

Apologies for being late with the newsletter – again. The Editor is losing track of time – some would suggest that’s not all he’s losing.

We are now at the end of April and the market is surprisingly busy. Enquiry levels from both investors and tenants remain high. Completing tenancies is taking longer as potential tenants have greater options and they are not in a rush.

We have noticed a lift in enquiries in Rolleston. After several months of low interest – and falling rent levels – suddenly the interest has come back. Rolleston has so much to offer with modern houses, great facilities, excellent schools and a wonderful community atmosphere we are not overly surprised by the lift. We believe that recent difficulties were caused by too many new rental properties hitting the market at the same time. There simply weren’t as many people looking as the number of properties available. This glut impacted rents slightly. However, this may be now behind us. On a cautionary note, we are sensing a similar situation in Lincoln. Too many new rental listings at the same time. We just have to sit this out. Lincoln is also a wonderful community but potential renters “haven’t found it” just yet. It will come.

The current political environment, both at home and overseas, is actually helping the rental sector. People are expressing caution. There are concerns around pricing, interest rates, job security and world peace. People are holding back on making what for most will be the largest purchase that they ever make. Migration is steady, both internally and from overseas, Christchurch is viewed as the place to be. Several of our clients are taking this opportunity to grow their rental portfolio. They can purchase competitively, rents are generally stable, demand is out there. Please remember if you are considering further purchases then please discuss with us. We can guide you on what the market is looking for, where the market is looking, what the rent levels are within the neighbourhood. We are happy to assist.

The above may confuse you as the media would have us believe that investors are deserting the rental sector “in droves”. We are one of the larger property management companies in Christchurch. We are not experiencing that at all. In fact people “are deserting in droves” we would have noticed it.

There is no question that the real estate sector is suffering. With more stock and fewer buyers this has impacted the market in different ways. (it is recognised that March 2026 actually saw a lift in business for the real estate sector but there is no evidence that the market has in fact turned)

- House prices have risen to a two-year high. Average across NZ \$883,800. 1.7% higher than in February 2026. For Christchurch the lift is 2.7% or \$749,000 average
- In Christchurch demand is particularly strong for 3 or 4 bedroom homes with the average in this sector being \$822,800

Christchurch has become one of the most watched markets in the country due to its relative affordability compared to Auckland and Wellington. Feb 2026 vs Feb 2025.

	ALL PROPERTY	5+ BEDROOMS	3-4 BEDROOMS	1-2 BEDROOMS
ALL NZ	\$883,800 1.7%	\$1,529,800 6.6%	\$902,900 1.2%	\$602,800 1.0%
NZ EXCL. AUCK	\$855,750 1.2%	\$1,424,950 4.6%	\$872,050 1.0%	\$587,200 0.3%
AUCKLAND	\$1,291,050 5.2%	\$2,685,150 14.8%	\$1,531,100 1.5%	\$860,450 3.8%
WELLINGTON	\$860,200 -2.7%	\$1,457,200 -6.9%	\$953,800 -2.2%	\$701,550 8.7%
CHRISTCHURCH	\$749,000 5.8%	\$1,424,000 22.1%	\$822,800 4.3%	\$546,950 2.8%

Buyer demand is slowly increasing

- Property searches are up 18% year on year
- Housing supply has stabilised – the imbalance between supply and demand is considered the reason for price increases in March.
- The housing market appears to be entering a more stable phase with gradual growth
- Higher borrowing rates, lending rules and cautious buyers may mean that the days of rapid growth remain behind us for now.
- Many Economists believe this slower, more sustainable growth path may be healthier for the long-term stability of the housing market.

New data shows that 6,629 new rental properties were listed in March – a 3.2% drop year on year. Total rental stock fell 2.8% from 7,688 properties to 7,473 nationwide. In Canterbury 827 properties were listed - +6.7%



Nationwide average rents fell 2.0% from \$645 to \$632. March 2025 vs March 2026. For Canterbury rents moved from \$582 to \$586 or +0.6%. The big gainers were Central Otago +12.3%, Southland +8.6%, Marlborough +6.0%, West Coast +6.9%. The big losers were Coromandel -11.3%, Hawkes Bay -8.1%, Taranaki -4.9%, Wellington -6.9%.

