

INTELLIGENT INVESTMENT

What renters really, really want

REPORT

CBRE RESEARCH

APRIL 2026

realestate.com.au

realcommercial.com.au

CBRE

Quick takes

01

Who's renting?

- Around **1.6m Australians** rent apartments/flats
- Later home formation sees nearly **300,000 35-44yr old** renting
- **51%** of renters are **lone or sole parent**. 35% are couples or flatmates
- **37%** of renters earn over \$100k

02

Desires

- **Rent and location** are equally important
- **Parking, security and pet-friendly** are top 3 amenities. Search data shows “pet friendly”, furnished”, “air conditioning”, “pool”, and “undercover parking”
- Suburb choice is driven by **proximity to work/school, affordability and public transport**

03

Search trends

- NSW: **Surry Hills, Sydney City, Paddington, Parramatta** are most searched by renters
- VIC: **Melbourne City, Richmond, South Yarra** lead renter searches
- QLD: **Brisbane City, New Farm, West End** are most popular

04

Affordability

- **Perth rents** recorded the largest 5-year dollar increase (+\$16,100), followed by Sydney, Brisbane, and Adelaide
- Canberra and Melbourne have seen the **lowest rent growth** over the past 5 years
- **68%** of renters cover rent through salary alone or with additional income, **without support** from family/partners
- **53%** of renters would **stay put if their rent increased by \$50/week**. 37% would leave to find a cheaper option
- **24%** of renters plan to stay in their rental for **5+ years**

05

Sharing economy

- **45%** of share-house renters do so because they **can't afford to rent alone**
- Others enter share housing for **situational reasons** (flexibility, tight rental competition)
- **66%** of share-house renters would **prefer to live on their own**

“

Proximity to work, schools and transport are driving suburb selection, with established inner-city locations continuing to dominate search activity across Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane. Rent growth over the past decade has been significant across most markets, and renters are feeling it. Two-thirds of share house renters told us they'd prefer to live alone, but right now that's just not an option for many of them.

Anne Flaherty

Senior Economist
REA Group

“

This survey reinforces what we're hearing on the ground. Beyond price and location, rental choice is anchored by core essentials like security, parking, and pet-friendliness and increasingly, on stability. With nearly a quarter of renters planning to stay put for five or more years, households are viewing renting as a long-term solution.

Sameer Chopra

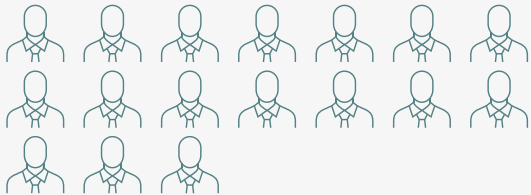
Head of Research, Pacific
CBRE



Who's renting?

