

# Roost - Home loan affordability in Wellington City

22 February 2012

A monthly assessment of home loan affordability for a first-home buyer\*



The Roost first-home buyer index for January 2012:

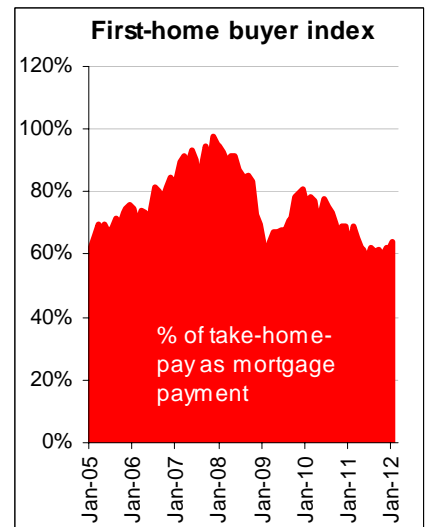
*FHB index 63.8%*

It now takes 63.8% of one median income of a person in the 25-29 age group to pay the mortgage on the lower-quartile priced house in January, up from December's 61.7%.

*Above 40% is "unaffordable"*

This index was 62.2% a year ago and 94.8% four years ago. This affordability index reached its highest point of 64.8% in November 2007.

Essentially a single median income for a first-home buyer is not high enough to buy a lower-quartile priced house, even with a deposit around 10% of the house's value. However, a couple/family with more than one income may find the lower-quartile house price is affordable. (See household income section below.)



For comparison, it takes 56.3% of one median income for the 30-34 year old age group to pay the mortgage on the lower-quartile house price, up from December's 54.5%. This index was 54.9% a year ago and 83.7% four years ago.

## Deposit

*A first-home buyer requires 9.1 years to save a 20% deposit*

The first-home buyer index is calculated assuming that the house buyer has been saving for four years, and that amount saved in the four years is then used as a deposit. Based on current income and house prices it will take an individual 4.5 years to save a 10% deposit, and 9.1 years to save a 20% deposit as now required by most banks.

## Key drivers of home loan affordability:

### House prices

*Lower-quartile price change for the year was 9.5%*

The lower-quartile house price was \$410,600 in January, up from \$397,600 last month. Annual growth was 9.5%, from the \$375,100 lower-quartile house price in January 2011.

Wellington City house prices in January		Month (ch)	Year (ch)
Median	\$484,600	-1.3% ↓	9.1% ↑
Lower Quartile	\$410,600	3.3%	9.5% ↑

### After-tax income

*Take-home pay increased 2.2% year on year*

The median weekly take-home pay for a first-home buyer was \$858.72 in January, up from the \$857.76 last month and up from \$840.19 in January 2011.

Five years ago, median weekly take-home pay was \$737.81.

## Disposable Income (wages minus mortgage payment)

Weekly disposable income was \$310.48 in January, \$7.17 lower than the \$317.66 in January 2011 (and compares with \$328.24 one month earlier). This measure shows why current property prices exclude so many potential buyers.

Take-home pay (wkly)		A month ago (ch)		A year ago (ch)	
Wages	\$858.72	\$857.76	↑	\$840.19	\$18.53 (2.2%)
Disposable Income	\$310.48	\$328.24	↓	\$317.66	↓\$7.17

## Interest rates and mortgage payments

Interest rates have slightly risen since last month, but are lower than one year ago. The average bank interest rate for a floating mortgage rate was 5.74% for January, -50 basis points less than the 6.24% twelve months earlier.

Mortgage rate and payment (wkly)		A month ago (ch)		A year ago (ch)	
Floating rate	5.738%	5.738%	↔	6.243%	↓ -50 basis points
Mortgage payment	\$548.24	\$529.52	↑	\$522.53	↑ \$25.70 (4.9%)

