

## Timaru house prices up 2pc in past year

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From the Timaru Herald

Timaru's real estate market is on the mend with sales prices up for the third month in a row.

Residential property values, released yesterday, show Timaru house prices rose 2 per cent in the 12 months to September 30.

It is positive news compared with the 1.4 per cent fall reported in the 12 months to August and better than the national average, showing prices down 1 per cent on this time last year.

The figures are based on sales data entered into QV's system during the previous three months, compared with the same three-month period 12 months earlier.

The average sale price for a home in Timaru is now \$232,979 compared with \$231,195 at the end of August, \$228,202 at the end of July and \$223,747 at the end of June.

The Waimate and Mackenzie figures were not considered accurate enough due to the small number of sales in each area.

The drop in valuations seen in 2008 has improved slightly, but Timaru still needs to recover to reach the \$233,249 figure recorded in April last year.

REINZ South Canterbury president Warwick Jones said he was encouraged by the amount of activity right across the spectrum during September.

The biggest factor real estate agents were facing relating to sales volumes was job uncertainty, he said.

Comparatively low interest rates offered several multiple-offer situations.

Nationwide values are now nearly 3 per cent up from their low in April but remain 7 per cent below the market peak of late 2007.

The national average sale price of a residential property was \$387,567, up from \$385,426 in August.

Waitaki's valuations took a hit with the average sale price now \$208,027, down 7.4 per cent on the year to September 30.

Meanwhile, valuation declines continue in the Queenstown Lakes district, down 6.3 per cent to \$568,973.

The main centres are showing marginal changes, with Auckland up 0.6 per cent, Christchurch up 0.4 per cent, while Dunedin jumped 2.2 per cent.

QV Valuations spokeswoman Glenda Whitehead said results of the latest QV.co.nz housing survey showed consumer confidence had improved, but uncertainty remained.

"Compared with the same time last year, there is now more market activity across most price bands, but especially towards the lower end of the market.

"However, there is no consistent national trend as to whether prices are going up or down within each value band."