5%; much tighter than Melbourne's 2.2%. **Tenants are moving in fast, which means landlords aren't left waiting** (or discounting) to get properties filled.

The typical house in Wodonga costs around 35% less than in Melbourne or Canberra. If you're a first-time investor, that kind of discount makes a huge difference.

WHAT'S AROUND THE CORNER

There's plenty happening on the ground too. **Around \$570 million worth of projects is scheduled** to start in 2025. Big-ticket items include the Bandiana Military Area Water Treatment Plant (Federal Government-backed), and the Kiewa Valley Battery Energy Storage System

On the housing side: **77 new land lots, 76 townhouses, 17 units, and just 8 houses** are in the pipeline. That's positive — but **if you've been watching markets like this before, you'll know it's nowhere near enough to meet demand**. And that's usually when prices start to move faster than expected.

KEY FACTS

House median price (2024)	\$580,000
Land median price (2024)	\$220,000
Unit median price (2024)	\$380,000
Vacancy rate (as of Dec-24)	0.5%
House rental yield (as of Dec-24)	4.3%
Unit rental yield (as of Dec-24)	4.9%
Estimated value of developments in 2025	\$570,789,445
Total dwellings set to commence construction in 2025	77 lots 76 townhouses 17 units 8 dwellings
Unemployment rate (as of Dec. qtr. 2024)	3.0%
5-year population growth (from ABS ERP 2023)	+6.6% (+2,735 residents)

IN SUMMARY

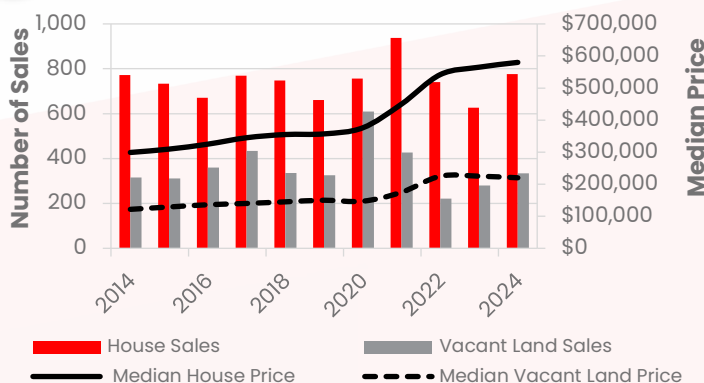
Wodonga offers what many regional buyers are hunting for:

- **Cheaper prices.**
- **Strong rental returns.**
- **Low vacancies.**
- **A solid, growing economy.**

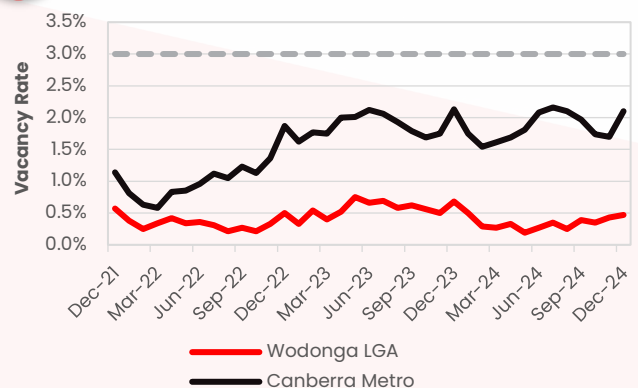
For **smart investors** and **first-time buyers**, it's **worth a closer look**.



AREA SALES & MEDIAN PRICE



VACANCY RATE



BURNIE, TASMANIA

TOP AFFORDABLE MAJOR REGIONAL AREA

Tucked along Tasmania's rugged north-west coast, **Burnie is one of those cities where opportunity often flies under the radar.** It has deep industrial roots — agriculture, mining, manufacturing — but in recent years, Burnie has been carving out a new path. Today, **it's balancing heritage with fresh economic activity and steady residential growth.**

Between 2018 and 2023, **Burnie added just over 4% to its population, reaching 20,463 residents.** That's solid growth for a regional city, and it hasn't come at the cost of local jobs. By the December quarter of 2024, **the unemployment rate had dropped to 5.6%** — not perfect, but far from concerning when compared nationally. **It suggests the economy is holding its ground even as more people move in.**

PROPERTY TRENDS: STRONG, BUT STILL ACCESSIBLE

Over the last decade, **Burnie's property market has been quietly building strength:**

- **Median house prices** have **nearly doubled, up 99.5%.**
- **Vacant land values** increased around **70%.**
- **Units** weren't far behind, rising about **65%.**

Like a lot of regional areas, Burnie peaked in sales activity during 2021, before a natural cooling in 2022 and 2023 when interest rates went up. But interestingly, **2024 saw buyers return, with house sales lifting by 18.5%** over the year, showing renewed confidence.

