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&

**Tony Alexander**

MORTGAGE ADVISERS SURVEY

February 2026



## Healthy start to the year

Each month we invite mortgage advisors around the country to give insights into developments in the residential real estate market from their unique perspective. Our latest survey has attracted 54 responses.

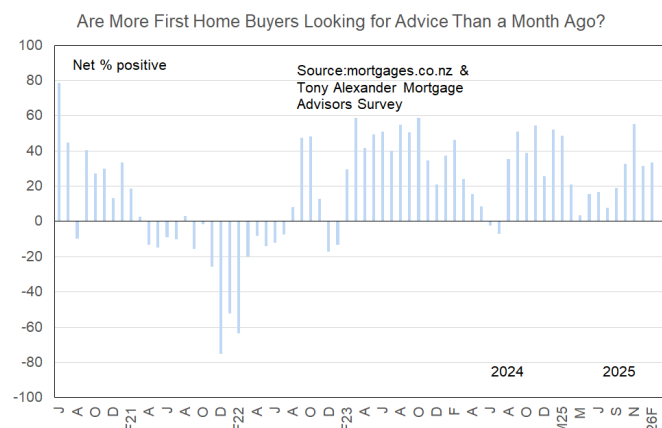
The main themes to come through from the statistical and anecdotal responses include the following.

- First home buyers are maintaining a strong presence in the mortgage financing market, but investors continue to take a back seat.
- Lending criteria continue to be eased in a sporadic manner with sometimes high variations between the main lenders.

### COMPARED WITH A MONTH AGO, ARE YOU SEEING MORE OR FEWER FIRST HOME BUYERS LOOKING FOR MORTGAGE ADVICE?

A net 33% of mortgage advisors report that they are seeing more first home buyers in the market looking for advice. This is little changed from our previous survey two months ago early in December but down from the short-lived spike to 55% in November.

Young buyers continue to take advantage of a real estate market replete with listings and with minimal upward price movement.



Comments on bank lending to first home buyers submitted by advisors include the following.

- Although interest rates have been slowly increasing, test rates have remained in place, so approvals are amounts that more clients are able

to purchase for with some negotiation at the moment.

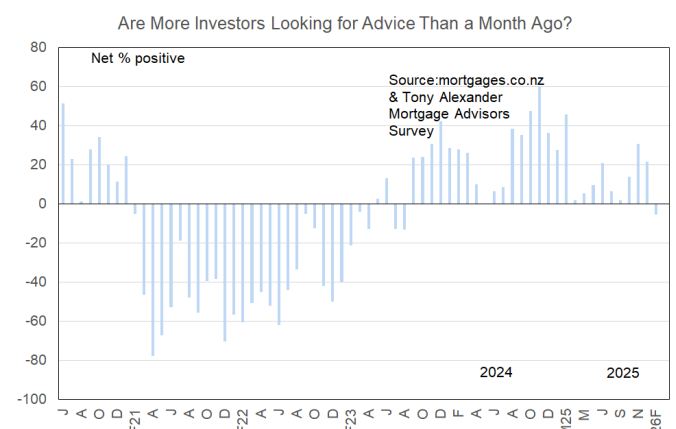
- Clean credit is a must.
- Preapprovals are back and turn around times are shortened which is awesome.
- Far easier to obtain lending, and banks want to workshop applications.
- More chance with a 10% deposit. Need regular income not casual contractors, same industry for 2 years.

### COMPARED WITH A MONTH AGO, ARE YOU SEEING MORE OR FEWER INVESTORS LOOKING FOR MORTGAGE ADVICE?

For the first time since August 2023 our survey shows more mortgage advisors saying they are seeing fewer investors than say they are seeing more. The net -6% result compares with a positive net 22% recorded two months ago.

There is no evidence of strong upward movement in house prices which would normally cause investors to accelerate any purchase plans they might have. There also appears to be growing realisation that average capital gains in the long-term will not be what they were in the past, plus awareness of rising costs of running a rental property business and altered access to credit.

Nonetheless, comments submitted by advisors indicate that there is still investor presence in the market.



