REIANEWS

ISSUE 100: AUGUST 2020

100th Edition

IN THIS ISSUE

Mr Adrian Kelly
REIA President

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

WELCOME
FROM REIA'S PRESIDENT

Welcome to the August and 100th edition of REIA News.

CV-19 and 2020 continues to provide uncertainty for Australians and the world and REIA, together with state and territory REIAs, continue to work with our industry through this challenging time.

With the continued Stage 4 and 3 restrictions, Victoria's rental moratorium has been extended with a suite of other support measures announced for tenants. REIV is actively working to assist their members and clients during this difficult period and this has thrown the nationwide moratorium into a state of flux for all of REIAs members as reported in Recon.

The Federal Government has also called for industry's reforecast budget contributions by 24 August 2020 with our key ideas on extension of JobKeeper, HomeBuilder and other areas to assist Australia's renters, homeowners, investors and property professionals.

Lastly, REIA were pleased to announce the appointment and welcome Anna Neelagama as REIA's incoming CEO, and have thanked Jock Kreital for his extraordinary work over the pandemic period who will remain on as an advisor to REIA and the REIs.

Read on for all of this and more including: protecting your business from cyber-attacks, the ATOs residential property podcast and what's happening in industry and in politics Australia wide.

Our thoughts go out to the Victorian industry and community at this time.

Mr Adrian Kelly

REIA PRESIDENT

Follow us on Twitter @REIANational

Introducing new CEO for REIA

Anna Neelagama

The REIA is excited to introduce its newest CEO, Anna Neelagama, who will replace and continue the good work done by Jock Kreitals.

"Earlier in the year REIA embarked on a recruitment process for a new CEO and we received over one hundred applicants for the role. We eventually decided upon Anna and I'm delighted to announce her appointment," said REIA president Adrian Kelly.

"Anna definitely is experienced in the areas of policy and advocacy which amongst other facets, are crucial focuses that REIA works within for the benefit of all estate agents and their employees across Australia."

"I'd also like to acknowledge the outstanding leadership provided by our former CEO, Jock Kreitals in particular for his steady hand this year in navigating our organisation and the wider industry through the current COVID pandemic. I look forward to Jock continuing to contribute his knowledge and experience to the REIA."

Ms Neelagama is excited to be taking on the role of CEO.

"I see real estate businesses as the heart of every Australian city and town, and a major contributor to the economic and social wellbeing of this country," said Ms Neelagama.

"This is why I am so excited to work with the REIA Board, members and Australian agency profession to tackle the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead for the property sector in the post-pandemic world."

"We have a great opportunity to facilitate national solutions to policy that will benefit REIA's members and the Australian economy."

REIA
MEDIA RELEASES

To subscribe to the latest news from REIA, email reia@reia.com.au

View REIA Media Releases [here]

Super's a lot like property - the more attention you give it, the more likely it will grow.

Take our Super Health Inspection today to help boost your future at **reisuper.com.au/open**

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REI Super

An Industry SuperFund

Super's a lot like property – the more attention you give it, the more likely it will grow.

Below are 4 simple things you can do today that could help improve your super and make a noticeable difference to how you retire.

1 Check your contact details

It doesn't sound important, but if you can't be contacted when legislation changes, you might miss out on important information.

When it comes to email addresses, our tip is to supply your personal email address, rather than your work email, that way your super fund can continue communicating with you even when you move jobs. Login into your account and update your details and communication preferences.

2 Investment option right for you?

You should choose where your money is invested, and be comfortable with your level of risk.

Tools such as risk profile quizzes will help you understand which investment options might be right for you and your circumstances.

We understand it's a volatile time for financial markets at the moment, but try not to panic and remember what goes down must come up. Call our helpline 1300 13 44 33. They can help you select investment options that you are comfortable with.

Did you know one of the ways REI Super supports the real estate industry is by investing in unlisted properties? Unlisted property assets are those investment assets that are not included in portfolios listed on the stock exchange. They are generally not readily available to individual investors. Read REI Super's latest unlisted property investment update.

3 Give your super a boost

Things might be challenging now, however as your situation changes you might want to consider boosting your super by making extra contributions. Whether you make a before or after-tax contribution, any amount can make a big difference to your retirement.

4 Are you properly covered?

As life changes, it's important to regularly review your insurance to ensure that you still have the right level of cover.

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Most super funds usually provide Death, Total & Permanent Disability (TPD) and Income Insurance cover. REI Super services the real estate industry by offering a unique Income Protection Insurance type which caters for the predominantly commission based industry.

If you have accessed your super early, and your balance is now less than $6,000, or has been inactive for 16 months it is likely that you have lost your insurance. Check your account status today, and if you want your insurance cover to remain ensure that you opt-in to keep your cover.

Getting on top of your super is really important. So, as we start to reopen our businesses and lives, take some time to review your super account. A few small changes now can make a big difference to your future.

Not a member of REI Super? It's easy to switch to REI Super, now anyone can join.

REIA PUBLICATIONS

REIA has published property market data and analysis for several decades. It has an excellent reputation as a highly credible source of information and considered opinion on the residential and commercial property markets in Australia.

REIA publications use information collated from a wide variety of sources including real estate agencies, industry and government. Both raw data and analysis are published in REIA reports.

The REIA Housing Affordability Report and the REIA Real Estate Market Facts may be purchased as a 6 or 12 month subscription. For more about the REIA Housing Affordability Report, click here. For more about the REIA Real Estate Market Facts publication, click here.

Also, "datacube" spreadsheets provide key information on quarterly median values, dating from the beginning of REIA data collection through to the current quarter, for all capital cities where data is available. For more information on REIA datacubes, please call 02 6282 4277.

RELEASE DATES FOR THE 2020 REPORTS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

REIA Housing Affordability Report

- December quarter 2019 – Wednesday 4 March 2020
- March quarter 2020 – Wednesday 3 June 2020
- June quarter 2020 – Wednesday 2 September 2020
- September quarter 2020 – Wednesday 2 December 2020

REIA Real Estate Market Facts

- December quarter 2019 – Wednesday 11 March 2020
- March quarter 2020 – Wednesday 10 June 2020
- June quarter 2020 – Thursday 10 September 2020
- September quarter 2020 – Wednesday 9 December 2020

Working Remotely:

Staying Cyber Safe

It is a sad state of affairs when a global virus proves to be a nexus to computer viruses.

However, one of the immutable laws of the universe is ringing true: ‘out of disaster, comes opportunity’. And unfortunately, in this case, the ‘opportunity’ is being taken by cyber criminals ramping up their phishing efforts, and taking advantage of the uncertain times.

As a small business owner, whilst your priorities at this time are probably on your personal health and hygiene, and the wellbeing of your employees, now might also be the time to brush up on some ‘digital hygiene’ habits to prepare your business for this newly emerging wave of threats.

Be on the alert for phishing emails and websites

Criminals are crafting emails and websites purporting to provide information on a vast range of important topics, such as health reports, travel advisory updates, flight cancellations and school closures, just to name a few. Some of these communications are skillfully crafted, making it difficult to identify them as a phishing email or website. Be on the lookout for emails or websites that ask you to click on suspicious links or request sensitive information such as log-in details, credit cards, passwords, passports, health details or addresses, and ensure you’re raising this awareness with your staff.

Read full article here

Professional Indemnity Insurance for REIA members. Easy.

