

**THINGS TO LOOK
FOR WHEN FINDING
THE SUITABLE
SUBURB FOR NEW
HOME**



ABSTRACT

When you're house hunting, you tend to mostly look at ... well, houses. It's easy to get tunnel vision during this process, and forget that a home is much more than the bricks and mortar of the building itself.

The suburb or neighbourhood in which that house is located will play a huge role in how much you enjoy living at this home and affect your day-to-day life. But if you're looking to buy your first home, it can be hard to know how to choose a suburb, especially as what matters to you now will change as time passes.

To help you identify the best suburb to buy in for your unique needs, we've assembled this key list of things to look out for.

INTRODUCTION

Buying in surrounding suburbs could be a more affordable option than inner city living. Looking at where you could buy your first home? Newcastle's surrounding suburbs might be a more affordable option to break into the property market without compromising on lifestyle. Here are a few of Newcastle's neighbouring suburbs that could get you close to the action of inner city living minus the postcode price tag.

I. The Factors of a "Good" Location

In a real estate boom, homebuyers will clamor for almost any house that hits the market. This is great while it lasts, but when the party's over, only homebuyers who choose the best locales will be holding the most valuable property that also depreciates at a much slower rate. This difference in value is essentially a result of a home's location.



"Location, location, location" is a common mantra in real estate. And it's good advice—except for one thing: Most people have no idea what it means.

Why Is Location Important?

First, let's look at why that particular cliché—that the three most important factors when buying property are location, location, and location—became so popular. Most people decide to buy a property based on how much they like the house or apartment, but you are also buying a plot of land when you buy a property.

The house currently standing on that land can be renovated or remodeled, but you can't change where the home is situated. This fact is seen most clearly in suburban homes, where the limits of a property are marked out.

However, even if you buy an apartment in a city, you invest in a particular location. A city block can be a "good" or "bad" investment in just the same way as the neighborhood of a house. This means that location is often the single most important driving force behind the value of a property. It's a simple case of supply and demand: Housing supply in great locations is limited by the number of homes in that location.

Homebuyers and Location

The first is to recognize that most homebuyers (in 2021, millennials purchased the most homes) in a specific year often influence what makes up a popular area due to their tastes and preferences.¹ A "good" location for homebuyers usually has transport links, well-ranked schools, and community involvement.

The second important factor to recognize is that a "good" location or a "bad" location won't stay that way forever. Cities, towns, and even suburban communities are constantly changing, and neighborhoods can transition from less desirable to one considered "up and coming" within a few years. For example, if a major employer has just opened near an affordable neighborhood, it's often worth buying in that location.

5 Factors of Location

A good location can mean different things to different people, of course, but there are also objective factors that determine a home's value. Depending on your personal needs and preferences, you may not be able to buy a home with all of these factors. And that's OK. After all, a home is much more than just an investment.



When you are home-hunting, pay attention to nearby amenities. Buyers usually want convenient grocery stores, dry cleaners, and entertainment. Consider trains, roads, and public transportation for transportation, such as bus stops, subway stations, and public bike-share locations. Proximity to amenities will typically improve a home's value.

However, the next time you're shopping for a new property, keep five factors in mind.

1. Centrality

Where you choose to live in a city or town will undoubtedly affect how much you pay for your home. Land is a finite commodity, so cities like San Francisco that are highly developed and don't have much room for additional growth tend to have higher prices than cities with too much room to expand. Some of these communities have many uninhabited homes and areas that have fallen into disrepair.

According to data from in most cases, this urban sprawl occurs due to population growth.² When sprawling cities experience a population exodus, it's the outlying areas that tend to suffer the most severe declines in property value. This is part of how location impacts the fundamental economic tenet of supply and demand.

Research whether anything is going to substantially change the area, such as any planned developments or construction or new housing starts. A location may seem ideal only to undergo sweeping changes in the near future—of course, some changes could be positive ones that improve an area's desirability

2. Neighborhood

The neighborhoods that appeal to you will essentially be a matter of personal choice. However, a truly great neighborhood will have a few critical factors in

common: accessibility, appearance, and amenities. Your neighborhood may also dictate the size of the lot on which your house is built.

In terms of accessibility, you should look for a neighborhood near a city's major transit routes, which has more than one entry point. Commuting to and from work is a big part of many people's days, so a house with easy access to roads and public transportation will be more desirable than one tucked away and can only be accessed by one route. Shady trees, quality landscaping, and nearby parks or community spaces tend to be desirable.