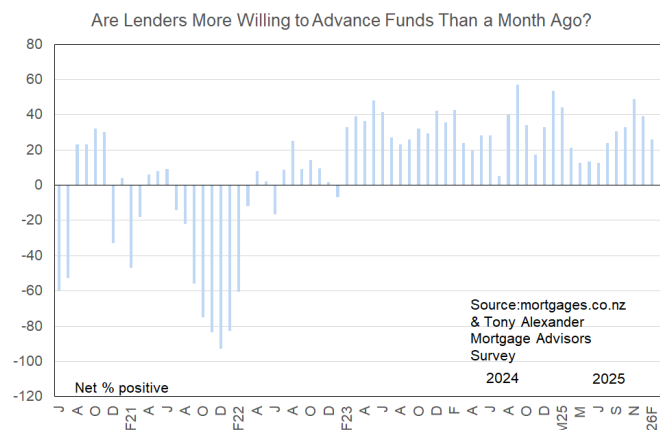
Comments made by advisors regarding bank lending to investors include the following.

- Banks have increased lending to investors with > 70% LVR.

- One major lender now (limited time) lending up to 85% on investment property.
- Banks are offering loans for over DTI of 7.
- Some willingness to lend outside DTI/LVR restrictions but for my clients I haven't had the need to utilise this.

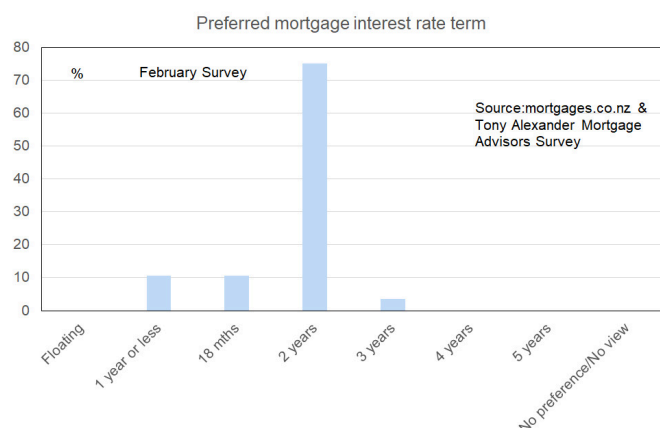
### COMPARED WITH A MONTH AGO, ARE YOU FINDING LENDERS MORE OR LESS WILLING TO ADVANCE FUNDS?

A net 26% of mortgage brokers have indicated that lenders are becoming more willing to advance funds for home purchases. This is down from 39% two months ago and 49% three months back but still consistent with the more relaxed lending environment which appeared from the early part of 2023.

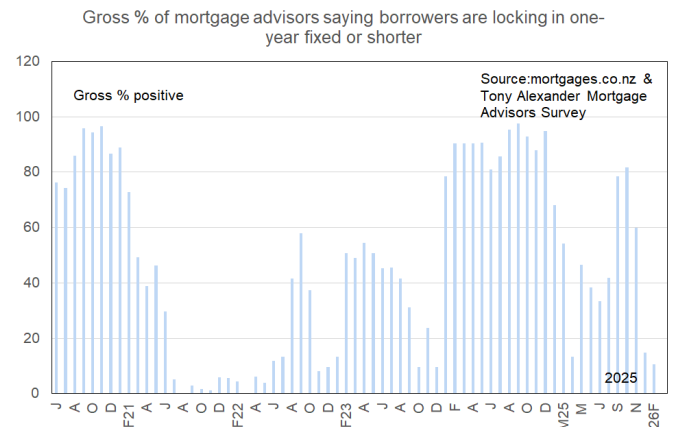


### WHAT TIME PERIOD ARE MOST PEOPLE LOOKING AT FIXING THEIR INTEREST RATE?

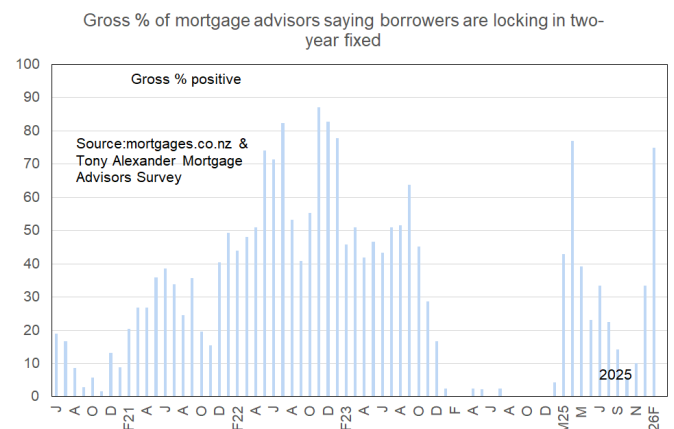
In our first survey for 2026 75% of mortgage advisors have reported that borrowers primarily favour fixing their interest rate for two years. Interest in other terms is minor.