Household composition of apartment renters

43% Lone Person



25% Couples Only



12% Families with children



10% Group/Share



8% Sole Parent

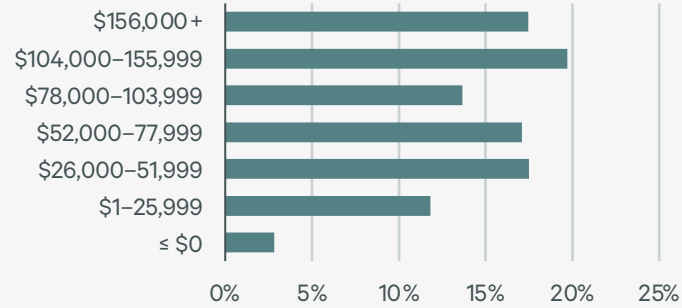


2% Other One Family

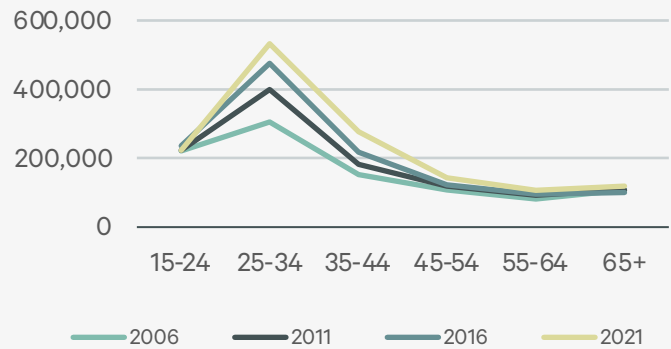


0% Multiple Families

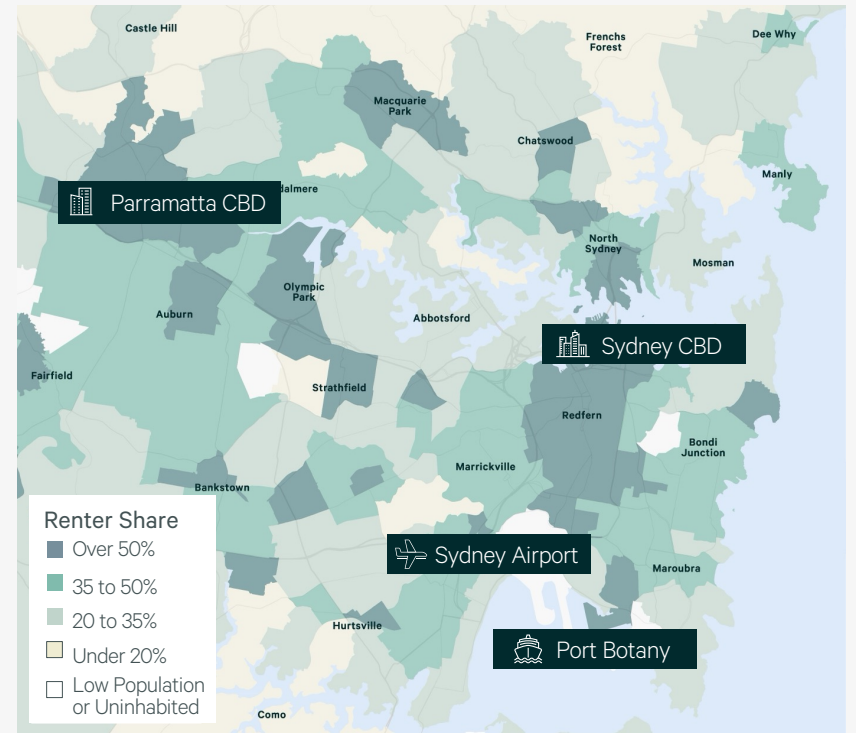
Annual income of apartment renters