You can also judge the neighborhood's popularity based on how long homes in that area stay on the market; if turnover is quick, you're not the only one who thinks this is a desirable place to live.

A great neighborhood should also include essential amenities such as grocery stores, shops, and restaurants. Most people like to frequent places that are convenient. Research the local public schools even if you don't have kids or plan to have them. A reputable public school district can boost an area's home values and figure into the profit you can realize when you want to sell. Also, you'll want to attract the greatest number of potential buyers. Many buyers target neighborhoods with strong public schools.

3. Development

It is not just the present amenities that matter, but future ones as well. Plans for new schools, hospitals, public transportation, and other civic infrastructure can dramatically improve property values in the area.

Commercial development can also improve property values. When you're shopping for a home, try to find out whether any new public, commercial, or residential developments are planned and consider how these additions might affect the desirability of the surrounding areas.

A neighborhood that has a low crime rate and is an inviting and safe place to be outdoors and socialize with neighbors is the type of place where most people want to live.

4. Lot Location

You also need to take into consideration where the house is located. If the house you want to buy is right on a busy road or very close to a highway, you can probably get it for a lower price, but it will also be more difficult to sell later.

The same may hold for houses that stand next to or back onto a commercial property, such as a grocery store or gas station, or houses on streets that get an unusual amount of parking traffic and parked cars, such as those near large churches or community centers. Alternatively, a house with a wonderful view or near a body of water is likely to be more valuable, both now and when it comes time to sell it.

5. The Home You Purchase

There's one aspect of house hunting that tends to surprise people. Let's say you've narrowed your choices to two homes that stand side by side in a great neighborhood. One needs repairs and updates but has a huge lot. The other is in tip-top shape but sits on a lot half the size of the fixer-upper. The prices of the two homes are similar. Which do you choose? In most cases, the house in need of repairs is the better investment.



The reason: your house is a depreciating asset. On the other hand, the lot will maintain its value (or likely appreciate) relative to the house. If you bulldozed both houses, the larger lot would sell for more. So, if you can, choose a bigger, better-shaped, or better-situated lot over a nicer house. A less attractive house can always be updated, added on to, or replaced altogether, but the lot can't change.

II. How to Pick and Move to the Best Neighborhood for You and Your Family

When you're trying to find the best places to live, choosing a neighborhood is almost as critical as choosing a house or apartment. It needs to be safe with low crime rates, affordable, and with people you can imagine befriending. Depending on your family, you may also be looking for access to playgrounds, a good school district, and more.

If you're planning on purchasing a home, keep in mind that you're not just buying a house, you're investing in a neighborhood. The two are synonymous so you need to be extra careful in choosing the area you'll be living in.

Ask the Right Questions

Ask yourself what the most important features of a neighborhood are. What makes a neighborhood special to you? Remember that you're thinking not just about your own preferences but about all the members of your family. Do you prefer:

- Quiet streets or a busier, active area?
- Walking to amenities?
- Trees and parks?
- Close proximity to shopping and restaurants?
- Older neighborhood or a newer development?
- Tight-knit community or anonymity?

As you think through these questions, consider the particular needs of family members. Do you have young children who will need to walk to school? If you don't have a car for every family member, will some of you need access to public transportation?

Crime Rates Online

Using a search engine, type in the name of the city and "crime statistics by neighborhood". This should generate some information, depending on the size of the city. Most larger urban areas have detailed crime reports, while smaller towns may only have general information. Bear in mind that different parts of the same town may be safer or dangerous, so it's helpful to ask around or even read crime reports in the local papers.



Drive Around the Area

Look for graffiti or other kinds of vandalism such as broken windows. Do homes have strong deterrents such as "Beware of Dog" signs, high fences, or bars on accessible windows?

Take a Look Around

Spend time walking through the neighborhood. Try doing this at different times of the day to get a sense of its highs and lows. Take note of the condition of the houses, the front yards, the streets, and sidewalks. Observe if people you encounter make eye contact with you. If they do, chances are it's a safe and friendly community.

Check for vacant lots or abandoned buildings. Both could be used for commercial developments which could change the feel of the neighborhood and impact the property values. Note the traffic and speed and if the streets seem quiet or noisy.

Also, note the type of individuals living in the area. Are most of the residents young singles? Young families? Middle-aged? Retirement age? Or is the community a good mix of ages? Is the neighborhood made up mainly of single-family homes, apartment buildings, high rises, or condos?