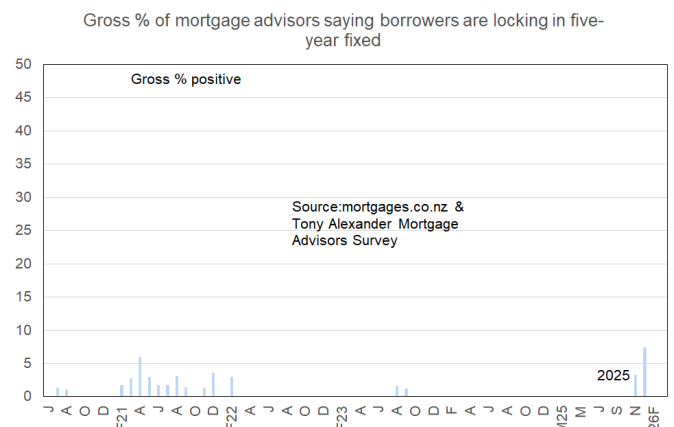
Few borrowers any longer indicate they will fix one year whereas as recently as October 82% of advisors said this was the preferred term.



The preference for fixing two years has soared back to levels last seen very briefly just under a year ago.

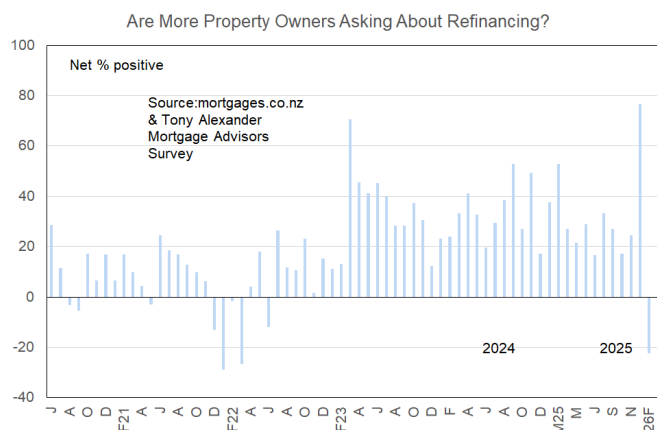


There was a short-lived burst of interest in fixing five years late last year. But that has now vanished.



## ARE MORE PROPERTY OWNERS ASKING ABOUT REFINANCING?

After soaring to an unusually high net 76% of brokers two months ago saying that more people were asking about refinancing it is perhaps not surprising that some of that surge to take advantage of cashback offers has eased off. This month a net 22% of brokers have reported seeing less refinancing interest from customers.



focusing on risk - they will miss out to other lenders. Should be a good quarter.

- Turnaround times are back down into single digits which is awesome. Still feel that banks are trying to cut our lunch sometimes - but its not as obvious as it was midway through 2025. Things are looking positive and ironically once interest rates started to rise just before Xmas, it seems to have made buyers want to jump on board now rather than waiting for rates to drop and drop - there is a bit more sense of urgency as rates have risen.
- Some people thinking they have missed the bottom on rates, hesitant to fix longer now as the rate is over 5 %.
- A good start in January with new buyers entering the market, however last 2 weeks a noticeable slowdown of new enquiries.
- We have had many clients preapproved for six months or longer, who are now committing to purchasing homes. Conversations with investors still show concern around if there is a government change.

## Mortgage Advisors' Comments

Following are some of the general comments which mortgage advisors volunteered in this month's survey.

- We are past the service issues from December with that 1.5% cashback promo. Lender turnaround times have improved.
- Turnaround times coming back down after December's insanity. Personally new clients all FHB right now.
- Way more enquiry, particularly from first home buyers and some refinancing. There is definitely some urgency in the market.
- The year has started very busy with lots of first home buyers getting ready and buying quickly.
- More interest from buyers and keen to borrow, good signs and busy, some missing out on multiple offers where properties are presented well. Some upwards rate movement might bring forward FHB that previously had time to wait. Stock of houses still in good numbers, lending credit teams still going through deals with fine tooth comb rather than looking beyond and

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This publication is written by Tony Alexander, independent economist.

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