



RELOCATION NATION: AUSTRALIAN FAMILIES ON THE MOVE AS LIFE PRIORITIES CHANGE IN 2021

New research from Real Insurance reveals the metro exodus trend is set to continue as life balance and wellbeing become more of a priority

SYDNEY, 10 MAY 2021 – The global health crisis has caused a major shift in what Australian families value in their home life, and what best suits this new version of normal as we continue to navigate our way out of uncertain times. As ‘work from anywhere’ and hybrid home-office working arrangements continue to steer a better work-life-balance, Real Insurance has found that more than half (50.7%) of families living with young children are considering relocating, or have already relocated in the short-term.

The research found that this desire to move is just heating up with four in 10 (42.5%) families overall in the process of relocating or considering moving in the short-term, setting the pace for a nation of families on the move.

Released today by Real Insurance, *The 2021 Real Home Shift* survey is the twenty-first instalment in a series of national studies investigating the shifting values and concerns impacting Australian families. This chapter, which surveyed over 5,000 Australians, explores how the traditional family home is changing, reveals the shift in where people want to live, what they are looking for in a property, and how perception of the ideal lifestyle has changed. At the same time, it draws comparisons from an earlier survey from Real, [The Real Home Reality](#).

According to the data, most families (66.4%) have chosen their relocation location based around their children, and interestingly, just over half (51.8%) of the children were excited to make the move. Outer suburban (23.2%) locations are cited as the most popular destinations for families with young children living at home, above regional and rural locations.

Young families are not the only ones that are considering a move. Looking at the population more broadly, the research shows that over the last two years alone one in 10 (9.1%) have already relocated, with over a quarter (27.5%) relocating interstate. Queensland (32.0%) has been the most popular destination, followed by New South Wales (26.9%) and then Victoria (17.1%). Whilst the movements are just beginning, they are showing no signs of slowing down, given another third (34.4%) are also considering the move over the next few years.

The data also found that the cost of living (26.2%) was one of the strongest motivators for relocation, followed by the desire to live a more relaxing lifestyle (24.7%), and own an investment property (21.6%). The most sought-after properties centre around a relaxed state of living, with outer suburban areas (23.1%) and coastal properties deemed most desirable, as almost two-thirds (64.8%) considering relocating to areas within 30 minutes of a coastline.

Professor of Property and Housing Economics at the University of South Australia, Chris Leishman, says that Australians are very mobile in general, and that mobility and relocation are heavily driven by employment choices and training or study.

“What we are seeing in this survey is very clear support for the emergence of lifestyle driven relocation decisions. Such choices were beginning to emerge before the pandemic, but living through COVID-19 seems to have strongly energised a growing cohort of Australians who highly value some of the attributes offered by living in regional locations.”

Further findings outline an interesting shift in the traditional ‘Australian Dream’ with owning a home no longer topping the list. In fact, there has been a shift since the 2018 *Real Home Reality* report, with people now prioritising wellbeing, whereas owning a home is now ranked as a second priority (8.3%), in comparison to staying healthy and enjoying life (23.7% ranked first).

“The Baby Boomer generation, and to a lesser extent Generation X, strongly associated financial stability in retirement with home ownership and were determined to become homeowners as soon as possible. There is evidence that younger generations see things differently. They value health, wellbeing and lifestyle more highly, but they do still want financial stability – it’s just that they are no longer convinced that this can only be achieved through home ownership.”

“Of course, this is also partly driven by realism and the fact that the housing affordability crisis we had before the pandemic has actually become much worse as the economy has recovered more strongly and quickly than many commentators predicted,” Professor Leishman added.

For those who have given up on the dream of owning a home, they say this was due to a few factors such as affordability (61.8%), concerns with property being too expensive at the current moment in time (21.6%) and worries about potential debt (17.4%). Although the dream has proven to fade for many, nine in 10 (90.6%) of those who are still looking to become homeowners are finding it hard to get onto the property ladder, with almost three-quarters (73.2%) feeling largely locked out of the property market.

Therese Waters, Real Insurance Spokesperson and Head of Communications, Content & Research at Greenstone, said “The research shows a refreshing and interesting perspective around the shifting priorities of the post-pandemic Australian, with the last year leading to an increased focus on health, wellbeing and finances. Understanding our customers and what’s important to them is key, and we had heard anecdotal feedback that there was a rise in the number of families relocating so wanted to understand if this was in fact the case. Our research tells us that the way we are living has, and continues to change, particularly with many companies adapting to and facilitating remote work, allowing families to experience more flexibility and freedom regarding where, and how they want to live.”