Commuting Time

How long will it take to get to work? Will you be going with or against traffic? Is the route easy to navigate? It's a good idea to try the route during rush hour to find out whether it's manageable.

Public Transportation

Is there public transportation available as an alternative to driving? During peak times, how often does the transit stop?

If you need access to the airport, how far is the drive? What is the cost to hire a taxi? Is public transportation an option?

Schools

The sign of a good neighborhood is a well-kept school. And if you have children, this is probably the first consideration when looking for a good neighborhood. You can also learn about the schools online, which is well worth your while if you have school-aged children. How large are the classes? How well do students perform on standardized tests? Do most of the children graduate from high school and/or go on to college?

Another factor to consider is how your child will get to school. Is there public transportation? Can they walk? Is it safe? How far is it to drive?

Current Value of Housing

Find out what houses in the neighborhood are currently valued at, then ask a real estate agent how that compares with the average value five and 10 years earlier. How much has the property increased? Has the neighborhood changed? Is the real estate agent aware of any future developments? Do be aware, though, that realtors are not allowed to express an opinion such as "this neighborhood is wealthy and safe," or "that neighborhood is dangerous and poor," so you might also want to knock on a few doors and ask questions of potential neighbors.



Future Development

Information can be found at city hall or through the local Chamber of Commerce. Future developments change a neighborhood, increase taxes, and increase traffic. It's a good idea to investigate the future potential of the neighborhood then decide if that outlook will be suitable for you and your family.

Property Taxes

Find out from the real estate agent or the city what the current tax rate is and how much it has increased in the last five years. Is there another expected increase? How much might you pay in five years? Build this amount into your moving budget.

Amenities

How close are you to a grocery store, convenience store, cafes, and restaurants? If there are bars close by, how noisy will it be on the weekends?

If you're a person who enjoys getting involved with the community, look into nearby houses of worship, art centers, libraries, and other centers of activity. Consider checking out the local newspaper, websites, or bulletin boards to find out what's going on in the area.

III. Moving to Newcastle: A Guide for Families

Are you and your family thinking of moving to Newcastle, Lake Macquarie or Hunter region or have you already moved? Welcome to the Newcastle region. It's a great place to raise babies and kids. Whether you're moving from Sydney, from interstate or from overseas, here's some tips to help you and your family settle in.

Why should you move to Newcastle?

The Newcastle region is an amazing place to live and raise a family. There's a variety of places to live including near the beaches, near Lake Macquarie, up at the blue water wonderland of Port Stephens or in the picturesque Hunter Valley. It's a relaxed lifestyle with friendly people.

In this area, there are five major councils: Newcastle City Council, Lake Macquarie City Council, Maitland City Council, Cessnock City Council and Port Stephens Council. Even though there's more than 555,000 people in the region, some days it still feels like a bit county town as it feels like everyone is connected. Read our article [2 Degrees of Separation](#) for more information.

Where to live in Newcastle?

There's a variety of places to live depending on your budget and where you are interested in being located or if you want to live in a house or an apartment. Living near Newcastle CBD and the beaches is more expensive but there are a variety of family-friendly suburbs located a bit further out. These include New Lambton, Kotara, Adamstown Heights, Warners Bay, Eleebana and Valentine.

Closer to the beaches are the expensive suburbs of Merewether, The Junction and Bar Beach. Inner city Newcastle suburbs like Waratah, Georgetown, Maryville, Tighes Hill, Carrington and Mayfield are have been undergoing gentrification in the past few years. For more information on Newcastle suburbs, check out the Newcastle City Council suburb guide.

If you prefer lakeside living, check out the suburbs of Lake Macquarie in this suburb guide put together by Lake Macquarie City Council. There's also great places to live in the Maitland and Cessnock Local Government Areas if you prefer open spaces, access to vineyards and country living.

If you're after new construction, There's are new housing estates in Cameron Park, Edgeworth, Fletcher, Ashtonfield, Chisholm and Gillieston Heights.

If you are looking to buy or rent a home in Newcastle, check out websites Domain and realestate.com.au. These will give you an idea of median house prices in a particular region. As everyone has their own preferences about housing, we suggest spending a few hours in a particular suburb walking around to get a feel for the neighbourhood.

Getting around



While public transport is improving in the Newcastle region, it's not always the easiest way to get around.