House prices have stayed steady too, without the sharp spikes seen in larger markets. That points to **sustainable, organic growth, not speculative pressure.** Meanwhile, **unit prices dipped slightly (-3.2%),** which could offer a **rare entry point for first-home buyers and investors chasing value.**

RENTAL MARKET: TIGHT AND RESILIENT

For those looking at rental returns, Burnie **remains competitive.**

- **Houses are yielding around 4.1%;** outperforming Hobart Metro (3.6%).
- **Units are delivering about 4.8%,** keeping pace with the Hobart Metro market.

Perhaps more telling is that **vacancy rates have stayed locked at 0.6%;** identical to Hobart Metro's figure. In real terms, **this means rental properties are turning over quickly — tenants are ready, and landlords aren't left waiting.** It's exactly the kind of environment that **supports reliable income streams for investors.**

WHAT'S COMING NEXT?

While Burnie isn't chasing massive residential developments, it's not standing still either. In **2025, around \$1.1 billion worth of projects** are set to get underway. Notably, the North-west Regional Hospital redevelopment (a State Government priority), and the HIF Fuels Manufacturing Facility (boosting local industry and jobs).

On the residential side, new supply will remain tight, with just **192 lots and 30 units** are planned for release. **Given the clear rebound in buyer activity, that new stock is unlikely to satisfy demand** — especially if construction faces delays, which is often the case regionally.

KEY FACTS

House median price (2024)	\$435,000
Land median price (2024)	\$147,500
Unit median price (2024)	\$343,750
Vacancy rate (as of Dec-24)	0.6%
House rental yield (as of Dec-24)	4.1%
Unit rental yield (as of Dec-24)	4.8%
Estimated value of developments in 2025	\$1,091,940,000
Total dwellings set to commence construction in 2025	192 lots 30 units
Unemployment rate (as of Dec, Quarter 2024)	5.6%
5-year population growth (from ABS ERP 2023)	4.4% (862 residents)

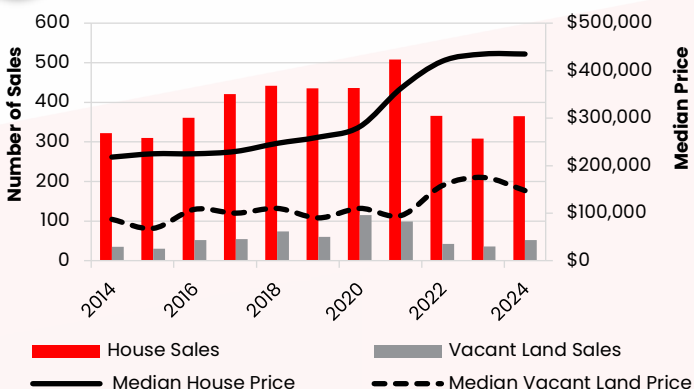
IN SUMMARY

Burnie still offers houses priced **around 41% lower than Hobart Metro**, but the fundamentals are changing fast: **more people, more jobs, limited new housing.**

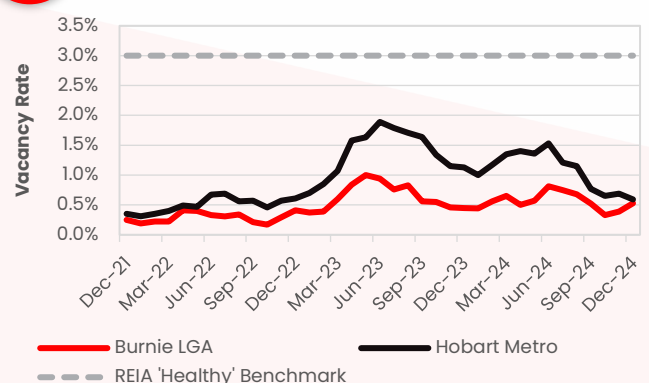
For **investors and buyers** looking for **affordable entry points** backed by real **economic drivers**, Burnie represents an **opportunity that might not stay affordable for long.**



AREA SALES & MEDIAN PRICE



VACANCY RATE



QUEENSLAND & NEW SOUTH WALES

TOP AFFORDABLE REGIONAL AREAS 2025

To broaden the range of opportunities available to first-home buyers and investors, the following tables expand our focus from the top three LGAs to the top ten. (Note: the tables add seven additional LGAs to those discussed earlier in the report.)