*Lower interest rates than twelve months ago*

## Household income

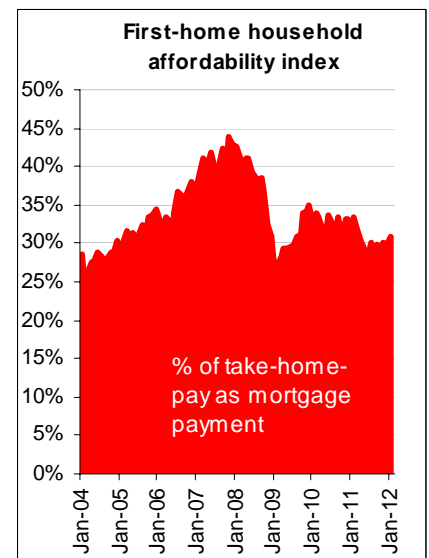
*FHB index is at 30.9% for household income*

*Above 40% is considered "unaffordable"*

Household income is a key criteria for lending institutions. We have established a set of standardised household profiles, and these can be used to check affordability.

Based on our first-home buyer household profile, it now takes 30.9% of the median take-home pay to service a mortgage of a lower quartile home purchased in January. Lower quartile housing is affordable for families in Wellington City when both adults work.

This is up from 29.9% in the previous month, December. A year ago, it was 30.0%.



*A first home buyer household consists for 2 adults and no children*

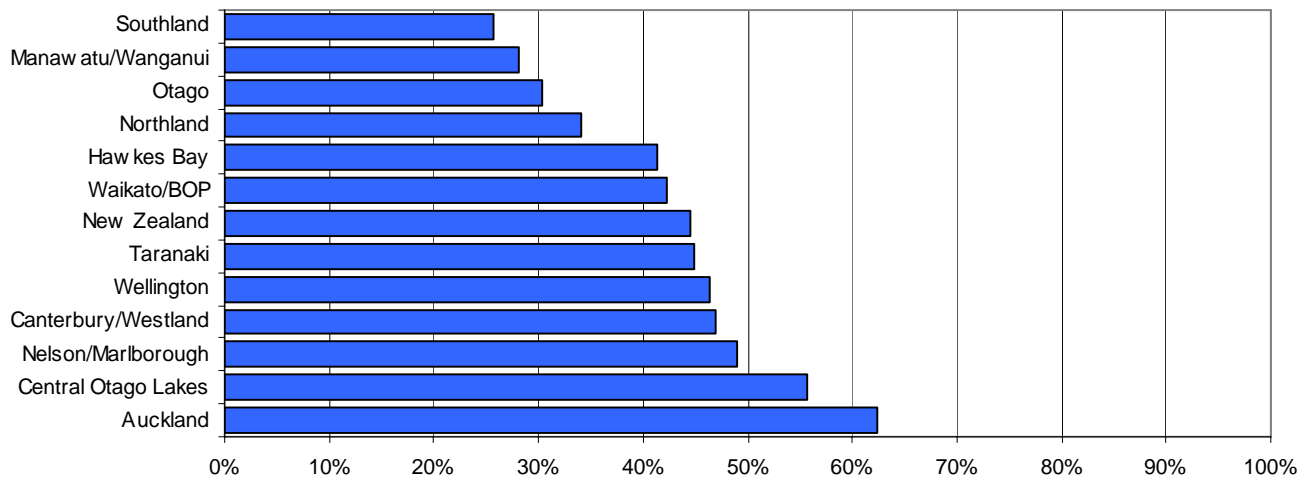
The profile we use for a first-home buyer household is one adult male working full-time, one adult female working full time, with no children.

Details of our household profiles, the data sources, and the methods used, are set out in the Notes section of this report, below.

