

National

## Kiwis pay extra for good schools, backyard

By Michael Dickison

5:30 AM Monday Feb 13, 2012



Expand

Kiwis just want somewhere comfortable to live. Photo / Supplied

New Zealanders want safe backyards for their children and access to good schools – and will pay hundreds of thousands of dollars for them.

The trend echoes an Australian survey of real estate agents, which found Aussie home buyers were prepared to pay extra for lawns.

The poll of 114 agents, by Turf Australia, said a lawn could add 18 per cent, or just over \$75,000, to the average \$420,000 home.

Almost three-quarters of the agents said buyers wanted safe playing areas for the kids – particularly a backyard at least a third of the size of their property.

Harcourts chief executive Hayden Duncan said space was highly sought-after by New Zealand families as well.

"People pay hundreds of thousands of dollars for the quarter-acre dream in the main centres of New Zealand."

In the central suburbs of Auckland, the demand for yards was so high that they had become more valuable than a second house on a subdivision of the plot, Mr Duncan said.

"People are asking to pay more than it costs to break it up."

In Auckland, particularly towards coastal suburbs, people paid a similar premium for views, he said.

"Views, especially those that can't be built out, increase the value dramatically. There's a big price difference."

There would be a gap of hundreds of thousands of dollars between a house with a view of the harbour on the northern slopes of Remuera versus the southern end.

The same was true of the seaward side of East Coast Rd, on the North Shore, versus the inland side, Mr Duncan said.

The quality of the house's structure was another priority for house buyers, he said.

"Plaster-clad homes are becoming increasingly more discounted in order to sell. The interiors are probably less important in the long run."

Ray White Mt Eden Village principal Adrienne Gooch said school zones were the big driver of Auckland house price premiums.

"In Auckland the most important thing is schooling," she said, noting that in the city fringe – Mt Eden, Ponsonby and Westmere – house hunters would look to spend \$100,000 to \$150,000 more to be in a Grammar zone.

"A second living area is another biggie – the kids have a playroom, and the adults have another area for the TV and lounge. It's a close second after the other two."

Ms Gooch said other features, such as swimming pools, could count against a property because of safety concerns for children and the hassle of maintenance.

### WORTH \$100,000+

- \* An open backyard.
- \* Views of the harbour.
- \* The Grammar school zone.

### Other priorities

- \* A permanent – not plaster-clad – house.
- \* A second living room.

By Michael Dickison | [Email Michael](#)

- [Contact the site](#)
- [Contact the paper](#)
- [Advertising](#)
- [Photo sales](#)
- [Subscriptions](#)
- [Promotions](#)
- [Sponsorships](#)
- [About Us](#)
- [Our Publications](#)

- [Help and Tech support](#)

Your questions answered & how to report a technical issue [More](#)

- [Feedback](#)  
How to contact someone at nzherald.co.nz [More](#)
- [Send us stuff](#)  
Send us your news tips, photo, video. [More](#)
- [Contact online newsroom](#)  
News & feedback for the online editorial team [More](#)
- [Help](#)  
For information about the newspaper [More](#)
- [Subscription and Delivery](#)  
How to subscribe to the newspaper or raise a delivery matter [More](#)
- [Contact news staff](#)  
How to contact the editorial department [More](#)
- [Reader Panel](#)  
Join our reader panel [More](#)
- [Advertise with APN](#)  
Find your best advertising solution [More](#)
- [Print advertising](#)  
Go here for Print advertising [More](#)
- [Online](#)  
Go here for online advertising [More](#)
- [Classified advertising](#)  
Go here for classified advertising [More](#)
- [Jobs](#)
- [Cars](#)
- [Classifieds](#)
- [sella](#)
- [Radio](#)
- [Eventfinder](#)
- [Other](#)

© Copyright 2012, APN Holdings NZ Limited