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Sydney still outperforms other capitals ... this seven-bedroom Tamarama home was the most expensive property sold at the weekend, fetching \$6,450,000

Andrew Wilson

THIS weekend's Sydney auction market failed to build on the encouraging results recorded from last weekend's year-high Super Saturday of auctions. Although there were more than 100 fewer properties up for auction, the preliminary auction clearance rate fell from 54.9 per cent to 52.8 per cent.

Of the 378 auction results reported so far for the weekend, 234 were sold and 65 withdrawn. The total value of the properties sold was \$196.9 million, an average of \$841,453 per property. The median value of houses sold was \$850,000 and \$591,500 for units.

The most expensive property reported sold was a seven-bedroom house in Tamarama that went for \$6,450,000. The most affordable property reported sold was a one-bedroom unit in Waterloo that went for \$180,000.

Sydney's housing market contin-

ues to shift sideways with no real sales or price growth momentum being created so far during the traditionally busy spring selling season. With only three weeks until the end of the year it is unlikely the market will revive significantly, despite increased numbers of first-home buyers chasing established homes to buy before their stamp duty concession expires on December 31.

Recent house price data confirms a subdued housing market overall for Sydney. According to Australian Property Monitors, the median Sydney house price fell 1.1 per cent over the October quarter, and unit prices fell 0.9 per cent. Over the year ending October, median house prices have fallen by 2.3 per cent, but unit prices have risen 0.5 per cent over the year.

Sydney's lower price range suburbs have continued to record modest price growth, led by Canterbury

Bankstown, where the median house price was up 1.8 per cent to \$530,000 over the October quarter. This growth is being offset by continued weakness in the prestige market. Median house prices on the north shore were down 7.1 per cent, in the eastern suburbs by 6 per cent, and the northern beaches 4.4 per cent over the October quarter.

Although Sydney's housing market has remained relatively subdued this spring it nonetheless continues to outperform all other capital city markets. The general weakness of housing markets will be an important factor considered by the Reserve Bank in its deliberations over the direction of interest rate policy to be announced tomorrow.

Dr Andrew Wilson is senior economist for the Fairfax-owned Australian Property Monitors.