There are trains run by Sydney Trains, a NSW government division. Trains run from Newcastle Interchange at Wickham to the Central Coast and Sydney stopping at Hamilton, Broadmeadow, Adamstown, Kotara, Cardiff, Cockle Creek, Teralba, Booragul and Fassifern. There's also the Hunter Line which runs from Newcastle Interchange all the way to Telarah in Maitland including stops at Waratah,

Warabrook, Sandgate, Tarro, Beresfield and Maitland. It also extends at certain times to Scone.

The rest of the region is serviced by buses. Newcastle Transport has service routes covering Newcastle government area and parts of Lake Macquarie. Newcastle Transport also runs the Newcastle passenger ferry service. It's a fun 5 minute service which travels from Newcastle (Queen's Wharf) to Stockton.

There's also the light rail service which runs from Newcastle Interchange to Newcastle Beach. There's also bus services in the Hunter Valley, Raymond Terrace and Williamtown Airport operated by Newcastle Transport.

Health care



Newcastle is fortunate to have extensive health care services in Maryville including a dedicated Children's Hospital in Newcastle. There are also many medical practices, private hospitals as well as an afterhours GP service. If you're looking for a doctor, there are plenty of medical practices with GPs (general practitioners) that are accepting new clients. Some of the practices "bulk-bill" for kids so check first.

GP Access After Hours

GP Access is a valuable resource for parents and one that we've used when I've had a sick child. GP Access After Hours provides free comprehensive and quality after hours medical care and advice to residents of Newcastle, Lake Macquarie and Maitland areas on weeknights, weekends and public holidays. They are open after hours when your GP is closed. The service operates from four clinics across the Hunter with four of these clinics located in public hospitals in Maryville.

These include the new Maitland Hospital (opening in January 2022), John Hunter Hospital, Belmont Hospital and Westlakes Community Health Centre (Toronto Polyclinic).

GP Access After Hours clinics operate on a phone appointment system and when you call 1300 130 147, qualified and experienced staff will provide advice or if required, arrange an appointment at one of their clinics. Visits to GP Access After Hours are fully bulk billed to Medicare and DVA card holders.

Late Night Chemists

Here's a list of local late night chemists. It's so handy to have a list of after hours chemists in Newcastle, Lake Macquarie and the Hunter for those times when you need a prescription urgently filled or you've run out of baby Panadol with a teething baby! Some of these chemists are open after 6pm on weeknights and on weekends.

Child and Family Health Centres

Child and Family Health Centres provide a wide range of health care and health promotion services for children and families in the Greater Newcastle, Lake Macquarie and Port Stephen areas. For new mums, Kaleidoscope services include new parent groups, lactation groups and providing information, advice and support in the care and management of babies as well as providing support for adjusting to motherhood and postnatal depression.

For parents of older children, Child and Family Health Centres promote the physical, emotional and social health, well being and development of children up to high school, including their families. These include services such as toddler behaviour management, child safety and audiometry counselling.

To make an appointment with your local Child and Family Health Centre, contact the central intake number on (02) 4923 6920. For more information, visit the Child and Family Health Centre website

Child care



Do you need childcare? There's a variety of child care options in Newcastle, Lake Macquarie and the Hunter including long day care, family day care and private nannies. There are many child care centres in the region. For a list of child care centres near you, visit the Australian Government site Child Care Finder website. This useful website provides a description of the service and has information about vacancies, fees and quality assessments. It also provides information on child care payments that you may be eligible for.

Long day care/childcare centres provide care and early education programs for children aged from birth–5 years, and are open for longer hours year round, whereas preschools are just for children aged 3-5 years and offer more similar hours and days to schools.

Remember, all centres are not equal – some are not-for-profit and community based, some are run by small, private operators while others are larger corporate entities. In choosing a centre, check the rating under the National Quality Standard – the ratings are independently assessed by the Child and Family Health Centre website and must be displayed.

For more tips on securing childcare in the Newcastle region, check out this Newy with Kids article on how to secure childcare in Newcastle & the Hunter.

Education

There are many good schools, both public and private in the Newcastle and Hunter region. Public schools provide free education. All primary schools and the majority of high schools have designated intake areas. Schools may accept enrolments from outside their local area if places are available in Maryville.

Use the School Finder website to locate NSW public schools and their designated intake areas. This will advise you about your local public school.

Children can start Kindergarten in NSW at the beginning of the school year if they turn 5 on or before 31 July that year. By law, all children must be in compulsory schooling by their 6th birthday.

