

FREE GUIDE · 2026

Buying in *Adelaide*

The honest guide to buying a home in Adelaide's north-east: your budget, every cost, finding and checking the right home, making an offer under SA's rules, and the road to the keys.

RIDGEHAVEN · REDWOOD PARK · MODBURY · GOLDEN GROVE
SURREY DOWNS · HOPE VALLEY · POORAKA





WELCOME

Read this before you buy

G'day, I'm Matt Manser. I sell homes in Adelaide's north-east with eXp Realty, so I meet buyers at every open home I run.

I'll be straight with you about one thing first: when I'm selling a home, I act for the seller. That's the law. But a buyer who understands the process, has their finance sorted and knows what things really cost is a buyer every seller wants to deal with. This guide is how to be that buyer.

Market figures are a snapshot from October 2026 and the sources are on the last page. Rules and prices change, so check the latest before you sign anything.

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The short version: get pre-approval before you fall in love with a house. Add stamp duty and the other costs to your budget from day one. Look at what has actually sold, not asking prices. Read the Form 1 with your conveyancer. And never bid at auction without unconditional finance.

Looking in the north-east?

See what I've got for sale now, and ask me what's coming up before it hits the portals.

mattmanserrealestate.com.au/listings

Got a question?

About a suburb, a price, or how something works in SA. Call or text me any time, no obligation.

0437 044 433

The market for buyers

\$928,560

Adelaide median home value, end of September 2026

Cotality Home Value Index

+6.5%

Change over the year to September

Cotality HVI

-2.7%

Change over the September quarter (-1.3% in September alone)

Cotality HVI

10,849

Homes for sale in Adelaide in September, up 39.5% on a year ago

SQM Research

39 days

Average time to sell across the capitals, against 23 a year earlier

Cotality

4.60%

RBA cash rate after the 29 September rise, the fourth of 2026

Reserve Bank of Australia

What happened this year

Adelaide values are still up on a year ago, but they've come off the top: at the end of September they were 2.9% below the May 2026 peak (Cotality).

Rates went up four times in 2026. Canstar worked out those rises cut what a couple on two average wages can borrow by about \$95,000.

And there are far more homes for sale than a year ago, and they're taking longer to sell.

What it means for you

- **More choice.** You can compare more homes before you decide, and you're less likely to be rushed.
- **Re-check your budget.** If your pre-approval is from earlier in the year, it may not stretch as far now.
- **Good homes still sell.** A well-priced, well-presented home in a good street still draws a crowd. Have your finance ready so you can move when you find it.
- **Use what's sold.** Asking prices tell you what a seller hopes for. Recent sales tell you what buyers actually paid.

One thing to watch: the next Reserve Bank decision is on 3 November 2026. Whatever happens, ask your lender to re-check your borrowing before you make an offer.

Cotality (formerly CoreLogic, the company behind RP Data) Home Value Index, September 2026, released 1 October 2026. SQM Research listings, September 2026. RBA media release, 29 September 2026. Canstar analysis, September 2026.

Your budget and pre-approval

Work out your budget

Start with your income, savings and debts, then talk to a mortgage broker or your bank. Your budget is the price **plus** stamp duty and the other costs (page 5), not the price alone.

Get pre-approval

Pre-approval (conditional approval) gives you a firm borrowing limit. It lasts for a limited time, so ask your lender how long. You can make an offer without it, but with it you're a stronger buyer and less likely to have a finance condition fail.

What quietly cuts your borrowing

- **The 3% buffer.** Banks test your loan at about 3 percentage points above today's rate (APRA's serviceability buffer), so you can borrow less than the repayments alone suggest.
- **Credit card limits.** Banks count the full limit on every card, not what you owe. An unused card still lowers what you can borrow.
- **New debt.** Avoid car finance or buy now pay later while you're getting pre-approval.

Your deposit

- A deposit of 20% or more usually means no Lenders Mortgage Insurance (LMI). Less than that and most lenders charge LMI, which can be added to the loan.
- On a home at Adelaide's median of \$928,560, 20% is about \$185,700, before stamp duty and costs.
- Your deposit has to cover the purchase costs too, so keep money aside for stamp duty, conveyancing and inspections.

First home buyers

- **Buying new?** No stamp duty on a new home, off-the-plan apartment or vacant land to build on, at any price (contracts from 13 February 2025), and a First Home Owner Grant of up to \$15,000 (RevenueSA).
- **Buying established?** Full stamp duty applies. There's no first home buyer relief on an established home in SA.
- **5% Deposit Scheme.** The Australian Government scheme covers homes up to \$900,000 in Adelaide, so you can buy with a 5% deposit and no LMI.

Ask a broker or your lender. Every bank works it out differently. Get your numbers checked before you set your budget, and again before you make an offer.