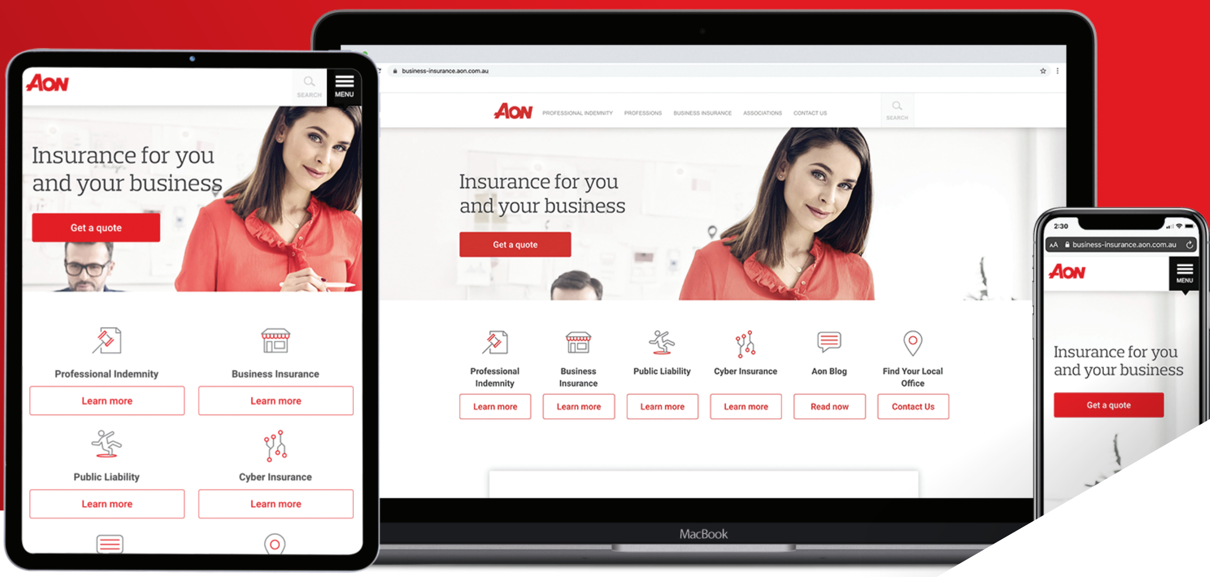
✓ Easy to understand, buy and manage

Powered by our new insurance platform coverwallet, Aon Direct helps solve your business insurance needs in challenging times.

Take control of your business insurance costs

Get instant quotes online

Talk to experienced, friendly brokers to help make better decisions that protect your business



Get a quick quote
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PROPTECH SUMMIT 2020

WHAT IS THE PROPTECH SUMMIT 2020?

10-12 NOVEMBER 2020 SYDNEY

WHERE TECHNOLOGY AND INVESTMENT CONVERGE TO TRANSFORM THE FUTURE OF PROPERTY

Launched in 2018 with huge success and 200 real estate professionals in the room, who met to discuss and debate the rapid pace of change and disruption facing the industry.

We're back in 2020, to catch up on how the industry has changed in the last 12 months, hear from globally recognised and domestic thought leaders who will share case studies and discuss what your strategies should look like for the coming year.

If this is your first time, don't miss out on the opportunity to meet, network with and be inspired by leaders who are the driving force behind the PropTech revolution globally and in Australia.

We'll be addressing all the big issues, peeking over the horizon to see what's coming next and helping the industry grow.

Make sure you're part of the growth, we look forward to seeing you there.

Request BROCHURE

Register

AUSTRALIAN TAXATION OFFICE

ATO'S TAX INVOICE RESIDENTIAL RENTAL PROPERTY PODCAST

2020 has been a difficult and challenging year for everyone with impacts from the bushfires, floods and COVID-19 affecting us all.

The ATO's latest Tax InVoice podcast provides information and answers to questions being asked by residential rental property owners affected by current events. It helps them understand how natural disasters, COVID-19 and recent legislation changes may affect their rental income and deductions, as well as gives tips to avoid any mistakes in their returns.

Join Michael Yardney, CEO, Metropole Property Strategists and Adam O'Grady, Assistant Commissioner, Risk & Strategy Individuals and Intermediaries, Australian Taxation Office as they talk all things rentals, including:

- recent law changes and how they affect investors' tax obligations,
- what interest payments are deductible on mortgages,
- what can and can't be claimed this tax time,
- the importance of good record-keeping and
- tips and tricks to avoid common mistakes.

The ATO want rental property investors to feel confident in lodging their returns and getting it right the first time. If you are in need of assistance or are looking for more information check out the below ATO web pages. For:

- COVID-19 impacts head to residential rental property
- Changes to rental property law check out property and rental income online
- Tax time toolkit - Tax Time Toolkit for rental property owners.

MAKING NEWS

General national news

REIWA supports ‘Homes for Good’ during Homelessness Week

2-8 August 2020 was National Homelessness Week and according to the Home Hub there are over 60,000 households (families or a group of people who share a home) in need of safe and affordable homes in Western Australia.

Community REInvest program

REIWA and its members have been supporters of The Salvation Army through the Community REInvest program which helps the Salvos deliver services to clients who may be residing at The Beacon or at Graceville, their domestic violence shelter for women and children.

Overall, our contribution helps the Salvos ensure that these individuals get back on track, access the support they need and regain their independence back in the community.

Homes for good

However, this year REIWA is pleased to also support The Home Hub’s ‘Homes for Good’ initiative which promotes a whole of community response to the housing crisis due to the increased housing needs presented by COVID-19.

REIWA CEO Neville Pozzi said homelessness can happen to anyone, at any time and it is even more prevalent since the pandemic commenced.

“Homes for Good enables people with vacant or specialised properties an opportunity to house those in need whether it be on a short or long-term basis,” Mr Pozzi said.

“Utilising these properties which may not be in use at the moment, will make a big difference to those currently experiencing homelessness.”

Looking at the data

A single person on the JobSeeker payment currently receives $1,115 per fortnight which will reduce to $815 on the 30 September 2020 and down again to $565 at the end of the year.

Compared to Perth’s median rent per week, which is $350 per week, as payments reduce, tenants will find it more and more difficult to pay rent as well as afford the basics.

“One of the key issues for those who are vulnerable in our society is housing and by ensuring those in need have a secure place to live means they can set down the foundations they need to rebuild their lives,” Mr Pozzi said.

“There are a few ways in which you can assist, whether it is to help provide short- or long-term support and REIWA is encouraging anyone who can help to do so.”

How you can help

During this difficult time, the Home Hub platform is asking people to please register if:

- Homes for good: you have any vacant or available properties, including houses, unused holiday homes, hotel rooms and short-term rental properties that can be leased to those seeking shelter.
- Management capacity: you can help by managing Home Hub properties if you are a community housing provider, property manager, government department, hotelier or self/private manager.
- Need for housing: if you are, or know anyone, requiring safe accommodation, including seniors, low-income earners, people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, anyone fleeing family and domestic violence, as well as anyone needing to move or find accommodation as a result of COVID-19.

More information

For more information on the Homes for Good initiative visit the Home Hub website.

Alternatively, read how landlords play a key role in the fight against homelessness.

Source: Real Estate Institute of Western Australia

INDUSTRY UPDATE

Industry news from around Australia

South Australia

A new future for REISA

The Real Estate Institute of South Australia has successfully been established as a company and is now known as the Real Estate Institute of South Australia Limited (REISA Ltd).

The establishment of REISA Ltd follows the adoption by members on 31 March 2020 to establish a new Constitution and become an organisation with contemporary governance.

This change marks an important turning point for the organisation.

REISA's future is exciting – their focus has evolved and will provide members with a new offering to support the continued strategic growth and success of the industry, in what has been an ever-changing real estate landscape.

REISA will provide members with important advocacy to influence positive policy and legislative change, access to online business tools, support businesses and their learning and development needs and provide services that enhance the competitiveness and market opportunities for real estate enterprises in South Australia.

Further, REISA announced the appointment of the new Board of Directors by the independent Board Selection Committee.

REISA's new Directors bring skill sets and leadership capabilities to support the future direction and in accordance with best practice governance, the Board as a whole will be a majority of Independent Directors.

As REISA embarks on change, their focus will remain fixed on continuous improvement to the industry and an impactful return on your membership investment.