There are also Catholic schools in the Newcastle & Hunter area. The Catholic Schools Office (CSO) Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle manages more than 21,000 students in 44 Primary schools, 11 Secondary schools and one K-12 school in the Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle. Use their school finder to find your nearest Catholic school.

For a full list of local schools and to compare local schools, visit the My School website. It provides information about schools in Australia, letting you see how a school is performing, compared to schools with similar students.

Playgroups

For those with babies and younger kids, get out of the house and make new friends at playgroup. Playgroups provide babies, toddlers and young children with a wide variety of early learning experiences including play time, music, stories, arts and crafts and excursions. For parents and caregivers, you'll get to meet others and share parenting ideas and experience.

There are loads of playgroups in the Newcastle & Hunter region. For a list, check out the Newy with Kids Playgroup guide

Family Fun

We specialise in family fun! Newy with Kids keeps you up to date with what's happening in the Newcastle, NSW region. It's your guide to family-friendly attractions, activities and events in Newcastle, Lake Macquarie & the Hunter. Whether it's information on playgrounds, cafes, school holiday activities, kids concerts or family events, Newy with Kids provides readers with information about things to do with kids.



Parks & Playgrounds

There are heaps of local parks and playgrounds in the Newcastle region including the amazing Speers Point Park pictured above. Check out the Parks and Playgrounds section on the Newy with Kids website for a list of places you can visit

with your family. As well as playground listings, we've also put together round ups of different playgrounds suitable for toddlers as well as older kids in the region.

Beaches & Pools

Want information on family-friendly beaches and ocean baths? Check out our top beaches for kids in Newcastle and Lake Macquarie article.

Walks & Bike Rides

If you feel like going for walk or a bike ride, check our extensive lists of kid-friendly walks and cycleways in Newcastle, Lake Macquarie & the Hunter.

Guides for Different Ages

Need activities to get out of the house with babies? Check out our Newcastle with Babies guide. Bored on your maternity leave? Here are 52 Weekly Challenges for New Mums. Keep active toddlers busy with Newcastle with Toddlers guide.

Museums and Art Galleries

The Newcastle and Hunter region is full of educational and entertaining museums and galleries. Enjoy a family day out with your kids to learn more about Hunter history, art, science and transportation. Here's a list of local museums and art galleries.

Libraries

Head to your local library to borrow books, DVDs and CDs. Newcastle and Hunter libraries offer free programs for families such as Baby Book Time and storytime. There's also lots of school holiday activities to keep school aged kids entertained. Newcastle Region Library also hosts a Toy Library at New Lambton Library where families can borrow up to 3 toys per child every week.

Kids Eat Free



We're blessed with loads of eating places in Newcastle and the Hunter. Here's a list of Kids Eat Free places when you don't feel like cooking. Here's also a guide to local restaurants with kids areas or playgrounds.

IV. Newcastle housing market: eight suburbs tipped for big things

1: STOCKTON

Median house price \$865k

"Stockton's had its controversy over the years, but the Sydney market's looking at that and saying there's really good value in Anna Bay and Stockton where you can get 300 metres to the beach for around \$1.3 million. It isn't Merewether ... but people from outside the area are saying we see those two suburbs as something completely different to what the local market is viewing them as."



2: WARATAH

Median house price \$710k

"It's a fringe city suburb, you've got the train line, three to four really good schools in the area and the hospital. People are buying blocks for \$750,000 to \$800,000, bulldozing the house and spending up to a million to build something. I'm not seeing that as much in any other suburb apart from New Lambton. I think Waratah's starting to become a hidden gem."

3: BROADMEADOW

Median house price \$737k

"Investors need to read up on what's planned for Broadmeadow over the next five years. You've got new sporting facilities ... there's a lot happening. Investors should keep that one on their radar."

4: BLACKSMITHS

Median house price \$800k

"If you want to be located further south in the Lake Macquarie region you're looking at \$1.8 million in Catherine Hill Bay now as an average for a three-year-old house close to the beach in the new Beaches estate. In Blacksmiths, most of the streets within 500 metres to the beach you're still looking at under \$1.5 million. We look at that as locals and say 'that's a lot of money' - that same sort of property 300 metres to the beach even on the Central Coast you're looking at \$2.5 million now with no view."

5: MEDOWIE

Median house price \$630k

"Medowie to me is going to be the Matcham of the Newcastle-Port Stephens region. With the infrastructure that's gone in - it's got a golf course, proximity to the airport and it's also close to the freeway - over-60s that are looking for the tree change, they definitely have Medowie on their radar. I would urge anyone looking for an acreage just to have a drive through Medowie to see how much the area's changed."



