

Property Pulse Extra

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**North Island districts
attracting new breed of
lifestyle owners**



Several districts, particularly in the northern North Island, have come into focus for people seeking a lifestyle change, which technology makes more easily available.

As a consequence the lifestyle market is widening out from the major centres, in particular Auckland, Hamilton and Tauranga, opening up opportunities in localities previously seen as out of reach to anyone not working the land.

Kirsty Walker is a Tauranga-based PGG Wrightson Real Estate lifestyle property specialist. She says technology, the internet and ever faster broadband is allowing people to disconnect from the major hubs and relocate to more remote areas where they can live and operate differently.

"Interest in our region from Auckland is always strong, though we also assist people from elsewhere, including Waikato, Christchurch, Australia and the United States, into local lifestyle property.

"People move to the Bay of Plenty for the superior lifestyle and weather.

Often they want a change in direction, a new move and a new career which might include the purchase of horticultural crops.

"Lifestyle options are certainly within easy reach from the cities, and technology enables those from all walks of life to work remotely. Many of the people we deal with can work from anywhere with an internet connection. Those who work from home report less stress associated with being in a city and all the hassles that go with city life," she says.

Working out of PGG Wrightson Real Estate, Hamilton, Richard Thomson has lived in Raglan for seven years after he and his wife bought a holiday home in the district in 2006.

"We were dairy farming, aiming to retire to Raglan in our mid 50s. With the holiday home, though, and young children we re-evaluated. We thought the children were less likely to come back to visit us as adults if they didn't have their own memories and connection to the place. With the hours we were working in farming, while the money was good, the limited

time I spent with our young children was too high a price. We changed our lives and decided to live here permanently, much sooner than we originally planned," he says.

Those moving to Raglan for the lifestyle tend to be either younger people from Auckland, or overseas, and able to relocate businesses or work remotely, or those in their 50s moving from Hamilton and easing back from work for a few years before retirement.

"Raglan's lifestyle, beaches, world class surf break and sunsets make it an amazing place. Like any small community, your connections to each other are visible, unlike how it can be in the city. In addition, we are close enough to Auckland to commute for a couple of days a week if you need to, though far enough away that you can disconnect from work. Working or running a business from here is easy too: I work from home more days than from the office and am even able to work just from my phone.

"For the locals, whether you own ten farms and a multi-national business,

or are an artist living in a caravan, it is a community that everyone loves. You are not trying to keep up with the neighbours, which breaks down those kind of barriers. For those inclined to volunteer, there is plenty to do in the community, whether that be the coastguard, the fire service, involvement in the church, or whatever you are into, and the social side of those organisations is really positive," says Richard.

Phil Goldsmith is one of PGG Wrightson Real Estate's leading salespeople, based in Whakatane. He says the Eastern Bay of Plenty has strong credentials for those looking for a step change away from the city.

"We see increasing numbers of people motivated to purchase here and re-shape their lives. For many the district is associated with warm fuzzies, maybe as a favourite family holiday destination growing up. The slower pace of life, great weather and lovely beaches create lasting memories that people want to come back to. For anyone keen to put city life behind them, those memories are powerful and this district shapes as an ideal location.

"For those that take that step the Eastern Bay of Plenty fully delivers with plenty of opportunities for

hunting, fishing and game fishing, and the likes of Te Urewera National Park and Aniwhenua Falls close by.

"While there are no traffic lights or parking meters in Whakatane, and the cars on the main street give way to the pedestrians, there is easy access to broadband internet and airports at Tauranga and Rotorua for those who choose to commute," he says.

Tom O'Sullivan is PGG Wrightson Real Estate Sales Manager for Hawke's Bay. He says the Central Hawke's Bay has had

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a hot lifestyle property market recently.

"We are seeing a flow of purchasers going further and wider than the Havelock, Hastings and Napier fringe areas. Many are happy to opt for up to an hour's commute to secure a more affordable property.

"There is room for the market to grow further as the flow from Auckland and Wellington is set to continue for at least another 12 months.

"Advances in technology are definitely helping drive this, as many companies offer increasingly flexible working arrangements, where working from home in the regions becomes a cost effective option, therefore a win for both employer and employee," he says.

If a change of pace is on the horizon, or you would like to view more lifestyle opportunities, visit www.pggwre.co.nz and click on 'Lifestyle.' PGG Wrightson Real Estate operates from 35 offices nationwide, with lifestyle property specialists across the country who live for their communities.

A national team of local experts.