More information will be provided shortly on our new membership framework and the application process.

This is an exciting time for the real estate industry in South Australia.

Source: Real Estate Institute of South Australia

Victoria

Vic homes are not hanging around

REIV President Leah Calnan says that despite the challenges presented by the pandemic residential property in Victoria is selling quicker now than it was 12 months ago.

The latest data (June 2020) from the Real Estate Institute of Victoria revealed that the average Victorian home is spending just 41 days on the market before being sold, down from 44 days in same period last year.

Days on market for properties sold by private treaty gives an insight into the current buyer demand.

"There remains a huge interest from buyers despite the State undergoing restrictions due to the pandemic." Ms Calnan said.

"The REIV days on market figures, amongst a range of other measures, show that our State's property market is holding strong and delivering great results across the board."

Homes in Metropolitan Melbourne are being sold within 39 days on average, improving on the 42 days it took in June 2019.

Selling a home in Montrose in Melbourne's East provides the shortest turnaround in the State; where homes are being sold in a mere 14 days on average, down from 17 days last year.

Warranwood and Chirnside Park follow taking just 18 and 19 days to sell a home respectively.

Lake Gardens in Ballarat is the fastest place to sell a home in Regional Victoria, taking only 24 days from listing, down from 25 days last year.

Winter Valley and Wangaratta are the second and third fastest localities to sell a property in Regional Victoria taking just 25 and 26 days respectively.

President of the REIV Leah Calnan said real estate in Victoria remains highly sought after.

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INDUSTRY UPDATE

Industry news from around Australia

» *continued*

"These figures provide great confidence to sellers, that buyers are rapidly snapping up Victorian real estate."

"Properties spending less time on the market means sellers won't have to deal with the stress of a lengthy real estate transaction."

"This is a great time to sell your property, a relatively lower volume of property listings is producing strong prices and driving down the selling time."

Source: Real Estate Institute of Victoria

Western Australia

Listings reduce significantly in regional WA during June quarter

In the June 2020 quarter all nine regional centres in Western Australia saw a significant reduction in listings when compared to the previous quarter. Karratha was a standout, with listings for sale reducing by 36 per cent and only 34 properties for sale on reiwa.com.

REIWA President Damian Collins said listings have declined in Greater Perth and we are now starting to see this being reflected in regional Western Australia.

"While Karratha saw the largest decrease when compared to the March 2020 quarter, Albany closely followed with a 29 per cent decline in listings with Kalgoorlie-Boulder down 28 per cent and Port Hedland with a 26 per cent decline," Mr Collins said.

"From an annual perspective, listings have also reduced across all regional centres with Broome experiencing a 60 per cent decrease, Kalgoorlie–Boulder falling by 42 per cent and Albany by 41 per cent."

Sales activity

According to reiwa.com, three regional centres saw an increase in sales compared to the March 2020 quarter.

"Usually when there is a decrease in listings, we also see a spike in sales however only three regional centres saw an increase including Karratha (up 72 per cent), Port Hedland (up 24 per cent) and Geraldton (up 15 per cent)," Mr Collins said.

"There could be a few reasons why we are seeing activity and listings reduce in other regions, including prospective sellers choosing not to sell their property during elevated levels of uncertainty around the impacts of COVID-19."

Median sale price

Karratha, Port Hedland and Geraldton all saw slight increases to their median house sale price during the quarter, with Albany and Bunbury remaining the same.

"While it is pleasing to see that five regional centres either saw an increase in median sale price or remained the same, the areas that did decline did so only slightly, with Kalgoorlie-Boulder declining the most by 4.4 per cent," Mr Collins said.

"Despite the uncertainty around what is expected to happen during the COVID-19 pandemic, the results we have seen during the June 2020 quarter when the outbreak was prominent in WA, are quite pleasing for all regional areas and should provide those people looking to buy or sell with confidence that the markets are holding up well."

Source: Real Estate Institute of Western Australia

Western Australia

Perth's affordable suburbs showing growth in July

Recently you may have seen that Perth's luxury market has weathered the COVID-19 storm, with various real estate agencies reporting that their multi-million-dollar listings are attracting high interest and sales.

This is great news; however we are also seeing sales activity growth in the more affordable end of the market, with eight of the top 10 suburbs, with a, median house sale price under Perth's current median of $475,000, seeing an increase in sales activity growth in July.

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INDUSTRY UPDATE

Industry news from around Australia

» *continued*

During the month of July, Byford had a 92 per cent increase in sales activity compared to June and a median of $380,000.

Following this was Port Kennedy which increased 88 per cent in sales activity and a median of $340,000 and Quinns Rock with 50 per cent increase in sales and a median of $450,000.

Rounding out the top five is Heathridge with a median of $430,000 and 42 per cent increase in activity, and Banksia Grove with a median of $355,000 and an increase of 38 per cent in activity.

Close behind this was Yangebup (median of $415,000 and activity up 29 per cent), Falcon (median of $340,000 and activity up 29 per cent), Baldivis (median of $366,250 and activity up 26 per cent), East Fremantle (median of $1,100,000 and up activity 20 per cent) and Southern River (median of $540,000 and activity up 17 per cent).

It is pleasing to see the increase in sales activity as it shows that the established real estate market is still performing quite well despite the significant increase we have seen in land sales since the government grants were announced at the start of June.

In addition, the increase in activity at lower price points, demonstrates more activity by first home buyers, due to there being no stamp duty payable on the purchase of an established home under $430,000.

In the latest *Lending Indicators* by the Australian Bureau of Statistics showed there was a 2.6 per cent increase in the number of loans to first home buyers during the 12 months to June 2020, compared to previous year.

Following on from the effects we are seeing with COVID-19 and the increase in activity recently, it will be interesting to see if this number continues to grow over the coming months.

For those that are looking to find their next home, make sure to visit reiwa.com and register for property alerts in your chosen suburb to make sure you are aware each time a new property is listed.

Source: Real Estate Institute of Western Australia

Northern Territory

House sales increase during the pandemic in NT

The REINT June Quarter 2020 Real Estate Market Report makes for interesting reading as figures defy expectations.

The Real Estate Institute of the Northern Territory (REINT) has released its June Quarter 2020 Real Estate Market Report for the Northern Territory and has reported an almost 11 percent increase in house sales for the quarter and vacancy rates falling by around 2 percent across Greater Darwin.

"The Detached Dwelling or 'House' market saw a sizeable increase in sales and even a small bump in median price." said REINT Chief Executive Officer, Mr Quentin Kilian.

"The June Quarter 2020 saw sales volumes rise by 10.9 percent across Greater Darwin.

At a Glance:

- June Quarter 2020 saw sales volumes rise by 10.9 percent across Greater Darwin
- Median house price increased by 1.6 percent across Greater Darwin at $477,500
- For units sales volumes fell by 11.6 percent

"The bulk of this was in Darwin North Coastal area, with a 25.9 percent increase, and takes in suburbs such as Alawa, Coconut Grove, Milner, Nightcliff and Wanguri.

"Palmerston also fared well with an 11.3 percent increase in sales volumes."

The median house price increased by 1.6 percent across Greater Darwin to come in at $477,500.

"However, the increases were much stronger in some areas with Inner Darwin seeing a strong lift of 7.8 percent in

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INDUSTRY UPDATE

Industry news from around Australia

» *continued*

median price and Palmerston seeing its median go up 4 percent," said Mr Kilian.

Sales were strong in Katherine and Tennant Creek, but Alice Springs saw a drop of 11 percent in sales volumes.

"While the Alice Springs volumes were down, the median price held up very well with an increase of 3.2 percent to $471,500." said Mr Kilian.

Unfortunately it was a very different picture in the Unit/Townhouse market.

The Greater Darwin sales volumes fell again quite sharply, down by a further 11.6 percent this quarter, recording just 130 sales for the quarter.