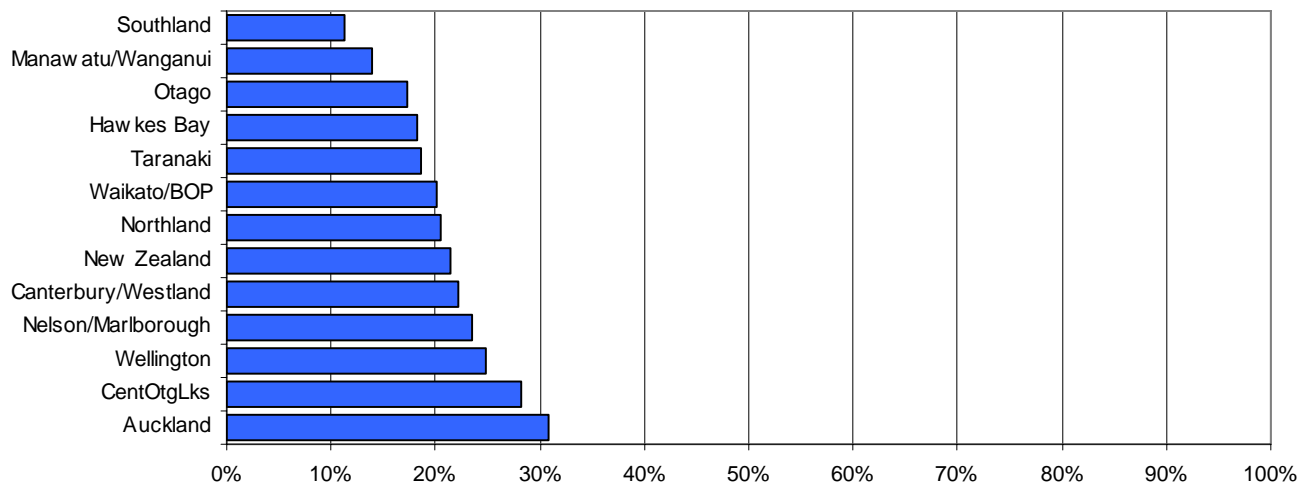
Refer to our [Median Multiple reports](#) for a reconciliation of this report to the internationally comparable benchmarks, by city.

- [New Zealand \(159kb .pdf\)](#)
- [Northland \(159kb .pdf\)](#)
  - [Whangarei \(159kb .pdf\)](#)
- [Auckland region \(159kb .pdf\)](#)
  - [Auckland Central \(159kb .pdf\)](#)
  - [Auckland North Shore \(159kb .pdf\)](#)
  - [Auckland South \(159kb .pdf\)](#)
  - [Auckland West\(159kb .pdf\)](#)
- [Waikato and Bay of Plenty \(159kb .pdf\)](#)
  - [Hamilton \(159kb .pdf\)](#)
  - [Tauranga \(159kb .pdf\)](#)
  - [Rotorua \(159kb .pdf\)](#)
- [Hawkes Bay and Gisborne \(159kb .pdf\)](#)
  - [Napier \(159kb .pdf\)](#)
  - [Hastings \(159kb .pdf\)](#)
  - [Gisborne \(159kb .pdf\)](#)
- [Taranaki \(159kb .pdf\)](#)
  - [New Plymouth \(159kb .pdf\)](#)
- [Manawatu and Wanganui\(159kb .pdf\)](#)
  - [Palmerston North \(159kb .pdf\)](#)
  - [Wanganui\(159kb .pdf\)](#)
- [Wellington region \(159kb .pdf\)](#)
  - [Wellington City \(159kb .pdf\)](#)
  - [Wellington Hutt Valley\(159kb .pdf\)](#)
  - [Porirua \(159kb .pdf\)](#)
  - [Kapiti Coast \(159kb .pdf\)](#)
- [Nelson and Marlborough \(159kb .pdf\)](#)
  - [Nelson \(159kb .pdf\)](#)
- [Canterbury \(156kb .pdf\)](#)
  - [Christchurch \(156kb .pdf\)](#)
  - [Timaru \(156kb .pdf\)](#)
- [Central Otago Lakes \(159kb .pdf\)](#)
  - [Queesntown \(159kb .pdf\)](#)
- [Otago \(159kb .pdf\)](#)
  - [Dunedin \(159kb .pdf\)](#)
- [Southland \(159kb .pdf\)](#)
  - [Invercargill \(159kb .pdf\)](#)

**First-home buyer affordability index**  
% of take-home pay as mortgage payment



**First-home buyer household affordability index**  
% of household income as mortgage payment



r) = Revised, following Statistics NZ LEEDS database update.

#### Note to Editors

This work must be referred to as **The Roost first-home buyer home loan affordability series**. There are two related components – the **Standard home loan affordability series**, and the **First-home buyer home loan affordability series**. They have both been produced by [www.interest.co.nz](http://www.interest.co.nz). Please direct queries via email to [info@interest.co.nz](mailto:info@interest.co.nz), or see our contact information below.