What it costs to buy

Stamp duty is the big one, and it's on top of the price. Here's what it is on an established home, and everything else to budget for.

\$29,580

Stamp duty on a \$650,000 home

RevenueSA scale

\$44,903

Stamp duty on a \$928,560 home
(Adelaide's median)

RevenueSA scale

\$59,830

Stamp duty on a \$1,200,000 home

RevenueSA scale

The SA stamp duty scale

Price of the home	Stamp duty
Up to \$12,000	\$1 per \$100
\$12,001 to \$30,000	\$120 + \$2 per \$100 over \$12,000
\$30,001 to \$50,000	\$480 + \$3 per \$100 over \$30,000
\$50,001 to \$100,000	\$1,080 + \$3.50 per \$100 over \$50,000
\$100,001 to \$200,000	\$2,830 + \$4 per \$100 over \$100,000
\$200,001 to \$250,000	\$6,830 + \$4.25 per \$100 over \$200,000
\$250,001 to \$300,000	\$8,955 + \$4.75 per \$100 over \$250,000
\$300,001 to \$500,000	\$11,330 + \$5 per \$100 over \$300,000
Over \$500,000	\$21,330 + \$5.50 per \$100 over \$500,000

RevenueSA, read 30 October 2026. Charged per \$100 or part of \$100, paid at settlement. Foreign buyers pay a 7% surcharge on top. Try my [stamp duty calculator](#).

Everything else

Cost	Good to know
Conveyancer or lawyer	Handles the contract, searches and settlement. Get a written quote first.
Building and pest inspection	Strongly recommended. Book it inside your inspection condition's date.
Lender fees and LMI	Application and valuation fees, plus LMI if your deposit is under 20%. Ask for the full list.
Rates and water	Council rates and SA Water are adjusted at settlement: you pay from settlement day.
Insurance	Building insurance from the date the home is your risk. Ask your conveyancer when that is.
Moving	Removalists, connecting power and internet, and the bits you need on day one.

Finding the right home

Know what you want

- Must-haves versus nice-to-haves: bedrooms, bathrooms, garage, land size, yard
- Be honest about what you'll actually use. It's easy to be swayed by features you won't need
- School zones follow streets, not suburbs. Check the exact address on the Department for Education's website
- Drive the commute at peak hour before you commit

Inspect like a pro

- Go to open homes before you're ready to buy. It trains your eye fast
- Inspect a home you're serious about more than once, at different times of day
- Ask the agent what has sold nearby recently, and check it yourself
- Ask for the Form 1 early (page 7)

Buying in the north-east

Ridgehaven · Tea Tree Gully

Established family streets a short drive from Westfield Tea Tree Plaza and the O-Bahn interchange in Modbury.

Redwood Park · Tea Tree Gully

Family homes on decent blocks, Redwood Park Primary School on Lokan Street, and Tea Tree Plaza close by.

Modbury · Tea Tree Gully

Home of Westfield Tea Tree Plaza, the O-Bahn interchange to the city, and Modbury High School.

Golden Grove · Tea Tree Gully

Planned streets and reserves, and the One+ campus: Golden Grove High, Gleeson College and Pedare.

Surrey Downs · Tea Tree Gully

Quiet established streets between Redwood Park and Golden Grove.

Hope Valley · Tea Tree Gully

Established streets with Hope Valley Reservoir on the doorstep.

Checking it properly

The Form 1 (vendor's statement)

- The seller's legal statement about the property: title, mortgages and easements, council and water details, approvals and notices.
- Read it with your conveyancer before you sign if you can. Your cooling-off doesn't start until you've received it.
- Buying a unit or townhouse? It includes the strata or community corporation's papers. Read the minutes and the accounts for upcoming costs.

Building and pest inspection

- Make your offer subject to one, with a date, or get it done before you sign.
- Read the whole report, not just the summary, and ask the inspector about anything you don't understand.

Other things to check

- **Approvals.** Were the extension, shed, pergola or pool approved? Ask, and check the Form 1.
- **Smoke alarms.** Within 6 months of buying, SA law needs mains-powered or 10-year sealed battery alarms. Find out what's there now.
- **Pools and spas.** Check the safety barrier.
- **Council rates.** Ask for the latest notice. Tea Tree Gully's rates rose 5.5% for 2026-27 and Salisbury's 4.7% on average.
- **The street.** Visit at night and at school pick-up.

Questions to ask the agent: how long has it been on the market? Has the price changed? What's sold nearby lately? Is there a Form 1 ready? When does the seller want to settle?

Making an offer, the SA rules

Private sale: making an offer

- Your offer must be in writing and signed, on the offer form or contract the agent gives you.
- Add conditions you need, each with a date: usually finance, a building and pest inspection, and your settlement date.
- The agent must pass every written offer to the seller. No buyer is ever told another buyer's offer amount.
- The seller can accept, reject or counter. Negotiating is normal.