BIRMINGHAM GARDENS

Median house price \$546k

"For a lot of buyers that have between \$700,000 and \$900,000 I think Birmingham Gardens is still really good value for the size of the block, the kind of home you're getting and that area really booms when the student accommodation area is doing well. Because student accommodation at the moment is so down - they'll probably start coming back in January - I think there's a really good window of opportunity in the next three months. For families that want a good size family home, all they need to do is look at something that's traditionally student accommodation and convert it back to a normal home."

ANNA BAY

Median house price \$691k

"Anna Bay traditionally isn't really seen by the locals as somewhere they could experience that good a growth, but the Sydney market looking for weekenders, they quite like the Barubi Beach, the cafe there and its proximity next to the bay."



CARDIFF

Median house price \$603k

"Cardiff has good sized homes; older, but they're good blocks. I think it's been slightly overlooked by probably the more expensive suburbs, New Lambton Heights, Garden Suburb and so on. They're starting to reach some good prices there, but that's a pocket buyers should consider, especially first home buyers that are being priced out of other suburbs."

Maryville

Maryville is a popular suburb in Newcastle, which is around 0.6 square kilometres in size. This beautiful place has a peaceful surrounding and less traffic. So, you can enjoy a relaxed environment! The overall population of this suburb is around 1500, and the predominant age group is 30 to 39 years.



This excellent suburb offers all the basics necessities include health centres, offices, restaurants, markets and so on. You might not find any good schools in Maryville, but there are many schools in surrounding suburbs, Tighes Hill Public School (Newcastle) and San Clemente High School (Mayfield). Also, the University of Newcastle is hardly 7 to 8 km from Maryville, so it won't be a problem at all. This is why nearly 54 per cent of families live here with their children.

V. Buying in sister suburbs

Why not Wallsend?

With the Hunter Express Way and the University of Newcastle right on its doorstep, this sleepy little suburb has more appeal than might first meet the eye. Surrounded by history, this former mining town is a gateway into Newcastle and offers easy

access to great cafes and outdoor activities like golf or exploring the nearby Hunter Wetlands.

Suburb standout: Historic charm. The town was initially established in 1860 to house miners arriving from Scotland, England and Wales after the Wallsend Coal Company opened. Remnants of the past still exist around the area – from heritage detailing in houses, to sculptures and historic town buildings.

Median house price: \$525,000*

Median unit price: \$436,150*

Consider Cardiff South

Just a hop, skip and a jump away from sought after suburbs including Kotara and Adamstown, Cardiff South offers affordable prices without compensating on location. With shopping centres and beautiful beaches just minutes down the road, you won't miss out on any of the action and could save yourself thousands.

Suburb standout: Convenience. Take your pick between spending your spare time at the beach, enjoying the Lake Macquarie waterfront or exploring Glenrock State Conservation Area. Errands to run? No problem – duck to Charlestown or Westfield Kotara and be back home within minutes.



Median house price: \$540,000*

Median unit price: \$425,000*

A nod to North Lambton

Wedged between Jesmond and Waratah, this little pocket is located only nine kilometres from the Newcastle CBD. With property options ranging from family

homes and apartments to town houses, there's definitely something for everyone. Due to the landscape, there's also potential to snag a property with views across the valley and towards the city.

Suburb standout: Potential. Located close to transport, two hospitals and the University of Newcastle – some of the biggest employers in the Hunter region – the area should hold its appeal for future buyers when you're ready to sell or you might be able to consider holding on to it as an investment property.

Median house price: \$615,000*

Median unit price: \$405,000*

Maybe Maitland...

It might be a little further out but Maitland still has plenty to offer. Close to vineyards and the train line into Newcastle, it's an ideal halfway point for the best of both worlds. There's also potential for slightly larger blocks if you'd like more space for kids or a pet. With plans for further infrastructure and development forecast over the next 15 years, the region is only set to grow.

Suburb standout: Laidback lifestyle. Picture cruisy weekends exploring cafes and shops along the Levee, or enjoying the nearby vineyards throughout the year.

Median house price: \$460,000*

Median unit price: \$300,000*

CONCLUSION

When buying a house, it's important to get to know the surroundings of your potential new home. This means doing some suburb research - not just the kind that involves Google, but a drive through town and chatting with some friendly locals, could shed some light on the pros and cons of the area (like maybe some insights on potential new neighbours), which may help you decide if you want to live there.

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