Age of apartment renters over time, earlier and later



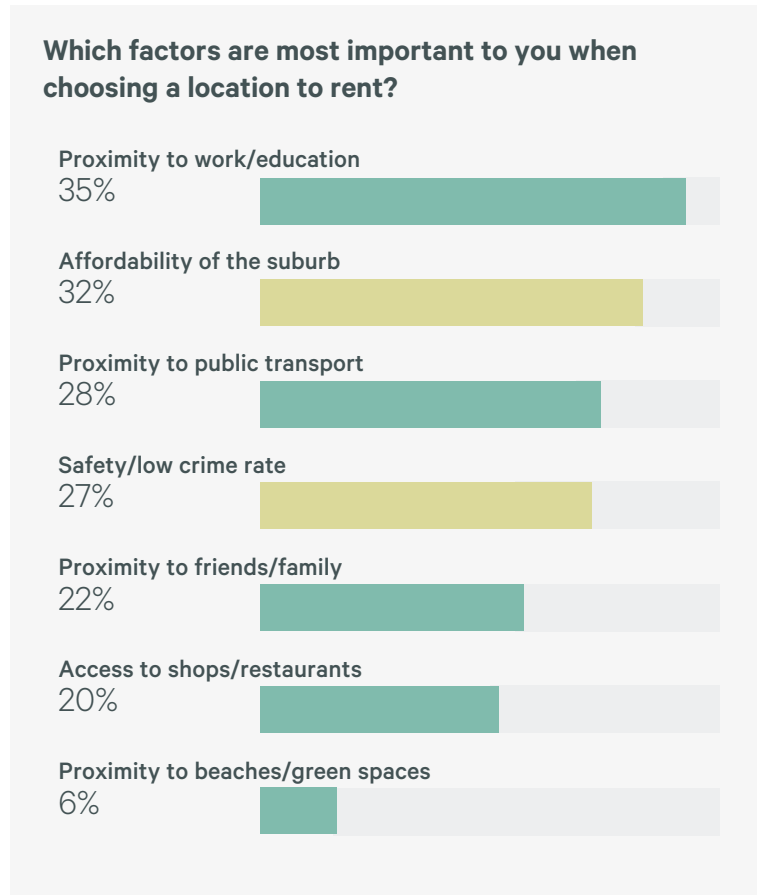
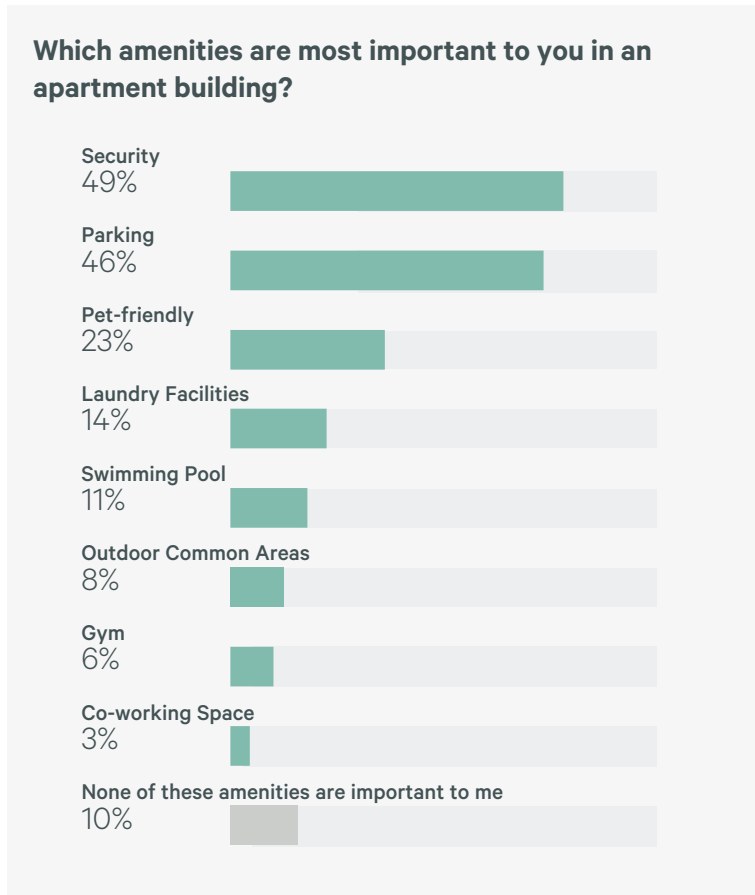
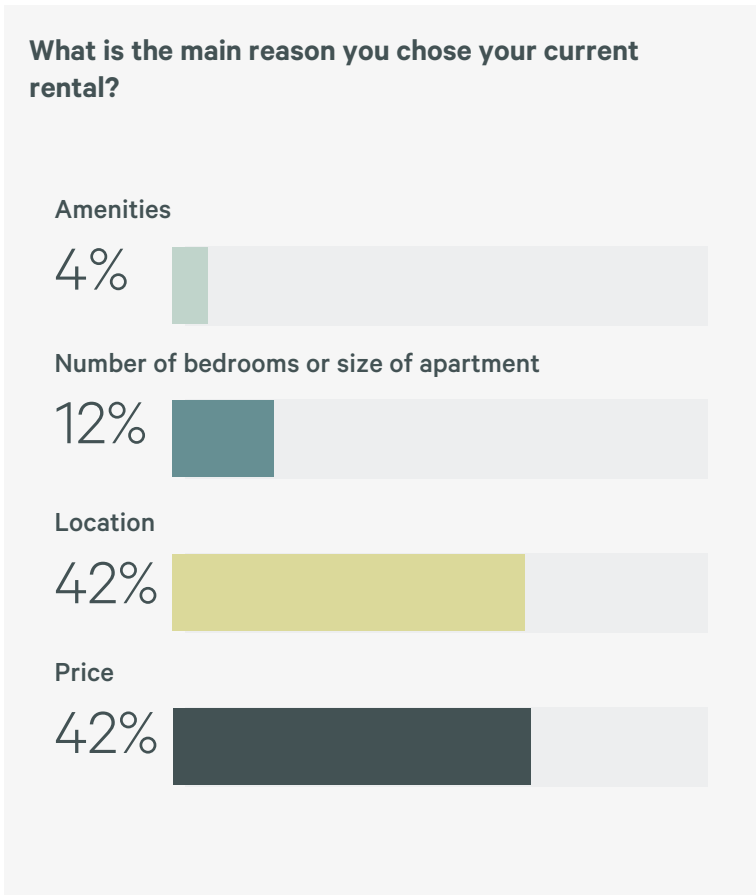
Sydney renter share heatmap