And with it came the median price, slipping a further 7.5 percent in the quarter to bring in the median at just $280,000.

"Inner Darwin and Palmerston bucked the negative sales trend for the quarter with Inner Darwin Unit sales up by 6.9 percent and Palmerston Unit sales rose a very healthy 27.8 percent," said Mr Kilian.

"However the median price took a hit coming down by 7.9 percent to $330,000.

"Equally the Palmerston Unit market took a solid hit to its median price, falling by 14.7 percent to $230,000.

"Alice Springs, on the other hand, saw very strong growth in both Unit sales volumes, up 11.1 percent, and median price, up 3.2 percent, to $337,500."

Vacancy rates fell across all jurisdictions in the Territory.

"Following on from the lead in the January Quarter, the Territory continues to have a very active rental market," said Mr Kilian.

" A trend that appears to be continuing into the September Quarter."

Greater Darwin rental vacancies have fallen by 1.8 percent to come in at 3.6 percent.

The Palmerston market saw a fall of 2.1 percent in available vacancies, registering one of the lowest vacancies rates for many years at 2.9 percent.

Alice Springs dropped a further 1.1 percent to record a vacancy rate of 4.3 percent.

"Rents were a mixed bag with House rentals, based on 3 bedroom detached dwellings, dropped 1.5 percent over the quarter to come in at $452.00 per week, but Unit rents, based on 2 bedroom Units, rose by 1.7 percent to come in at $335.60 per week," said Mr Kilian.

"One of the strongest points is for the investor market where Rental Yields remain very strong.

"House yields dropped slightly but still record a strong 4.9 percent, and with the falling Unit prices, coupled with strong rents, the Unit/Apartment yield has risen by 0.6 percent to an extremely attractive 6.2 percent yield.

"Alice Springs has also recorded strong rental yields with 5.6 percent on Houses and 6.2 percent on Units."

Mr Kilian said they are continuing to see strong buyer enquiries and activity, which makes it two consecutive quarters of strong sales growth.

"The pressure is on the Unit market, but the strong sales figures in Inner Darwin and Palmerston are very encouraging," said Mr Kilian.

"While some may look at the low median in the Unit market as troubling, the astute buyers – particularly First Home Buyers and investors – are seeing the real opportunity.

"To put this opportunity into perspective, the Greater Darwin Unit median is $280,000.

"The same Unit would cost you $315,000 in Adelaide; $369,500 in Brisbane; $370,000 in Perth; $385,000 in Hobart; $439,250 in Canberra; $540,000 in Melbourne; and a whopping $647,000 in Sydney.

"Darwin's Unit median is 56 percent lower than Sydney's!"

Source: The Real Estate Conversation
https://www.therealestateconversation.com.au/

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INDUSTRY UPDATE

Industry news from around Australia

» *continued*

New South Wales

On the phone: NCAT hearings during COVID-19

With the onset of the Coronavirus pandemic, the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal announced that all hearings will now be held by phone. It's a significant change for property managers and one with practical impacts. We spoke to Sandra McGee to find out the good and the bad aspects of this new way of operation.

Sandra McGee, Property Management Manager at Starr Partners Merrylands and member of the REINSW Property Management Chapter Committee, said that the feedback from her team about NCAT phone hearings has been largely positive.

"One of the biggest complaints property managers have always had about NCAT hearings relates to wasted time," she said. "There's the time it takes to travel to the venue, followed by a lot of sitting around outside the hearing room and waiting to be called.

"When you add it all up, there can sometimes be hours of downtime that could be better spent on other value-adding activities.

"Now, with phone hearings, you're given a firm hearing time. This means you're not waiting around and wondering when your matter is going to be heard. There are also time limits in place for each hearing, which ensures things don't drag on.

"In particular, for relatively simple matters, such as rental arrears, the phone hearings work well and decisions are made quickly."

However, Sandra explained that a lot more work has to be done upfront when it comes to phone hearings.

"Before, you would simply lodge an application with NCAT and then take the residential tenancy agreement, inspection reports, photos, et cetera along with you to the hearing," she said. "You could simply give them to the tenant on the day and negotiate a settlement, or present it all to the Tribunal Member and argue your case.

"Now, all your documentation needs to be prepared well ahead of time, because there's a lot more back and forth ahead of the phone hearing.

"For example, if you lodge an application with NCAT, you have 14 days to hand your documentation over to the tenant. The tenant then has 14 days to reply to you, followed by another seven days for you to reply back to the tenant. Then you have to also make sure the documentation goes to the Tribunal Member as well.

"So, with phone hearings, there's a lot more preliminary work and back and forth before you actually get to the hearing stage.

"It also means that there's a longer period of time between lodging an application and the actual phone hearing date. We're finding that our hearing dates are up to eight weeks from the time of application, whereas it used to be only three weeks."

While there is additional time now being spent preparing ahead of the hearing, Sandra said that this is more than offset by the time saved not having to travel to a hearing venue.

Even though phone hearings came about because of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, Sandra believes they are here to stay.

"Now that phone hearings have been shown to work, why wouldn't NCAT continue on with them," she asked. "Venue costs have always been a big issue for NCAT and we saw this when hearings were significantly cut back in Parramatta. Phone hearings surely go some way to easing this burden, while also providing convenience and ease of access for all parties.

"I can also see that phone hearings are of particular benefit in regional areas. Why have a Tribunal Member travelling hours by car on a regional circuit, only visiting towns every four to six weeks, when phone hearings can save time and money, and allow for more timely resolution of applications."

Source: Real Estate Institute of New South Wales

» *article continues*

INDUSTRY UPDATE

Industry news from around Australia

» *continued*

New South Wales

Outer Sydney sees sharp vacancy increase as inner city eases

REINSW has released its Vacancy Rate Survey results showing a large increase in out Sydney suburbs.

As COVID-19 continues to impact the residential rental market, the REINSW Vacancy Rate Survey results for July 2020 give a clearer picture by just how much.

Vacancies in Sydney overall increased for the fifth successive month and now sit at 5 per cent, up 0.5 per cent from June and 2 per cent since March.

In a slight turnaround, the exodus from inner-city Sydney appears to have eased and now sits at 5.3 per cent, down 0.5 per cent from June.

At a Glance:

- Vacancies in Sydney's Inner Ring hit a high last month to be 5.8 per cent
- Sydney's Outer Ring,in July saw a rise of 1.7 per cent in just one month
- Vacancies in the Northern Rivers region dropped by 1.5 per cent to 1.1 per cent, and the South Coast region saw a 1.3 per cent decrease to 1.4 per cent

"Vacancies in Sydney's Inner Ring hit a high last month to be 5.8 per cent," REINSW CEO Tim McKibbin said.

"Even with the 0.5 per cent drop in July, the vacancy rate for Sydney's inner suburbs is still 2.8 per cent higher than it was back in March.

"Sydney's Middle Ring increased for the fourth successive month and is now 5.4 per cent, up 0.2 per cent from June and 2.2 per cent from March.

"The real surprise this month comes from Sydney's Outer Ring, where vacancies increased sharply."

Mr McKibbin said vacancies have been steadily trending downward since March, as inner-city tenants relinquished properties with higher weekly rents for more affordable options in the suburbs more distant from the CBD, however, July saw a rise of 1.7 per cent in just one month.

Most regional areas are not faring well.