Each LGA was assessed using the same methodology, with as many selection criteria met as possible. While these LGAs did not qualify for the top three due to one or more benchmarks not being fully achieved, they still represent affordable alternatives when compared to their respective capital city markets.

QUEENSLAND

Local Government Area	Median House Price 2024	1yr Price Growth	10yrs Price Growth	House Sales 2024	1yr Sales Growth	Price % to Brisbane	House Rental Yield	Vacancy Rates	Total \$\$ 2025 Project*	Total Stand-alone New Stock	Total New Land Lots
Gladstone	\$490,000	19.5%	32.4%	2,187	32%	46.2%	4.80%	1.30%	\$6.6B	209	1444
Townsville	\$520,000	23.8%	44.8%	5,153	13%	42.9%	4.00%	1.60%	\$6.7B	213	4961
Mackay	\$545,000	18.5%	48.1%	3,091	24%	40.1%	5.20%	0.80%	\$625.9M	230	671
Toowoomba	\$635,000	15.5%	69.8%	3,379	14%	30.2%	4.10%	0.40%	\$2.6B	595	1316
Ipswich	\$695,000	19.4%	109.3%	5,467	19%	23.6%	3.90%	0.50%	\$1.7B	1122	1246
Bundaberg	\$565,000	16.5%	91.5%	2,180	11%	37.9%	4.30%	0.50%	\$831.5M	1212	1764
Fraser Coast	\$620,000	8.8%	98.7%	2,646	15%	31.9%	4.00%	0.40%	\$1.2B	1805	3370

NEW SOUTH WALES

Local Government Area	Median House Price 2024	1yr Price Growth	10yrs Price Growth	House Sales 2024	1yr Sales Growth	Price % to Sydney	House Rental Yield	Vacancy Rates	Total \$\$ 2025 Project*	Total Stand-alone New Stock	Total New Land Lots
Albury	\$525,000	-8.1%	66.7%	1195	34.0%	68.1%	3.8%	0.8%	\$909.8M	138	734
Port Stephens	\$825,000	-2.9%	85.4%	1313	22.0%	49.9%	3.4%	0.7%	\$1.6B	239	208
Shellharbour	\$860,000	-2.3%	63.8%	1404	37.0%	47.7%	3.2%	0.5%	\$925.7M	592	343
Queanbeyan-Palerang	\$900,000	2.9%	100.9%	1063	18.0%	45.3%	3.7%	1.4%	\$581.4M	665	1767
Lake Macquarie	\$840,000	0.6%	78.7%	3815	34.0%	48.9%	3.3%	1.2%	\$1.2B	745	1647
Newcastle	\$890,000	3.5%	79.8%	2636	22.0%	45.9%	3.9%	1.5%	\$2.3B	1073	902
Mid-Coast	\$675,000	0.0%	80.0%	1873	16.0%	59.0%	3.4%	1.2%	\$890.8M	1574	2012

*Disclaimer: Estimated value is the value of construction costs as per provided by the relevant data authority, it does not reflect the project's sale/commercial value. It is current as of January 2025, as per values quoted in Cordell Connect Database. Source: APM Pricerfinder, SQM Research, Cordell Database, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australian Government Department of Jobs and Small Business. © PRD 2025

VICTORIA & TASMANIA

TOP AFFORDABLE REGIONAL AREAS 2025

In the year leading up to December 2024, **Melbourne and Hobart recorded the softest growth in median house prices across the capitals** featured in this report; **slipping -1.8% and growing just 0.7% respectively**. This slowdown has opened a short-term window for first-home buyers — those who have been priced out previously may now find a more affordable entry point in these two markets.

Meanwhile, cities like **Brisbane tell a different story, with median house prices jumping by 10.3%** over the same period. It's a reminder that while some markets pause, others are still moving quickly.

That said, **any improvement in affordability in Melbourne and Hobart may be short-lived**. With **predictions of cash rate cuts** ahead, along with **consistently high buyer demand** and very **limited new housing supply**, conditions are shaping up for **a potential return to price growth** from 2025 onwards.

For that reason, **keeping an eye on opportunities beyond the major capitals** — including key regional markets — **remains a smart strategy for both first-home buyers and investors**. Tasmania, given its smaller population base compared to New South Wales, Queensland, and Victoria, contributed five LGAs to this report's regional selection.

