

National Rental Vacancy Rates Remain Stable in March

Capital City Asking Rents Decrease

14 April 2020

New data released by SQM Research today has revealed the national residential rental vacancy rate has remained stable in **March 2020** at **2.0%** since last month, with the total number of vacancies Australia-wide now at **67,371** vacant residential properties.

Most states recorded minor **0.1%** declines in vacancy rates with the exception of Sydney, Melbourne and Darwin which were stable.

The year on year comparison revealed a minor decline when the national rental vacancy rate in March 2019 was **2.1%** compared to **2.0%** recorded for March 2020. Only Melbourne and Hobart recorded higher vacancy rates compared to this time last year.

City	Mar-19 Vacancies	Mar-19 Vacancy Rate	Feb-20 Vacancies	Feb-20 Vacancy Rate	Mar-20 Vacancies	Mar-20 Vacancy Rate
Sydney	21,942	3.1%	20,815	2.9%	21,443	2.9%
Melbourne	9,210	1.6%	11,085	1.9%	11,091	1.9%
Brisbane	8,232	2.5%	7,530	2.2%	7,299	2.1%
Perth	6,085	2.9%	4,323	2.0%	4,023	1.9%
Adelaide	2,024	1.1%	1,953	1.0%	1,761	0.9%
Canberra	575	0.9%	651	1.0%	589	0.9%
Darwin	1,153	3.7%	879	2.7%	853	2.7%
Hobart	131	0.4%	267	0.9%	238	0.8%
National	70,877	2.1%	68,079	2.0%	67,371	2.0%

SQM's calculations of vacancies are based on online rental listings that have been advertised for three weeks or more compared to the total number of established rental properties. SQM considers this to be a superior methodology compared to using a potentially incomplete sample of agency surveys or merely relying on raw online listings advertised. Please go to our [Methodology](#) page for more information on how SQM's vacancies are compiled.

Managing Director of SQM Research, Louis Christopher said, *"The minor decline in most capital cities' vacancy rates for March was somewhat surprising given the uncertainty around economy. With job losses, a freeze in migration and an expected sharp rise in short-term accommodation vacancies, we are likely to record significant increases in rental vacancy rates as 2020 progresses. Let's keep in mind our methodology requires a property to be advertised for three weeks or longer before we regard it as unoccupied.*

"We note the 3.2% drop in asking rents for houses over the month which may well be as a result of many short-term accommodation dwellings entering into the longer term leasing market, and overall, a sign of things to come."

Asking Rents

Over the month, Capital city asking rents decreased **3.2%** for houses and **2.9%** for units for the week ending **12 April 2020** to record asking rents of \$544 per week for houses and \$428 per week for units.

Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Hobart all recorded decreases in asking rents for both houses and units over the month.

Perth and Adelaide were the only capital cities to record rent increases for both houses and units. Perth increased by **1.9%** for houses and **0.8%** for units, whilst Adelaide recorded a **0.3%** increase for houses and **1.4%** for units.

Canberra and Darwin recorded increases in house asking rents with Canberra increasing by **2.6%** and Darwin **0.1%**. However, both cities had declines in unit prices over the month. Canberra declined by **0.1%** and Darwin by **0.6%**.

SQM Research Weekly Rents Index					
Week ending: 12 April 2020		Rent	Change on previous week	Rolling month % change	12 month % change
Sydney	All Houses	667.3	-13.3 ▼	-4.9% ▼	-4.7% ▼
	All Units	484.9	-6.9 ▼	-3.1% ▼	-4.3% ▼
Melbourne	All Houses	543.9	-4.9 ▼	-1.2% ▼	0.1% ▲
	All Units	415.4	-4.4 ▼	-1.7% ▼	-1.6% ▼
Brisbane	All Houses	461.4	-4.4 ▼	-1.9% ▼	1.0% ▲
	All Units	376.6	-0.6 ▼	-0.5% ▼	1.5% ▲
Perth	All Houses	457.3	-0.3 ▼	1.9% ▲	2.8% ▲
	All Units	347.5	-0.5 ▼	0.8% ▲	3.3% ▲
Adelaide	All Houses	407.7	-0.7 ▼	0.3% ▲	3.9% ▲
	All Units	313.2	0.8 ▲	1.4% ▲	4.0% ▲
Canberra	All Houses	647.7	0.3 ▲	2.6% ▲	2.0% ▲
	All Units	464.1	-1.1 ▼	-0.1% ▼	1.8% ▲
Darwin	All Houses	467.4	-2.4 ▼	0.1% ▲	-4.8% ▼
	All Units	361.4	-0.4 ▼	-0.6% ▼	-4.2% ▼
Hobart	All Houses	442.4	-7.4 ▼	-2.5% ▼	3.3% ▲
	All Units	392.9	-4.9 ▼	-3.9% ▼	7.2% ▲
National	All Houses	442.0	-2.0 ▼	-1.8% ▼	0.2% ▲
	All Units	367.0	-2.0 ▼	0.5% ▲	0.5% ▲
Cap City Average	All Houses	544.0	-9.0 ▼	-3.2% ▼	-2.2% ▼
	All Units	428.0	-5.0 ▼	-2.9% ▼	-2.9% ▼

Source: www.sqmresearch.com.au

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Key Points

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- Most states recorded minor **0.1%** declines in vacancy rates with the exception of Sydney, Melbourne and Darwin which were stable.
- Over the month, Capital city asking rents decreased **3.2%** for houses and **2.9%** for units for the week ending **12 April 2020** to record asking rents of \$544 per week for houses and \$428 per week for units.

About SQM Research

SQM Research Pty Ltd is a respected Australian investment research house, specialising in providing research and data across all major asset classes. For further information contact **02-9220 4603**.

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