“2020 truly showed what is important in life and because of that, Australians are looking to lead healthier lifestyles. At the same time, families experienced a natural shift in where they reside and what they now find important.” Concluded Ms Waters.

Further findings from the research

Outer suburbs and regional centres more popular in 2021

- 11.9% are now most likely to consider moving for a tree change (regional centre), doubled compared to 6.1% in 2018.
- 44.9% are now considering moving to outer suburbs, compared to 38.5% in 2018.

Citysider and regional resident experiences

- 71.3% of those who relocated over last one to two years have no regrets.
- 57.8% have serious intentions of integrating with the local community.
- The reviews of local residents regarding the influx of citysiders are mixed. 51.3% of regional Australians believe that migration or investment property purchases from non-locals is changing the community, with 55.3% rating this as both good and bad.
- 52.3% of regional Australians feel that they have benefitted from property value increases and 41.8 per cent experienced an increased mix of diversity in the community.
- 65.5% believe property is becoming harder to afford and the cost of living has gone up (45.1%).

Issues Australians facing after the move

- 38.3% miss their old friends, 22.4% find it difficult making new friends, 26.3% feel a bit isolated and 18.9% are missing their old routines.

Generational perspectives

- Interstate moves are typically driven by younger individuals moving to other metro areas, with seven in 10 (70.7%) aged between 18 and 49 years old. The biggest difference in motivations for those moving interstate include access to work opportunities (13.0%), re-evaluating things after the pandemic (16.1%) and facilitating working from home (10.3%).

- More than half (55.2%) of those looking to relocate to regional areas are based in metropolitan areas. These are typically older Australians who are looking to escape the hustle-bustle of a city lifestyle (29.9% vs. 23.3% overall), overcrowding (32.0% vs. 26.1% overall) as well as the traffic and commuting (32.3% vs. 27.6%).

The 'Australian Dream' has been reinvented

- Australians believe the 'Australian Dream' consists of staying healthy and enjoying life (23.7% ranked first), feeling financially secure (14.0% ranked first), having a happy/healthy family (10.4% ranked first), being the best they can be (8.1% ranked first) and having the experiences they want in life (8.7% ranked first).

Australians take advantage of pandemic restrictions while saving money for home deposit

- 68.5% have already started cutting down spending on clothing, footwear and accessories, with a further 19.4% planning to do the same.
- 64.0% have been cutting down on eating out/socialising.

Further insights from the research can be found on the Real Insurance website

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About *The Real Home Shift Report*

The Real Home Shift report explores the impact the last 12 months has had on the average Australian family home, from how the traditional concept of the home is changing, the shift in where people want to live, what they are looking for in a property, and how our perception of the ideal lifestyle has changed.

The report is compiled based on research commissioned by Real Insurance and conducted by CoreData between 18 February and 5 March 2021. The research was conducted via a quantitative online survey, gathering 5,019 responses from Australians aged between 18 and 65 years. The report also compares some results to those gathered previously in the [2018 Real Home Reality report](#).

The sample is representative of the general population of Australians in terms of age, gender, wealth, and state/territory.

There are four major scenarios that are referenced throughout the report, these are:

- Owners – respondents who have bought a home and have either paid it off, or still paying it off
- Prospects – respondents who are currently committed to saving for a home deposit
- Non-prospects – respondents who are currently not looking to be a homeowner
- Owner prospects - respondents who are owners and considering to buy a residential property in the next 1-2 years

About Real Insurance

Real Insurance is an award-winning Australian brand specialising in life, funeral, pet, car, home, landlords, travel and bike insurance. In the market since 2005, Real Insurance has protected the quality of life of many Australians, through the delivery of innovative and affordable products. Real Insurance has been the recipient of the Feefo Trusted Service Award 2021, the Feefo Gold Trusted Service Award 2019 and 2020, and the Readers Digest Quality Service Award in the life and funeral insurance categories for 2019. Real Insurance is a trading name of Greenstone Financial Services Pty Ltd and The Hollard Insurance Company Pty Ltd.