

More Victorians are set to make the sea or tree change post coronavirus



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Jan and Gilles Bachet are swapping city for sea after selling their Caulfield South home during COVID-19. Picture: Tim Carrafa

When in the midst of a global pandemic, it's hard to see what benefits may come from it.

But as people work from home, spend more quality time with family and explore their own neighbourhoods due to COVID-19, it's clear where we live is more important than ever.

Experts predict working from home will become the norm even after the pandemic, leading to less reliability on closeness to the CBD. Living happily and healthily in a safe place has also become a focus for many.

As a result, more Victorians are considering a tree or sea change.

VICTORIAN COASTAL HOT SPOTS

THE MOST SEARCHED COASTAL TOWNS ON REALESTATE.COM.AU AND THEIR MEDIAN PRICES

UNITS

- BARWON HEADS - \$1.013M
- MT ELIZA - \$606,000
- HIGHTON - \$405,000
- FRANKSTON SOUTH - \$615,000
- GEELONG WEST - \$382,500

HOUSES

- JAN JUC - \$989,500
- EAST GEELONG - \$650,000
- MT ELIZA - \$1.2M
- GEELONG WEST - \$680,000
- SHOREHAM - NA *too few sales to generate median price

Where househunters wanting to be close to the beach are searching.

VICTORIAN COUNTRY HOT SPOTS

THE MOST SEARCHED COUNTRY TOWNS ON REALESTATE.COM.AU AND THEIR MEDIAN PRICES

UNITS

- BALLARAT CENTRAL - \$305,000
- WENDOUREE - \$265,000
- CANADIAN - \$300,000
- KENNINGTON - \$259,000
- BALLARAT EAST - \$310,000

HOUSES

- LINTON - \$292,500
- BUNINYONG - \$550,000
- SMYTHESDALE - \$440,000
- BENDIGO - \$410,000
- BALLARAT EAST - \$365,000

The most in-demand bush 'burbs.

WHY NOW?

Real Estate Institute of Australia president Adrian Kelly said sea and tree changes were becoming increasingly popular before coronavirus. But he expected the pandemic to brighten the spotlight on the country's regional areas.

"We were already seeing a fairly stable increase in sea and tree changes, with people wanting to get out of our big capital cities as they were getting too busy," he said.

"These days, it's all about living a happy, healthy lifestyle and sustainability is the keyword. It's much more difficult to engage in (a sustainable lifestyle) in the large capital cities.

"A lot of people are also starting to look for safer places to live. Since the pandemic, the inquiries have already started for safer and quieter places."

Mr Kelly said regional areas were more insulated from the crisis. And as people sought to steer clear of crowded areas, public transport and congested healthcare systems, country or coastal towns with good infrastructure could be attractive

Search trends clearly show Melburnians are on the hunt for a sea change — the five top regional suburbs plugged into realestate.com.au by people in metropolitan Melbourne were all on the Mornington Peninsula.

Mt Eliza was the top choice for city slickers, followed by Frankston, Rye, Mt Martha and Rosebud. Ballarat and Bendigo were popular with those looking to move to the country.

Realestate.com.au chief economist Nerida Conisbee said the areas within commuting distance to the CBD often attracted the most demand.

"People do tend to like the ability to get into the city," she said.

"Although we will be working from home more, it is unlikely you will never have to go into the office."

Regional areas with train links, NBN or strong internet connection, ample amenities and good employment opportunities were often in high demand, according to the experts.



[1110 Great Ocean Rd, Bellbrae](#), combines coastal and country elements. It's on the market for \$3.4-\$3.7 million.

THE BENEFITS

Affordability was a key driver for those considering moving away from the big smoke, Ms Conisbee said.

"Moving to a regional area does provide that ability to live in a great neighbourhood and the pricing is much more attractive," she said.

"One of the challenges for young people living in capital cities is buying is really expensive. Then you put a lot of money towards paying that mortgage off instead of spending on other things, like holidays and cars, that helps the economy.

"It can also affect things like starting your own business.

"If you have a big mortgage, the ability to take risks is harder."

Mr Kelly said moving regional was attractive to retirees and semi-retirees, especially following improvements to medical services across the country.

"A lot of those people can sell up and be well cashed up, as the property they're after in regional Australia tends to be much more affordable," he said.



Mt Martha was one of the most-searched suburbs on realestate.com.au by people in Melbourne.



[22 Wonderland Tce, Mt Martha](#) is on the market with a \$1.95-\$2.1 million price guide.

HELPING THE RECOVERY

An uptick in sea or tree changes was also going to get Australia's economy back on track, according to the experts.

"People move into those areas and spend money, their kids go to school there and the economic cycle begins," Mr Kelly said.

"A lot of start-up businesses in those areas then might employ one or two people.

HOW TO MAKE THE MOVE

Full Circle Property Advocates director Rob German's simple tips for those planning the big move included spending a few weeks in your target location before committing.

"(Rent) a place for a week or two weeks and get a feel for what it's like to live in that location," he said.

"It should convince you that you are happy with the lifestyle and making the right move.

“Also, look at the associated expenses: what (price) you’re going to sell your home at, and what you’re going to purchase at, and does it achieve your goals?”



Working from home is second nature to the Bachets who are heading to Mt Martha for a lifestyle change. Picture: Tim Carrafa

SWAPPING CITY FOR SEA

Working from home is a tried and tested environment for Gilles and Jan Bachet, who have been running their Australia-wide company from their house in Caulfield South.

After living close to the city their entire lives, they’re now following in their son’s footsteps by embarking on a sea change to Mt Martha.

“We have always lived close to the city: Richmond, Albert Park, Glen Iris, Camberwell,” Mr Bachet said.

“I have been running a consulting business from home (and) as we are now empty nesters, we have been planning to downsize for a while. Our son bought a year ago at Mt Martha and we spent Christmas there and fell in love with the area.”

The couple, who are on the hunt for their new pad, said they were most looking forward to getting away from the crowds and having a home office with a water view.

“Both Jan and I are excited to move there and we look forward to the next stage in our lives,” Mr Bachet said.

They advised other tree or sea-changers to “trust their gut” with the move and expected other empty nesters to follow in their footsteps after the coronavirus crisis.