Table 1 *Residential Rental Vacancy Rate Survey – Sydney and Hunter Regions*

	Jul-20	Jun-20	May-20	Apr-20	Mar-20	Feb-20	Jan-20	Dec-19	Nov-19	Oct-19	Sep-19	Aug-19
Sydney												
Inner	5.3%	5.8%	5.0%	4.3%	2.5%	2.8%	3.1%	3.4%	2.4%	2.7%	3.1%	3.4%
Middle	5.4%	5.2%	4.6%	4.4%	3.6%	3.9%	3.6%	3.4%	3.7%	4.2%	3.0%	3.9%
Outer	4.3%	2.6%	2.7%	3.1%	3.0%	3.5%	3.3%	3.4%	3.6%	3.9%	2.7%	3.5%
Total	**5.0%**	**4.5%**	**4.1%**	**3.8%**	**3.0%**	**3.4%**	**3.3%**	**3.4%**	**3.2%**	**3.6%**	**2.9%**	**3.6%**
Hunter												
Newcastle	1.3%	1.7%	2.4%	2.1%	1.6%	2.5%	2.0%	2.5%	2.6%	2.5%	1.2%	1.5%
Other	1.3%	1.9%	2.4%	1.8%	1.2%	2.0%	0.9%	1.7%	1.1%	1.4%	1.0%	1.4%
Total	**1.3%**	**1.8%**	**2.4%**	**1.9%**	**1.3%**	**2.1%**	**1.2%**	**1.9%**	**1.6%**	**1.8%**	**1.0%**	**1.4%**

Source: REINSW

» *article continues*

INDUSTRY UPDATE

Industry news from around Australia

» *continued*

Vacancies in the Northern Rivers region dropped by 1.5 per cent to 1.1 per cent, and the South Coast region saw a 1.3 per cent decrease to 1.4 per cent.

Other regional areas also recorded drops including the Central Coast, Central West, Coffs Harbour, MidNorth Coast, New England, Orana and the Riverina.

Only Albury and the Murrumbidgee region bucked the trend, recording increases in vacancies.

"This month's results show that COVID-19 is having a significant impact across the whole of New South Wales and it's unlikely that things will settle for a while yet," Mr McKibbin said.

Source: The Real Estate Conversation
https://www.therealestateconversation.com.au

Table 2 *Residential Rental Vacancy Rate Survey – Illawarra and Regional NSW*

	Jul-20	Jun-20	May-20	Apr-20	Mar-20	Feb-20	Jan-20	Dec-19	Nov-19	Oct-19	Sep-19	Aug-19
Illawarra												
Wollongong	2.9%	3.2%	3.9%	3.2%	3.5%	2.0%	2.9%	2.6%	4.3%	2.5%	2.8%	2.4%
Outer	2.6%	2.9%	2.9%	4.3%	4.3%	2.3%	2.3%	2.9%	1.5%	2.1%	1.5%	2.3%
Total	**2.8%**	**3.1%**	**3.6%**	**3.6%**	**3.8%**	**2.1%**	**2.7%**	**2.7%**	**2.9%**	**2.4%**	**2.2%**	**2.3%**
Regions												
Albury	1.1%	0.6%	1.2%	1.2%	0.6%	1.6%	1.8%	1.1%	1.3%	0.9%	1.0%	1.3%
Central Coast	1.5%	2.1%	2.3%	3.0%	2.4%	3.0%	4.3%	5.1%	3.5%	4.4%	3.0%	3.4%
Central West	1.1%	1.5%	2.0%	2.0%	1.0%	1.4%	2.1%	2.2%	2.0%	1.9%	2.3%	2.3%
Coffs Harbour	2.1%	2.4%	3.0%	3.4%	3.1%	5.4%	3.3%	2.5%	3.1%	3.6%	2.9%	1.3%
Mid-North Coast	1.2%	2.0%	3.2%	2.6%	1.7%	2.5%	2.4%	2.2%	2.3%	2.1%	2.8%	2.6%
Murrumbidgee	0.9%	0.8%	2.0%	1.1%	1.4%	1.5%	1.9%	1.8%	-	0.5%	1.2%	1.0%
New England	2.8%	3.1%	3.9%	3.4%	3.0%	3.8%	4.1%	3.3%	2.4%	2.8%	2.4%	2.6%
Northern Rivers	1.1%	2.6%	1.8%	2.7%	1.7%	1.7%	2.2%	1.5%	1.3%	1.5%	1.6%	2.1%
Orana	1.0%	1.9%	2.4%	2.7%	0.7%	1.2%	2.4%	1.8%	1.8%	1.8%	1.4%	1.5%
Riverina	0.6%	1.2%	2.5%	1.8%	1.5%	1.9%	1.7%	1.2%	0.8%	1.1%	1.2%	1.8%
South Coast	1.4%	2.7%	2.0%	1.7%	4.8%	3.9%	2.7%	3.4%	2.4%	3.1%	3.1%	2.8%
South Eastern*	-	0.8%	1.8%	0.7%	3.5%	2.5%	1.8%	1.2%	0.3%	0.8%	1.2%	4.1%

Source: REINSW

» *article continues*

INDUSTRY UPDATE

Industry news from around Australia

» *continued*

Will rental moratorium be extended Australia-wide?

Williams Media asked the real estate institutes from each state and territory what is happening in their rental market, after Victoria's eviction moratorium was extended to the end of the year.

Victoria's government announced an extension to their rental moratorium late last week, which will see it continue until 31 December, 2020.

This will mean evictions will continue to be banned for residential tenancies, except under special circumstances.

Rental increases will not be allowed and residential tenants and landlords who struggle to reach agreement over rent reductions will continue to have access to the dispute resolution service.

Leah Calnan, president, REIV told Williams Media they weren't surprised when the annoucement was made.

"However, there needs to be some additional processes put in place for landlords," said Ms Calnan.

"There are many examples of tenants blatantly not paying their rent.

"It is just not foreseeable how landlords will make it to the end of the year, otherwise.

"VCAT are not tough enough on delinquent tenants as the moratorium wasn't for tenants to just stop paying their rent.

"There is no help for landlords in this process."

As Victoria continues to grapple with COVID-19 and Stage 4 restrictions, Williams Media investigated how other states and territories are coping with the rental moratorium, what can be expected in the coming months and how the economy will react.

REIACT

Michell Tynan, CEO, REIACT told Williams Media they are still awaiting the ACT Government's decision regarding an extension of a rental moratorium.

"I have no idea which way it will go," said Ms Tynan.

"We have an election here on 17 October 2020, so the government will go into care-taker mode on 10 September 2020.

"We will be releasing a media statement once we have a decision.

"We have been involved in numerous discussions with the government in recent weeks, however, no indication has been given as to whether our recommendations will form any part of the government's policy."

Ms Tynan said the current eviction moratorium in the ACT does not end until 22 October 2020.

"Our recommendation to government is for a rent assistance scheme for those COVID impacted tenants facing large rent arrears debts, with modelling for a scheme which would see landlords receive 75 per cent of rent arrears paid in full by government and a loan agreement between tenant and government to realise payment of the debt over an extended period," said Ms Tynan.

"This would allow tenants to remain in their home whilst negotiating an affordable repayment plan with government to repay arrears over 3 years.

"This would be funded from the ACT Government commitment of $39 million in April for the Land Tax Credit Scheme, which to date has only expended $2 million.

"We are already seeing increased listings of rental properties for sale, we believe in part due to COVID, but also due to increased statutory charges in land tax and rates, making the ACT somewhat unattractive to investors in the current environment."

REIT

Mandy Welling, president, REIT told Williams Media they have not be advised by Government of any change to the emergency period in Tasmania at this stage.

"As it sits, our extension expires on midnight 30 September 2020," said Ms Welling.

We wouldn't like to guess as to whether or not this timeline will be extended, there's always a chance whilst the virus is a threat.

"I can understand the extension in Victoria due to the number of COVID cases and the Stage 4 restrictions in place.

"It's a terrible situation for them all and we feel for them.

» *article continues*

INDUSTRY UPDATE

Industry news from around Australia

» *continued*

If we are presented with an extension in Tasmania it could certainly create concerns with investors.

"With a rental property shortage already present across the state, it's a situation best avoided."

REINT

Quentin Kilian, CEO, REINT told Williams Media there is no rental moratorium in the Northern Territory, rather a Modification Notice.