This research has been sponsored by Roost since July 2010. **Roost**, owned by AMP, is one of New Zealand's largest independent home loan and investment property brokers with 16 franchisees nationwide. Roost offers to source the perfect loan for its customers from a panel of lenders, and insurance advice from Roost insurance specialists. Roost was established in 1996. For more information please visit [www.roost.co.nz](http://www.roost.co.nz)

#### Sources / Definitions / Methodology

\*a **first-home buyer**: An individual in the 25-29 year old age group that buys the lower-quartile priced house with a deposit as calculated below.

#### Interpreting this Index:

These affordability indexes measure the proportion a weekly mortgage payment is of weekly take-home pay. A separate measure is generated for each region, plus a national one, and for other various mortgage interest rate terms.

**Weekly Income (source change):**

From the July 2007 Report onward, the source on which we base our estimates of weekly income, is now the LEEDS (Linked employer-employee data survey) data from [Statistics New Zealand](#).

The first-home-buyer home loan affordability report is based on the LEEDS data for the 25-29 age group.

Income tax rates from [IRD](#) are used to calculate a take-home pay (which is the LEEDS-based data net of the specific income tax rate).

**Deposit - First home buyer index:**

As house prices vary by region to a larger extent than wages, we refrained from using a simple 10% deposit-90% mortgage rule to emulate a first home buyer. Instead, to capture the disparity between incomes and house prices we estimate the deposit as a function of savings – that is 20% of weekly income saved for 4 years, plus interest earned at a 90 day deposit interest rate.

**Home Loan:** (Lower quartile house price less the deposit)

Mortgage repayments are based on the value of the home loan, paid weekly for 25 years, using the 2 year bank average interest rate. The home loan is assumed to be a standard table mortgage, where both interest and principal is repaid in a fixed weekly payment made in arrears. The repayment is calculated using the tools at <http://www.interest.co.nz/calculators/mortgage-calculator>.

**Mortgage Rates:**

Average mortgage interest rates are sourced from [www.interest.co.nz](http://www.interest.co.nz). These averages are for banks only as banks have 90%+ of the mortgage market. Affordability calculations are done for mortgages at the floating rate and one year through to the five fixed-rate terms. In this report, the two-year fixed mortgage interest rate is used until August 2010. From September 2010 onward, this research has adopted a variable or floating interest rate as the market is shifted to a lower and cheaper rate on a floating basis.

**House price data:**

Median house prices are as reported by the [Real Estate Institute of New Zealand](#). Although the REINZ series is more volatile than the [QV](#) equivalent, there is a highly positive correlation between the two series. The REINZ series is more current and offers an earlier indication of market trends.

**Saving Rates:**

Average savings interest rates are sourced from [www.interest.co.nz](http://www.interest.co.nz). These averages are for banks only, and use the 90 day term deposit rate. Saving calculations take into account the individuals marginal tax rates as defined by [IRD](#).

**Household affordability:**

Household affordability is calculated in the same way as individual affordability except instead of individual income, a household income is used. The household income for a *first-home buyer* household is made from 1 full time male median income, and 1 full time female median income (from LEEDS data) both in the 25-29 age range. Our first-home buyer household profile does not have any children.

**Disclaimer**

IMPORTANT – PLEASE READ

No reader should rely on the contents of this report for making a specific investment or purchase decision. The information in this report is supplied strictly on the basis that only overall market trends are being reported on, and that all data, conclusions and opinions expressed are provisional and subject to revision.

If you are making a specific investment or purchase decision, you are strongly advised to seek independent advice from a qualified professional you trust.

The conditions and disclaimers set out at <http://www.interest.co.nz/terms-conditions> are applicable to this report as well.

This report is made available on these terms only, and JDJL Limited or [www.interest.co.nz](http://www.interest.co.nz) or Roost is not responsible for any actions taken on the basis of information in this report, or for any error in or omission from this report.

**Contact**

For more information, contact

Bernard Hickey  
Managing editor,  
[www.interest.co.nz](http://www.interest.co.nz)  
JDJL Limited  
206 Jervois Road, Herne Bay  
PO Box 47-756, Ponsonby  
Auckland, New Zealand

Phone: (09) 360-9618  
Mobile: 021 866-051  
Fax: (09) 360-9319  
Email: [bernard.hickey@interest.co.nz](mailto:bernard.hickey@interest.co.nz)