

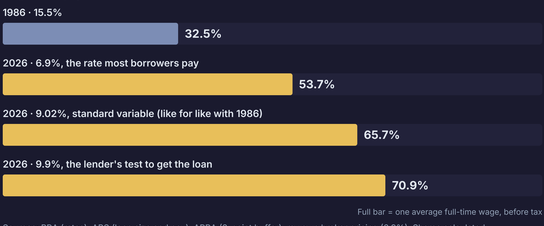
What it took to own a home: 1986 vs 2026

01 · THE RATE

Lower rate. Heavier load.

15.5% → 6.9%

Home loan rate, 1986 vs the rate most borrowers pay today. Now the share of one full-time wage the repayment takes:



Sources: RBA (rates), ABS (loan size and pay), APRA (3-point buffer), my own broker pricing (6.9%). Shares calculated by the author. Notes 1, 4, 5, 9, 10, 11, 17.

02 · THE STANDARD YARDSTICK

Under 5 years of income. Now 14.

Sydney median house ÷ median household income: the median multiple, rated on Demographia's scale.

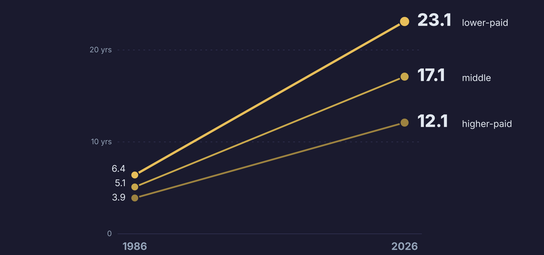


Sydney ranks second worst of 96 cities. 1986 uses Australia's median household income ($22,000); no Sydney figure was published. Sources: Demographia 2026 edition (2025, a median only); ANU house price and ABS 1986 Census income (1986, calculated by the author). Notes 6, 21, 22.

03 · DOWN THE PAY SCALE

Lower pay, longer climb.

Sydney median house, in years of one full-time worker's pay.

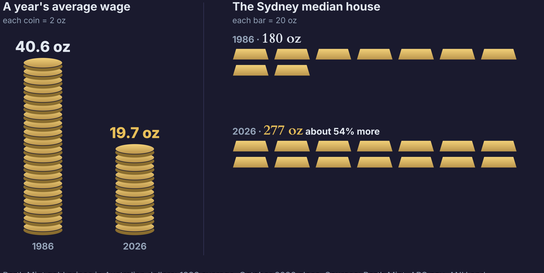


Workers a quarter, half and three quarters of the way up the full-time pay scale. 2026 uses August 2025 pay, the latest published. Sources: ABS pay distribution, quartiles calculated by the author; ANU (1986 house) and NSW Government sales report (2026 house). Notes 6, 18, 19, 20.

04 · MEASURED IN GOLD

The wage halved. The house went up.

Priced in ounces of gold, which can't be printed.



Perth Mint gold prices in Australian dollars: 1986 average, October 2026 close. Sources: Perth Mint, ABS pay, ANU and Cotality house prices. Ounces calculated by the author. Notes 4 to 7, 12, 13.

05 · WHAT'S LEFT EACH WEEK

Same cash left. Far bigger debt.

1986

$969

a week on one wage after the repayment, in 2026 dollars

2026 · AT 6.9%

$965

a week on one wage after the repayment

The loan behind it: 2.1 years of pay then, 6.8 years of pay now.

Before tax and other living costs. Average full-time wage, average new owner-occupier loan. Sources: ABS pay and loan size, RBA rates and CPI, my own broker pricing (6.9%). Calculated by the author. Notes 1, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 17.

Healthy Wealthy Investor

Every number follows the Healthy Wealthy Investor Standard v1.1, built on the ABS Data Quality Framework. Sources: RBA, ABS, APRA, Demographia, Cotality, NSW Government sales reports, ANU, Perth Mint. Full article, method and all 24 sources: healthywealthyinvestor.com.au/what-it-took-to-own-a-home-1986-vs-2026

General information only. It does not take your personal situation into account. Juan Jeffery, November 2026.