"In April the Attorney-General introduced legislation in the form of a Modification Notice to the Residential Tenancies Act which brought in amended conditions on ceasing tenancies by extending notice periods to 60 days," said Mr Kilian.

"The current Modification Notice has been extended to 23 September."

Mr Kilian said this weekend's election outcome may be the difference between whether or not measures will be extended.

"The REINT is preparing a letter to the Attorney-General, whomever that may be on Monday, to have the Modification Notice cease on 23 September to allow the industry to return to normal governance and regulation," said Mr Kilian.

"If the Modification Notice continues it will create a greater financial impact for landlords and property owners, many of whom are under financial stress themselves.

"It also serves as a disincentive to future investors."

The REINT has surveyed its members and found that less than one percent of their rent rolls were impacted and affected by COVID19.

"As such the REINT is seeking to impress upon the Attorney-General that extending the Modification Notice would be a major impost on the majority of the renters and the industry, rather than a protectionist measure," said Mr Kilian.

REISA

Paul Edwards, Legislation Advisor, REISA told Williams Media there is a rent moratorium in South Australia until September 30 under the Emergency Response Act.

"I can't see how it won't be extended," said Mr Edwards.

"Once the JobSeeker and JobKeeper payments are reduced or stop, more tenants will be in financial hardship, but it will depend on what the South Australian government's response is."

REIWA

Damian Collins, president, REIWA told Williams Media there is a rental moratorium until the 29th September, 2020, unless the Western Australian Government changes it.

"Our position in Western Australia is a different situation to Victoria," said Mr Collins.

"We have had no community transfer of COVID-19 for 4 months and we have 98 per cent of people back to normal and normal trading.

"We have put forward a submission where we would prefer the legislation to lapse, however, if there is an extension, it must be changed."

Mr Collins said changes should include limitations to those under the moratorium only being people who are genuinely economically affected.

"If they've had a 25 per cent reduction in income from March to October, they would be included," said Mr Collins.

"95-98 per cent of people are back to normal, so therefore the rental market should be under normal market conditions."

Source: The Real Estate Conversation
https://www.therealestateconversation.com.au/

POLITICAL WATCH

Information and news from government

» *continued*

Dwelling approvals slide to an eight-year low in June

The number of dwellings approved fell 4.9 per cent in June, in seasonally adjusted terms, according to data released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) recently.

"The impact of COVID-19 was evident on dwelling approvals in June," said Bill Becker, Assistant Director of Construction Statistics at the ABS. "Falls were recorded in all states, and across both detached and attached dwellings."

In seasonally adjusted terms, private sector houses fell 5.7 per cent in June, while private sector dwellings excluding houses fell 5.3 per cent.

Double-digit falls were recorded in New South Wales (14.8 per cent), Western Australia (11.7 per cent), Queensland (10.9 per cent) and Tasmania (10.8 per cent), while South Australia (4.6 per cent) and Victoria (0.2 per cent) also declined.

Approvals for private sector houses fell in Queensland (15.2 per cent), New South Wales (11.3 per cent), South Australia (2.3 per cent) and Western Australia (0.8 per cent), while Victoria rose slightly (0.9 per cent), in seasonally adjusted terms.

The value of total building approved rose 7.3 per cent in June, in seasonally adjusted terms. The value of non-residential building rose 17.8 per cent, while residential building rose 0.1 per cent. The latter was buoyed by an 11.4 per cent increase in the value of alterations and additions to residential building.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics

Home loan commitments partly recover in June

The value of new loan commitments for housing rose in June, up 6.2 per cent, seasonally adjusted, according to the latest Australian Bureau of Statistics figures released recently.

ABS Chief Economist, Bruce Hockman, said: "The rise in housing loan commitments in June reflects the easing of COVID-19 restrictions in May on auctions, open houses and mobility in general."

The value of new loan commitments for owner occupier housing rose 5.5 per cent, while investor housing rose 8.1 per cent. The number of owner occupier first home buyer loan commitments rose 3.3 per cent.

"Despite the rebound in lending activity, the value of housing loan commitments in June was down over 10 per cent compared to March after large falls in April and May," Mr Hockman said.

The value of new loan commitments for fixed term personal finance rose 5.2 percent in June, seasonally adjusted, led by a 20.4 per cent rise in the value of new loan commitments for road vehicles.

Mr Hockman added: "The easing of COVID-19 restrictions drove the rises in May and June but commitments for road vehicles and total fixed loan commitments for personal finance remain below the pre-COVID level."

The ABS appreciates the continued support of APRA and lending institutions in providing the data used to compile this publication and for the additional data insights being provided by lending institutions.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics

Pilot program to deliver additional community housing throughout New South Wales

The Commonwealth and New South Wales Governments will work together on a new pilot program to fast-track community housing supply by providing innovative, low cost finance to Community Housing Providers (CHPs)

The NSW Land and Housing Corporation's (LAHC) Community Housing Renewal

» *article continues*

POLITICAL WATCH

Information and news from government

» *continued*

Program will take advantage of an innovative financing structure designed to use the relative strengths of the parties to the transaction to deliver renewable and scalable financing for the social and affordable housing sector.

Minister for Housing Michael Sukkar said that pilot program was the first of its kind in Australia and demonstrated how the National Housing Finance and Investment Corporation (NHFIC) is working to improving housing outcomes for Australians.

“The Coalition Government established NHFIC to deliver innovative programs to improve outcomes across the housing spectrum and this pilot program is a further example of our commitment to helping Australians into a home of their own,” Minister Sukkar said.

“The pilot program gives CHPs the opportunity to build new social and affordable homes on State Government owned land, through access low cost and long term funding to manage the housing under build to rent long term leases.”

“This pilot program complements, and is in addition to, the $1.2 billion in bonds NHFIC has issued through its Affordable Bond Aggregator, which has supported the delivery of more than 2,000 new and 6,300 existing homes built and managed by Australia’s CHPs.”

NSW Minister for Water, Property and Housing Melinda Pavey said this innovative build to rent and financing model delivers on the NSW Government’s objectives to build new and better social housing by renewing ageing assets that are expensive to maintain, and creating mixed communities.

“We’re not only building more new housing for those people who really need it – we’re also providing jobs and supporting the NSW economy at a critical time,” Minister Pavey said.

“We need more of this type of innovative thinking and collaboration that provides the best possible bang for our buck we can get. This model has the potential to inject hundreds of millions into the housing sector and ultimately the economy, which was essential during this difficult time.”

“Six sites in Sydney have been identified for the pilot program, with development approvals in place that will deliver around 96 new homes. Preparation for a second tranche of sites for release is already underway following the pilot, which will include around 300 homes in metropolitan and regional areas of NSW,” Minister Pavey said.

Tier 1 and Tier 2 CHPs in New South Wales will be eligible to participate in their own right or by forming consortia with other CHPs or non-CHP partners.

CHPs will, at its option, have access to both NHFIC and institutional subordinated debt provided by Cbus.

CHPs can access the Program through an expression on interest period which opens today (20 August 2020) with the aim of delivering new and better social housing under an innovative build to rent model on a neighbourhood scale.

For more information on NSW Land and Housing Corporation’s Community Housing Renewal Program visit the NSW eTendering website.

Source: The Hon Michael Sukkar MP, Minister for Housing and Assistant Treasurer
and
The Hon Melinda Pavey MP, NSW Minister for Water, Property and Housing

» *article continues*

POLITICAL WATCH

Information and news from government

» *continued*

New social housing to be delivered in innovative partnership

The National Housing Finance and Investment Corporation (NHFIC), together with the leading industry fund Cbus Super (Cbus), is pleased to support the NSW Land and Housing Corporation (LAHC) in a leading-edge pilot program that will deliver new social and affordable housing for NSW.