Source: ABS Census



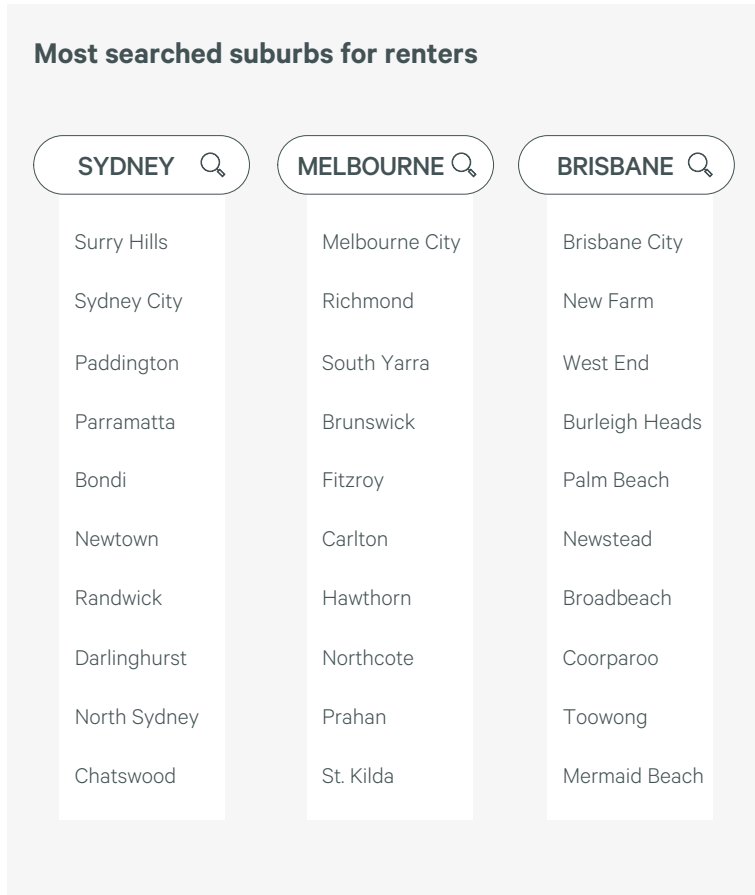
Desires and choices



Source: CBRE Research



Search trends

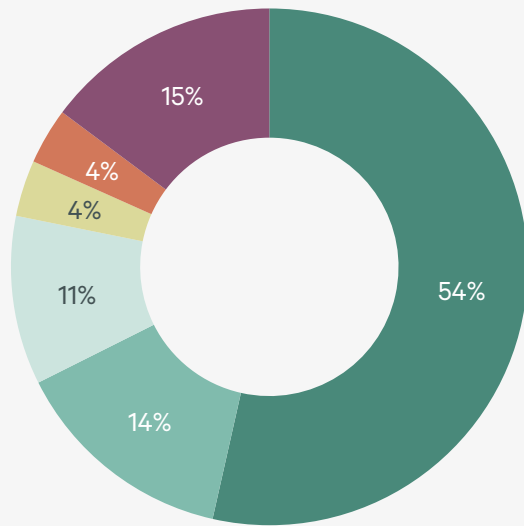


Source: REA Group

Affordability and terms



How do you cover your rent and living costs?



- My salary alone
- Salary plus extra income (bonuses, savings, second job, etc.)
- Salary plus financial help from my partner
- Salary plus financial help from my family
- My family covers all of my rent and living costs
- Government assistance

If your rent increased by \$50 per week, what would you most likely do?

53%

Would stay and continue renting

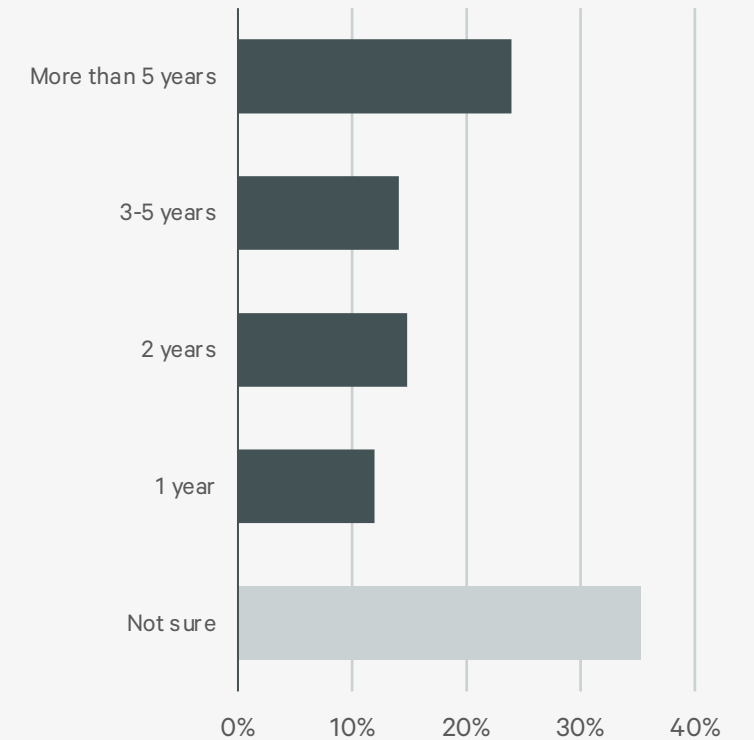
37%

Would leave and look for a cheaper rental

10%

Would get a housemate/flatmate

How long do you plan to stay in your current rental overall?