There has been a swing in the profile of foreign investors in both New Zealand and Australia. For nearly a decade Chinese buyers dominated the foreign buyer segment. But their confidence is collapsing. With a weaker domestic economy coupled with falling property values with China (some markets are down 10-50%) there is now a reduced appetite for global investments.

At the same time a new profile is emerging. Buyers from the Middle East. They have two powerful motivations. Moving wealth away from politically unstable environments and seeking safe-haven countries. They believe that the current market conditions offer short-term buying opportunities.

They are prepared to act fast. They see surging fuel prices will add inflationary pressures on the construction sector.

This isn't just a property story. It is a global economy / capital movement story. Property markets become the landing zoner for global wealth shifts.

New Zealand has opened up on foreign investment and the results are already showing. Buyers have to purchase at the top end of the sector and they must invest capital into the New Zealand economy.

This will become more political as the elections approach. Debate around foreign buyers is intensifying and immigration and housing will become even more politically linked.

We thought you may find this media release from the New Zealand Property Investors Federation of interest.

Sector sustains 126,000 jobs across the economy- The New Zealand Property Investors Federation (NZPIF) has released new research showing private residential property investors contributed \$24.8 billion to GDP and sustain 126,000 full-time equivalent jobs across the economy in the year ending 31 March 2024.

The independent analysis, conducted by Infometrics, is the first major research project commissioned by the Federation.

NZPIF says the findings directly counter the narrative that property investors are "unproductive" and "speculators." "Property investors provide a critical service by supplying and maintaining most of New Zealand's rental housing stock," says NZPIF PR & Advocacy Manager Matt Ball. "This new report proves what our members have known for years: what they do is real work that supports jobs, strengthens local communities, and underpins the wider economy."

#### Key Findings

- \$24.8 billion in GDP, equivalent to 5.9% of New Zealand's total economy
- 126,000 FTE jobs sustained, or 5% of the national workforce
- \$4.1 billion spent on maintenance and improvements
- \$10.7 billion spent on new builds

Economic benefits spread across all 109 industries measured in the New Zealand economy Infometrics found that property investors generate significant economic ripple effects through construction, trades, manufacturing, architecture, engineering, legal and financial services, retail, hospitality and other industries.

"Providing rental housing doesn't just produce economic activity, it's an enabler of economic activity throughout the economy," says Ball. "A well-functioning rental market allows workers, students, and families to live where they need to be. Without private investors providing most rental properties, the economy simply wouldn't operate effectively."

A Commitment to Evidence-Based Debate NZPIF says the report marks the beginning of an expanded programme of research to counter misinformation and support more informed policy discussions. "This is the first time we've commissioned a report like this, but it won't be the last," says Ball. "Our members are tired of being scapegoated by politicians who blame landlords for their housing policy mistakes." "We are committed to growing the evidence base around the rental sector so that we can effectively contribute to developing sound housing policy which benefits investors, renters and homeowners alike."



And this fire-side chat released by the NZPIF will help to explain the background to delays in getting in front of the Tenancy Tribunal. For most of you this is our responsibility – and we get equally frustrated by the delays – but as mentioned before not all of our readers are our clients.

At the start of April 2026, I sat down for coffee and a chat with Brett Carter, Principal Tenancy Adjudicator for the Tenancy Tribunal. He's the guy responsible for the efficient operation of the Tenancy Tribunal. If you've ever had to wait weeks to get a hearing, he's the guy trying to get that wait time down. He's got some interesting plans on that front.

When we met for coffee he'd come straight from a hearing, which, I'll be honest, surprised me. I assumed he spent all his time on the business of running the Tribunal. But as he explained, it helps him keep in touch with what's going on and, importantly, if he didn't hear the case, it wouldn't get heard that day. Great to see such a hands-on approach.

We talked about the delay in getting cases dealt with at the Tribunal, and what the causes might be. It seems to be a classic case of not enough resource to deal with an increasing, and increasingly complex workload. This is likely to be the result of increasing numbers of tenancies, more rules and compliance to follow and more understanding by tenants of their rights. That said, most cases are still brought by landlords, over 80%.