The Community Housing Renewal Program (CHRP) will see LAHC partner with Community Housing Providers (CHPs) to deliver new social, affordable and private dwellings on selected LAHC-owned land under a long-term lease.

LAHC today (20 August 2020) opened an Expression of Interest (EOI) period for registered CHPs.

NHFIC and Cbus have been working together to offer registered CHPs the option to access low interest, long-term funding to take part in this program. The two organisations recently signed a joint letter to CHPs outlining a debt package available to participants in the EOI.

NHFIC CEO Nathan Dal Bon praised the innovative structure, which partnered NSW LAHC (a state government agency), NHFIC (a Commonwealth entity) and Cbus (an industry super fund for the building, construction, and allied industries) for the first time.

“Working collaboratively with the NSW state government on delivering this program – and leveraging our strong relationship with Cbus to provide financing – will support the further development of the community housing sector in NSW,” Mr Dal Bon said.

Linda Cunningham, Head of Debt and Alternatives at Cbus said the fund is proud to be working with NHFIC and the NSW Government on the next evolution of housing finance.

“This innovative model increases the amount of debt funding available to CHPs and has the potential to be scaled to allow hundreds of millions of additional capital to be invested into the housing sector,” Ms Cunningham said.

“This could be a gamechanger in addressing the financing gap for new social and affordable housing construction.”

The CHRP pilot program includes six shovel-ready sites in Sydney that will deliver 96 dwellings. A second tranche of sites is being prepared for release after the pilot which will include 300 new social, affordable and private dwellings in metropolitan and regional NSW.

Source: National Housing Finance and Investment Corporation (NHFIC), Australian Government

The scams that target small business and what you can do

As more small businesses use digital and online tools to run their business and sell things, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) is urging you to protect your information.

Scams affecting small business

Scams can target any small business. The ACCC’s Targeting scams report found that business email compromise scams caused the largest losses of any scam type in 2019, with $132 million lost.

Business email compromise scams trick someone into paying invoices to scammers’ bank accounts instead of the legitimate account.

Other common scams that may impact your business include:

- **phishing** — for example where a business responds to a call, email or text message impersonating a known contact or real organisation
- **hacking and malware** — for example where a scammer compromises a business’s systems and accesses their data
- **online shopping scams** — for example where a business attempts to buy equipment online and the product never arrives.

» *article continues*

POLITICAL WATCH

Information and news from government

» *continued*

Many scammers see small businesses as a target for scams as they are often busy and have fewer resources to devote to security than large businesses.

Five simple steps to avoid scams

1. Inform and educate your staff members about scams (such as by forwarding this email).
2. Have strong processes in place for verifying and paying accounts, and make sure all staff know about them.
3. Ensure your systems have up-to-date anti-virus software.
4. Consider what business information you post on social media and networking sites, as scammers use publicly available information to target businesses.
5. Back up your data regularly and store your backups offsite and offline.

Do you have privacy obligations?

Scammers can gain identity information by unlawfully accessing your records. Some small businesses have obligations to protect information under the Privacy Act, so you should check if your small business needs to comply with privacy laws.

If your small business has privacy obligations, you must take reasonable steps to protect personal information from misuse, interference, loss, unauthorised access, modification or disclosure.

Stay ahead of scammers

Scams Awareness Week is helping to highlight common scams affecting small business and what you can do to reduce the risk to your business.

Visit the Scamwatch website to listen to our Scams Awareness Week podcast series and for more tips on protecting your small business from scammers.

Source: Australian Competition and Consumer Commission

Nation wide red-tape reduction to make doing business easier

Tradies including carpenters, joiners, bricklayers, builders, electricians and plumbers, as well as a raft of other licensed occupations such as teachers and property agents, could find it easier to do business across state and territory borders with a new agreement that will see Council on Federal Financial Relations (CFFR) develop a framework for occupational licences to be automatically recognised across jurisdictions.

Under red-tape reduction reforms agreed to by Commonwealth, state and territory treasurers, automatic recognition will allow individuals who hold an occupational licence in one Australian jurisdiction to undertake equivalent work in another jurisdiction under that licence.

CFFR will prioritise implementation of a uniform scheme to support widespread occupational mobility via automatic recognition, with ambition to take effect from 1 January 2021, subject to the passage of legislation in individual jurisdictions.

The current mutual recognition regime for licensed occupations across Australia is complex, costly, and imposes an excessive regulatory burden on businesses that operate across jurisdictions. Currently, there are over 800 different licences in manual trades alone, with around 20 per cent of workers in the economy required to be licensed.

Automatic recognition will help to address impediments to labour mobility across jurisdictions by allowing a person who is licensed or registered in one jurisdiction to be already considered registered in another in an equivalent occupation.

A uniform scheme will make it easier and less expensive for businesses, professionals and workers to move or operate within jurisdictions and across Australia, thereby creating jobs, increasing output, competition and innovation, and resulting in lower prices for consumers and businesses.

It is vital to ensuring Australians, including displaced workers, can take up new job opportunities wherever they arise as the economy recovers and restrictions on movement are eased from COVID-19.

CFFR will report back to National Cabinet in October 2020 on the progress in delivering a uniform scheme for automatic recognition of licensed occupations to take effect on 1 January 2021.

Source: The Hon Josh Frydenberg MP, Treasurer of the Commonwealth of Australia

This article is brought to you by Carolyn Parrella
Terri Scheer Insurance
Executive Manager

FACILITATING FAST AND EFFICIENT CLAIMS

With landlords facing heightened risks due to COVID-19, the support of property managers when lodging insurance claims has never been more important.

Here are key steps you can take to ensure claims are paid quickly and efficiently:

Entry and exit condition reports

Claims for property damage require 'before and after' evidence in order to be paid.

Entry inspections should take place when the landlord places insurance cover and at the start of each subsequent tenancy. Exit inspections should take place at the end of each lease.

These should be documented with plenty of evidence in the form of labelled and date-stamped photographs.

Where damage has occurred, photograph each room where repair work is required. Include detailed labelling – if the insurer can't tell which rooms or damage they are looking at, this will cause delays while those details are confirmed.

Regular inspections

Routine inspections are the best way to ensure a tenant is taking care of the property. It also allows property managers to identify any maintenance requiring attention.

Serve notices promptly

If the tenant falls into rent arrears, ensure you follow the Residential Tenancy Act in your state and, where permissible, serve the prescribed notices as soon as possible within the required timeframes.

Insurers need to see the correct process has been carried out and that attempts have been made to obtain the unpaid rent. Delaying this process can affect the outcome of a loss of rent claim.

Lodge police reports

Theft and malicious damage are criminal acts and should be reported to the police. Many landlord insurance policies stipulate that theft and malicious damage claims must be accompanied by a copy of the police report or the name of the police station where the report was made.

Minimise the loss

If your landlord needs to make a claim, ensure actions are taken to minimise the loss. This includes having the property cleaned and re-let as soon as possible. Provide proof of advertising to demonstrate you are making reasonable efforts to find new tenants.

Don't wait – claim online

It's important that claims are lodged prior to goods being replaced or damage repaired, as payment may be jeopardised if there is no evidence of the damage occurring.

If your insurer has an online claims function, this will speed up the process time. The online claims process is fast, simple and efficient.

Check the documentation

It can take longer to process a claim if the supporting documentation is not attached. The required documents can generally be found on the insurer's website and this will help to ensure payment is made as quickly as possible.

For further information, visit www.terrischeer.com.au or call 1800 804 016.

FIABCI WORLD PRIX D'EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2020

The 2020 FIABCI World Prix d'Excellence Awards took place online on July 16, in a **virtual ceremony** live-streamed via the federation›s official Facebook account, unlike past editions. Held as part of the FIABCI annual World Real Estate Congress, the in-person ceremony and gala dinner transitioned to an online event, following the **cancellation of the congress due to the severity of the situation related to COVID-19**.