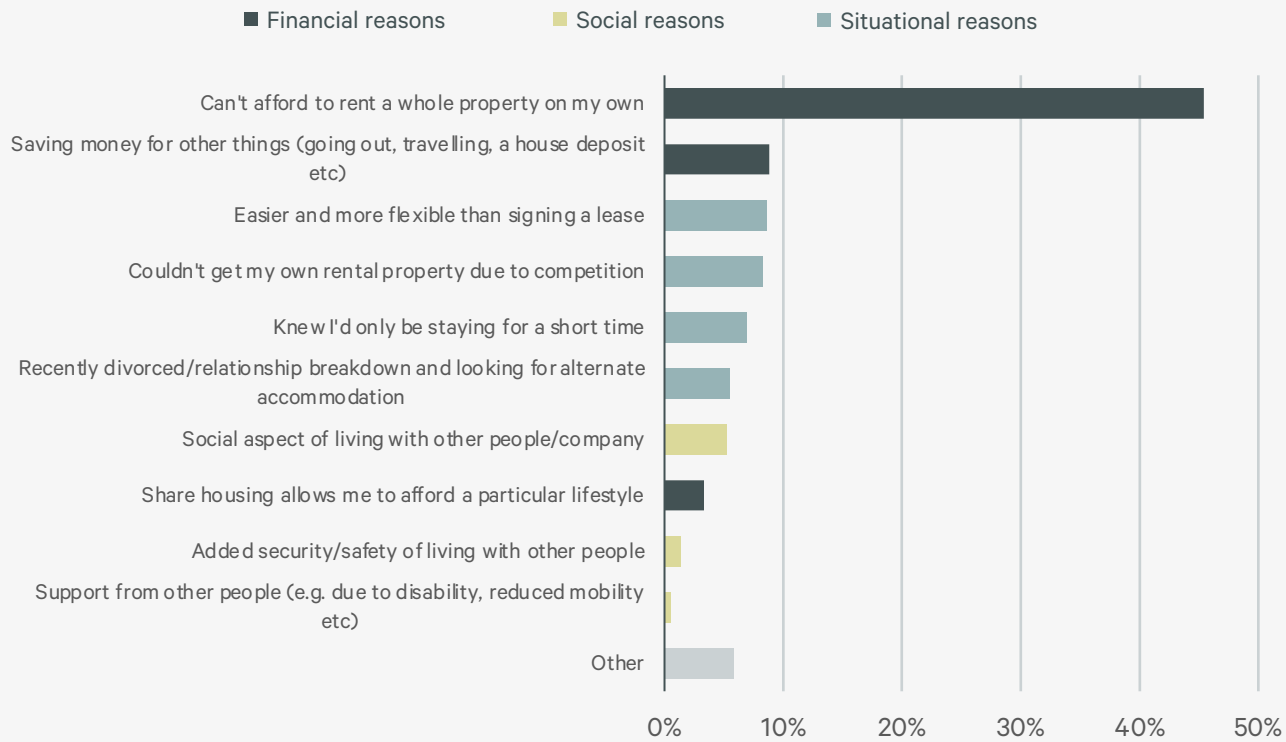


Source: CBRE Research

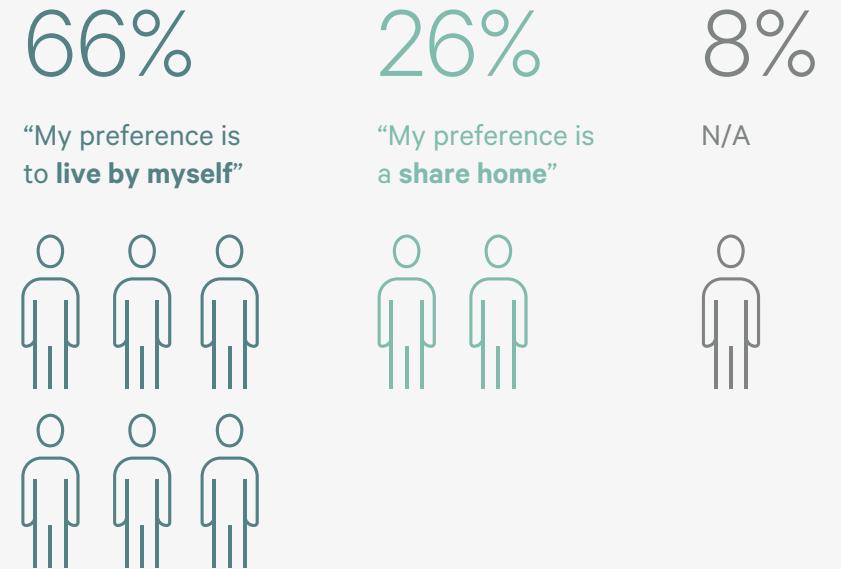


Sharing economy

What was your primary reason for finding a share house?



Thinking about the next 12 months, is your preference for a share house or would you prefer to live by yourself if you could?



Source: Flatmates.com.au