The Tribunal had an increase in headcount of one adjudicator in early 2025, and more recently is in the process of appointing three adjudicators to replace outgoing adjudicators. Brett said there were lots of high-quality applicants, so clearly there's a good pool of qualified people to draw from.

There is clearly demand for the Tribunal's services; There are qualified people wanting to work as adjudicators; So why can't the Tribunal just hire more adjudicators to deal with the demand? In my view, it comes down to funding. If we (landlords & tenants) want more adjudicators to reduce wait times, there will have to be an increase in funding – there's no way around it. That's a political decision, not one for the Principal Adjudicator, but it is something that NZPIF can raise with the politicians – and we will.

It looks like there will continue to be an increase in caseload and complexity. At the time we met the Tribunal was about to hear its first pet consent case, related to last year's law change. Brett thinks the new meth rules may generate additional work, even though the new regulations provide more clarity in this area. With new thresholds for contamination, and new rules around terminating tenancies at higher levels of contamination, there is still plenty of room for debate.

*Interesting fact.* When there are new issues like this, the first cases are dealt with by a small group of senior adjudicators to ensure consistency in approach. Learnings are then passed on to the wider group of adjudicators, and there is ongoing training

The most common complaint about the Tribunal process is the time it takes to get a case heard. Given the Tribunal can't do anything about the resources allocated to it by government, they're looking at how they can make their process more efficient.

One of the things we've long asked for is the separation out of rent arrears cases, which are included in 70% of disputes brought by landlords. We've argued that they are the most straightforward of all the disputes, as it is clear if rent hasn't been paid, and the legislative remedy is also clearly laid out. Our view was that there should be a separate channel for arrears cases, ideally all carried out online, to free up time for the Tribunal to consider more complex matters.

Our suggestion - would likely have required additional resource, which isn't available, but Brett and his team have come up with an approach that may deliver a similar outcome.

Currently, cases are allocated priority in line with the harm being caused. Things like statutory abandonment, assault/risk of harm and ongoing damage are priority one. Rent arrears was a lower priority, but the Tribunal has raised that priority and is putting more focus on arrears and termination/possession.

The Tribunal are still refining what this will look like in practice, but it will be something like this:

- Setting aside dedicated days to focus on arrears & termination/possession and other



urgent matters;

- On other days, dedicating time in the morning for arrears & termination / possession and other urgent matters
- separating out arrears/termination/possession from other aspects of a single claim, where several matters are bundled together.

By these means, they'll be able to put more focus on arrears related cases and – hopefully – reduce wait times.

These changes will benefit both landlords and tenants, and that's important to the Tribunal.

Landlords suffer financial loss when a tenant stops paying rent, and the longer the problem persists, the worse it gets. On the other side, the longer the process takes, the more cost and debt is racked up by the tenant – better to get a quick decision and cut the losses.

As a rule, Tribunal cases expected to take two hours or less are heard online. Typically, arrears cases are set down for 45 minutes, so this means they should all be heard online, further streamlining the process.

Rent arrears is not the only issue being given more priority. Significant health and safety issues – such as a recent case of a bathroom with a missing floor – will also be given more urgency. Fair enough too!

The Tribunal is also considering incentivising participation in mediation by giving additional priority to claims that have been through mediation. That's just under consideration at the moment but seems an idea worth trying.

These changes are starting to happen now, and the process will be refined as the Tribunal learns from experience. Results so far are promising, with one adjudicator handling 11 cases in one day (!) and feedback indicating that engagement from tenants is higher, and there is more positive discussion around repayment plans and conditional terminations.

Brett's one caveat is that these changes might have a knock-on effect on other work at the Tribunal. This is a risk, but the gains that could be made make trying worthwhile. If the Tribunal can deal with the largest claim category more quickly and efficiently, it will reduce the wait time for other cases as well, in the long term.

Overall, I have to say this is a great initiative, which NZPIF welcomes. We also welcome Brett's open and transparent approach, and the opportunity to hear first-hand what the Tribunal is doing. I came away with the impression that the Tribunal is working hard with limited resources to provide fair and timely dispute resolution for landlords and tenants.

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All the best

Sharon