This year, 33 projects were recognized as **silver** and **gold** winners in 14 categories, from affordable housing to sustainable development. The announcement was broadcasted live from multiple locations around the world, including Paris, London, Kuala Lumpur, and Malaysia. The winners will receive their trophies next year, on May 27 during the FIABCI World Real Estate Congress in Paris.

Dr. Yu Kee Su, President of the Prix d'Excellence Committee, welcomed attendees to the virtual ceremony and recognized all those involved in the creation and development of the awards, from the founding fathers to the sponsors. Dr. Yu also left an encouraging message to the FIABCI Chapters that are in the process of organizing their national property awards.

"Ladies and gentlemen, nobody is successful alone. To the FIABCI Chapters that are organizing property awards, please continue your good work. It will not be easy, but you will be making your developers, your property owners, your Chapter, and your country proud whenever your participants are announced as winners.", the President of the Prix d'Excellence Committee said.

Dr. Yu Kee Su's remarks were followed by those of the FIABCI World President Florentino Dulalia. Mr. Dulalia started his speech by recognizing World President 2019-2020 Walid Moussa, who was supposed to present the prizes on May 28 during the World Congress in Manila, Philippines. "Despite the complexity of the situation, it is important to attribute the Prix d'Excellence Awards and officially announce the winners," the current President in office added.

Other highlights of the virtual announcement of the winners included the **recognition of World President 1996-1997 Sheldon Good as FIABCI Honorary World President** by Secretary-General Narek Arakelyan.

The Prix d'Excellence Award – also known as the "Oscar of Real Estate" – recognizes projects that best embody excellence in all real estate disciplines involved in its creation and is a reflection of the FIABCI ideal of providing society with optimal solutions to its property needs and helping make the world a better place to live, work, and enjoy.

Projects competing for FIABCI's Prix d'Excellence Awards are judged according to the architecture, design, and construction of the project, in addition to its impact on the community and environment, and its financial and marketing success. The finalists are then confirmed by an independent auditor from KPMG.

To learn more about Prix d'Excellence Awards, please, visit http://fiabciprix.com/

THE WORLD

Property news from around the world

UK NEWS

Landlords welcome tenant loan plan in Wales

Loans to pay off rent arrears built during the COVID-19 pandemic will now be available to tenants in Wales following a campaign by the National Residential Landlords Association (NRLA).

The NRLA has been lobbying the Welsh Government to provide more support for landlords and tenants affected by the crisis, with a loan system one of its key asks.

Following the announcement of the new Tenancy Saver Loans, Ben Beadle, chief executive at the NRLA, said: “We are delighted the Welsh Government has listened to what we had to say and consequently adopted our proposals for a tenant loan scheme.

“These loans will help keep tenants who have been affected by coronavirus in their homes, while supporting landlords reliant on rental income to pay their own bills.

“We would advise every landlord with a tenant in arrears to make sure they are aware of the new scheme and advise any landlord in receipt of these payments to commit to working with their tenant to maintain the tenancy in the long term.”

The scheme will apply to the Private Rented Sector only, and will allow tenants to borrow money to cover the arrears they have built, with the money then paid directly to the landlord or agent.

The Government hopes the scheme will be operational from September. As yet, there is no cap on the amount that can be borrowed and the tenant will be given up to five years to repay the loan.

Source: PropertyWire.com

UK NEWS

UK house prices fall for fourth consecutive month

The average UK house price was £241,604 in July which represents a decline for the fourth consecutive month, according to the latest House Price Index by Halifax.

Despite the overall fall, a ‘mini-boom’ drove prices up in July to 1.6% higher than in June on a monthly basis. However in the latest quarter, house prices were 0.2% lower than the preceding three months. House prices in July were 3.8% higher than in the same month a year earlier, with the index indicating that uncertainty remains with likely downward pressure on prices in the medium term.

Russell Galley, managing director at Halifax, said: “Following four months of decline, average house prices in July experienced their greatest month on month increase this year, up 1.6% from June and comfortably offsetting losses in 2020. The average house price in July is the highest it has ever been since the Halifax House Price Index began, 3.8% higher than a year ago.

“The latest data adds to the emerging view that the market is experiencing a surprising spike post lockdown. As pent-up demand from the period of lockdown is released into a largely open housing market, a low supply of available homes is helping to exert upwards pressure on house prices. Supported by the government’s initiative of a significant cut in stamp duty, and evidence from households and agents suggesting that confidence is currently growing, the immediate future for the housing market looks brighter than many might have expected three months ago.

“However, looking further ahead, there is still a great deal of uncertainty around the lasting impact of the pandemic. As government support measures come to an end, the resulting impact on the macroeconomic environment, and in turn the housing market, will start to become more apparent.

“In particular, a weakening in labour market conditions would lead us to expect greater downward pressure on prices in the medium-term.”

Mike Scott, chief analyst at Yopa, added: “The Halifax recorded a 1.6% increase in house prices for the month of July, pushing the annual rate of growth up to 3.8%. Following four months of declining prices,

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this suggests that the stamp duty holiday is having an immediate effect on prices, and so most of the benefit of the holiday is going to sellers rather than buyers.

"However, this surge in prices may not last long, and the market may well turn down again as government schemes to support the economy come to an end and unemployment rises. We expect a slow start to the year in 2021, by which time it will be too late to make an offer on a house and expect to complete the purchase before the end of the stamp duty holiday on 31 March."

Source: PropertyWire.com

NZ NEWS

REINZ warns unintended consequences are likely to arise now RTA Bill has passed

Following the passing of the Residential Tenancies Amendment (RTA) Bill 2020 recently, the Real Estate Institute of New Zealand (REINZ) is warning that some of the changes are likely to have unintended consequences and actually cause more harm than good.

Bindi Norwell, Chief Executive at REINZ says: "Whilst the Act will achieve some positive things for tenants, the reality is that there are likely now to be a number of unintended consequences that arise as a result of the Bill passing.

"For example, in a recent survey around half of landlords and investors (46.3%) said it is likely or highly likely they will sell their rental property if removal of the right to issue a 90 day notice went ahead. Given we already have a shortage of quality rental stock across the country, this is problematic as it will further reduce the pool of rental properties available and likely push up rents even further.

"With median rents in Auckland having risen 9.8% in the last 3 years (from $510 to $550) and in Wellington by 20.2% (from $420 to $505), it will be interesting to see how much higher rents go as more landlords withdraw from the market," continues Norwell.

"Additionally, tenants without an 'excellent' rental history may now find it even harder to successfully secure a rental property than they already do, given how hard it will now be to remove tenants who end up significantly in arrears," she warns.

"This is especially true, considering landlords will need to apply to the Tribunal to terminate the tenancy therefore, extending the average timeframe to resolve claims and extending backlogs further.

"Both REINZ and the New Zealand Property Investors' Federation who represent a significant portion of landlords across the country have warned this would be a likely outcome as landlords and property managers seek to take a more risk averse approach to selecting tenants," points out Norwell.

However, REINZ has welcomed a number of positive provisions included in the Act.

"While there are a number of positive things in the new legislation, such as banning landlords from seeking rental bids, limiting rent increases to once a year and making rental properties safer and more liveable by enabling tenants to make minor changes to the property, such as installing child-proofing, hanging pictures, or earthquake-proofing," says Norwell.

"We're also broadly supportive of the changes introduced at the last minute including allowing victims of family violence to end a tenancy with two days' notice, to allow landlords and property managers to terminate tenancies with 14 days' notice if a tenant physically assaults them and the extension of the time the Tenancy Tribunal can hear cases via phone/video conference," concludes Norwell.

The Government has said the bulk of the reforms will come into effect in six months, to give tenants and landlords time to prepare for the new rules. REINZ will take an active position in supporting its members across the country with implementing the changes in due course.

Source: Real Estate Institute of New Zealand

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