SA's price rules help you

- An advertised price can't be below the agent's own estimate or the seller's price.
- A range can be at most 10% wide, and "offers over" isn't allowed.
- So the advertised price is a real guide. Still check it against what's sold.

Cooling-off

- In a private sale you can cancel until the end of the 2nd clear business day after you sign, or after you get the Form 1 if that's later.
- During cooling-off the deposit is capped at \$100. If you cool off, that's the most you lose.
- No cooling-off at auction, if you sign on auction day after bidding, or if your lawyer signs a Form 3 certificate before you sign.

Buying at auction

- You register to bid and get the bidder's guide.
- The auctioneer can make up to 3 vendor bids, only below the reserve, and must announce each one.
- The contract is unconditional when the hammer falls. Have unconditional finance and your inspections done first.

Never bid without finance. If your finance falls through after you win, you can lose your deposit and face a claim from the seller.

Summary of the Land and Business (Sale and Conveyancing) Act 1994 and its 2025 Regulations, read from legislation.sa.gov.au in October 2026. General information, not legal advice.

From contract to keys

Contract signed

- Cooling-off: 2 clear business days in a private sale
- Deposit paid into the agency's trust account once cooling-off ends

Conditions

- Building and pest inspection by its date
- Finance approved by its date, then confirm it in writing
- Contract unconditional

Before settlement

- Form 1 in your hands at least 10 clear days before settlement
- Insurance in place, removalist and utilities booked
- Final inspection to check it's as it was

Settlement

- On the date in the contract. Your conveyancer handles it
- Keys from the agent once settlement is confirmed

Questions buyers ask me

Do I need a buyer's agent?

Not necessarily. A good selling agent treats buyers fairly and gives straight answers. A buyer's agent works only for you, which can help if you're new to the area or short on time, but it's a cost to factor in.

How long is settlement?

Whatever you and the seller agree in the contract. Being flexible on the date can make your offer stand out.

Can I see the Form 1 before I offer?

Ask. Many sellers have it ready, and reading it first means no surprises after you sign.

What if I need to sell first?

You can offer "subject to sale", but sellers often prefer an offer without it. My Your Next Move guide covers buying and selling at the same time.

Buying in the north-east? Let's talk.



Ask me anything about a home, a street or a suburb in my patch. I'll tell you what's sold nearby and what's coming up. And if you've got a home to sell first, I can help with that too.

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Call or text Matt Manser · eXp Realty · RLA 300185

[See my listings](#)

[Book a call](#)

mattmanserrealestate.com.au

Your buying checklist

- ☐ Pre-approval from a lender
- ☐ Budget includes stamp duty and costs
- ☐ Must-haves written down
- ☐ Recent sales researched
- ☐ Inspected more than once
- ☐ Form 1 read with your conveyancer
- ☐ Building and pest inspection done
- ☐ Final inspection before settlement

Sources

Adelaide median dwelling value \$928,560; +6.5% year, -2.7% quarter, -1.3% September; 2.9% below the May 2026 peak; combined-capitals days on market 39 (23 a year ago): Cotality Home Value Index, September 2026 (released 1 Oct 2026).

Adelaide total listings 10,849 (+39.5%), September 2026: SQM Research (released 2 Oct 2026).

Cash rate raised to 4.60% on 29 Sep 2026: Reserve Bank of Australia. Borrowing capacity (~\$95,000 less for a couple on two average wages): Canstar, Sept 2026.

Stamp duty scale, first home buyer relief (contracts from 13 Feb 2025), seniors downsizing relief (contracts from 25 Mar 2026), 7% foreign ownership surcharge and the \$15,000 First Home Owner Grant: RevenueSA, revenuesa.sa.gov.au (read 30 October 2026).

5% Deposit Scheme (\$900,000 Adelaide cap, from 1 Oct 2025): Australian Government. Serviceability buffer: APRA.

Offers, price advertising (s 24A), cooling-off (s 5), \$100 deposit cap, Form 1 service, auctions and vendor bids: Land and Business (Sale and Conveyancing) Act 1994 and Regulations 2025 (legislation.sa.gov.au, read Oct 2026).

Smoke alarms within 6 months of transfer: Planning, Development and Infrastructure (General) Regulations 2017, reg 95. Council rates 2026-27: City of Tea Tree Gully (5.5%) and City of Salisbury (4.7% average).

General information only, not legal, tax or financial advice. Figures as at October 2026; prices and rules change, so check the latest before you decide. Nothing here is a personal story about a client. Photos: Matt Manser; Patrick McLachlan, Ryan Vand (Pexels licence); SCHolar44, Klemzig O-Bahn interchange (Wikimedia Commons, CC0).