VICTORIA

Local Government Area	Median House Price 2024	1yr Price Growth	10yrs Price Growth	House Sales 2024	1yr Sales Growth	Price % to Melbourne	House Rental Yield	Vacancy Rates	Total \$\$ 2025 Project*	Total Stand-alone New Stock	Total New Land Lots
Ballarat	\$535,000	-5.3%	72.6%	2355	25%	40.2%	3.50%	1.10%	\$915.0M	195	331
Wyndham	\$660,000	0.0%	69.2%	5847	22%	26.2%	4.10%	2.40%	\$1.7B	1068	2583
Casey City	\$735,500	1.7%	71.0%	5924	24%	17.8%	3.80%	1.00%	\$1.7B	1226	4331
Whittlesea City	\$710,000	1.3%	64.7%	2763	-13%	20.6%	4.70%	1.70%	\$1.3B	1287	2029
Greater Geelong	\$687,700	-3.4%	69.0%	4801	18%	23.1%	3.30%	0.90%	\$5.6B	1931	846
Hepburn	\$710,000	-5.3%	140.7%	327	9%	20.6%	2.90%	1.30%	\$3.4B	2407	1183
Hume City	\$665,000	0.8%	113.1%	4182	24%	25.7%	4.30%	1.30%	\$3.8B	2508	7139

TASMANIA

Local Government Area	Median House Price 2024	1yr Price Growth	10yrs Price Growth	House Sales 2024	1yr Sales Growth	Price % to Hobart	House Rental Yield	Vacancy Rates	Total \$\$ 2025 Project*	Total Stand-alone New Stock	Total New Land Lots
Kentish	\$485,000	-4.9%	74%	91	1%	34.9%	3.40%	1.30%	\$1.8B	40	36
Devonport	\$480,000	3.2%	97%	398	0.29%	35.6%	3.80%	0.20%	\$51.9M	49	191
Derwent	\$482,500	1.8%	103%	158	9%	35.2%	4.90%	0.10%	\$88.4M	58	58
Launceston	\$530,000	-0.6%	99%	1061	23%	28.9%	3.70%	0.50%	\$511.2M	112	307

*Disclaimer: Estimated value is the value of construction costs as per provided by the relevant data authority, it does not reflect the project's sale/commercial value. It is current as of January 2025, as per values quoted in Cordell Connect Database. Source: APM Pricerfinder, SQM Research, Cordell Database, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australian Government Department of Jobs and Small Business. © PRD 2025

ABOUT PRD'S RESEARCH DIVISION

PRD's property research division provides reliable and unbiased data, insights and consultancy to clients in both metro and regional locations across Australia.

Our extensive research capability and specialised approach ensures our clients can make the most informed and financially sound decisions about residential and commercial properties.

KNOWLEDGE

Access to accurate and objective research is the foundation of all good property decisions. PRD shares on-the-ground experience and decades of knowledge to deliver innovative and effective solutions to our clients.

We take a holistic approach and focus on understanding new issues impacting the property industry; such as the environment and sustainability, the economy, demographic and psychographic shifts, commercial and residential design; and forecast future implications around such issues based on historical data and facts.

PEOPLE

Our in-house research team is skilled in deriving macro and micro quantitative information from multiple credible sources, so we can ensure we provide strategic advice and financially sound direction regarding property and market performance.

RESEARCH SERVICES

Our research services span over every suburb, Local Government Area, and state within Australia. We have the ability and systems to monitor market movements, demographic changes and property trends. We use our knowledge of market sizes, price structure and buyer profiles to identify opportunities for clients and provide market knowledge that is unbiased, thorough and reliable.



GET IN TOUCH

PRD Research Division

 **+61 7 3229 3344**

 **research@prd.com.au**

Our services include:

- Advisory & consultancy.
- Market analysis including profiling & trends.
- Primary qualitative & quantitative research.
- Demographic & target market analysis.
- Geographic information mapping.
- Project analysis including product & pricing recommendations.
- Rental & investment return analysis.



**SCAN TO VIEW
more of our
latest research**



PRD does not give any warranty in relation to the accuracy of the information contained in this report. If you intend to rely upon the information contained herein, you must take note that the information, figures and projections have been provided by various sources and have not been verified by us. We have no belief one way or the other in relation to the accuracy of such information, figures and projections. PRD will not be liable for any loss or damage resulting from any statement, figure, calculation or any other information that you rely upon that is contained in the material. Prepared by PRD Research © All medians and volumes are calculated by PRD Research. Use with written permission only. All other responsibilities disclaimed.

PRD.  REAL ESTATE

