



HOW TO

# SELL YOUR OWN PROPERTY NOW

**DON'T GET CONNED**

Join the Real-Estate Revolution

**EXPOSING THE LIES**

Why YOU Don't Need an Agent

**ALL THE TRICKS**

Get the Highest Price

**SAVE THOUSANDS  
SELLING OR LEASING  
AUSTRALIA-WIDE**

Save Thousands of Dollars by Selling  
Your Own Property - it's EASY!



Just follow the steps and  
pocket the CASH

AU\$9.95

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# ABOUT THIS GUIDE

## SELLING YOUR OWN HOME USED TO BE HARD... *BUT NOT ANYMORE!*

This guide is a road map and an instructional manual on how to go about selling your property in Australia while paying ZERO real estate agent's commission!

We will give you clear and precise information about exactly how to achieve a no commission sale using a revolutionary new system pioneered by PropertyNow. This method is already proven by thousands of Aussies, who have saved millions of dollars.

This guide will dispel some of the most absurd and long-standing myths about what it takes to sell a property. It also lifts the lid on many unsubstantiated and incredible real estate agent claims that have never been tested or sufficiently scrutinised.

Everything you need to know is explained in the following pages. The first section of this guide covers the fundamentals of private selling. From there we move on to the initial steps involved in the process, followed by advice for each part of the marketing and sale process. Every step is covered in detail so that you have a comprehensive guide and can get the best possible results when selling your home.

Whether your motivation is to save money, achieve a higher price, have greater privacy, to take control or simply to accomplish something significant, then your journey to selling your own home commission-free starts here!

**What are you waiting for?**

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Andrew Blachut is a licensed real estate agent who specialises in helping people to sell their own home. He is the author of 'Get More for your Home: Join the Real Estate Revolution!', the best-selling private sale book. His company, PropertyNow, pioneered the agent-assisted sales model in Australia. This enabled Australians to sell privately without being road blocked by the entrenched industry that controlled the property listing sites. He has helped thousands of people just like you, to sell their properties successfully and with no commission.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

4	THE LOW-DOWN ON PRIVATE SELLING
8	DEBUNKING COMMON MYTHS
14	WHAT AGENTS WON'T TELL YOU
17	BEYOND THE SAVINGS
20	BEFORE YOU LIST
52	ABOUT REALESTATE.COM.AU
58	CHOOSING THE RIGHT COMPANY
68	THE MARKETING PROCESS
86	WHAT IF IT'S NOT SELLING?
90	YOU'VE GOT A BUYER
95	CHECKLIST
96	TESTIMONIALS
100	LEASING YOUR PROPERTY
104	APPENDIX

# THE LOW-DOWN ON “AGENT-

YOU CAN SAVE THOUSANDS BY SELLING YOUR HOME  
AND WITH NO COMMISSION AT ALL!  
IT ISN'T JUST DOABLE, IT'S EASY!

Selling a property in Australia has undergone enormous changes during the past decade. There is now an entirely new way to sell a home which simply did not exist prior to 2004 when PropertyNow invented a novel method to sell any property in Australia. This way of selling involved paying absolutely no real estate agency commissions at all, massively reducing the costs and in doing so, completely revolutionised the real estate industry in Australia.

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*“This way of selling involved paying absolutely no real estate agency commissions at all, massively reducing the costs and in doing so, completely revolutionised the real estate industry in Australia”*

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# ASSISTED” PRIVATE SELLING

PropertyNow not only invented this idea but also coined the name - Agent Assisted Sales. Agent Assisted selling simply means using a real estate agent to perform only a part of their traditional role, while leaving the owner and their conveyancer or solicitor to take care of the rest.

In Agent Assisted Sales, private sellers use the agent in a very new and clever way. The agent’s role, although diminished, becomes condensed and therefore far more efficient. In short, the agent becomes your assistant in the sale hence the name – “Agent Assisted Sale”.

## Comparing Ways to Sell

### Selling with a Traditional Real Estate Agent



Using the traditional Real Estate Agent method of selling, you sign an agreement with a licensed real estate agent who will charge a percentage of your sale price in return for their services in selling your property. They will also generally charge additional fees for advertising and materials (such as newspaper ads and signage). Depending on the price of your house; this can

cost you \$10,000 – \$30,000 or even more! The agent is very much in the driver’s seat when using this traditional method and is responsible for all the advertising tasks and all contact with the prospective buyers.

In traditional sales, you lose money and you also lose control of the process.

continued on page 6

# THE LOW-DOWN ON “AGENT-ASSISTED” PRIVATE SELLING

## Selling Privately

Using a private sale method, you don't engage any particular company or agent to help you with the sales process. You are responsible for the entire sales procedure and have no direct support. The main downside of this method is the limited exposure you can get since you are locked out of realestate.com.au and many other agent only sites. You are also likely to be refused access to or be overcharged by newspapers and other property magazines who cater mainly or exclusively to real estate agents.



## Selling Online with an Agent Assisted Company



Using the Agent-Assisted method of selling, you typically list with an online real estate agency which charges a flat fee instead of a commission. This fee is generally paid upfront. The agent-assist company will list your property on realestate.com.au and many other agent-only websites and will guide and support you throughout the sales process. Selling using this method means you will retain direct control over your listing and are responsible for (or get help with) writing your property description, arranging photos and handling the enquiries from prospective buyers. This hybrid method of selling represents the best of both worlds.

# HERE'S HOW TO PREPARE

## For The Economic Turbulence Ahead.

WHY THE WORLD COULD BE FACING A NEW GLOBAL DEBT CRISIS

**Y**ears ago, I had just wrapped up a major property development and made a high six figure profit. I was flying high!

Rather than bank it and earn little interest, a trusted colleague convinced me to lend it to another developer as bridging finance in exchange for an attractive rate.

**Everything was going wonderful – then catastrophe struck!**

The economy suddenly slowed and the developer was forced into bankruptcy, but not before he paid me back what I was owed.

I thought I had dodged a bullet. However, the liquidator commenced legal action claiming I had been paid a priority payment ahead of other creditors.

My assets were frozen and years of legal action ensued. Long story short, the case was eventually awarded against me.

**Everything I had worked so hard for was suddenly gone!**

Not only did I lose my money, I was ordered to pay legal costs for both parties which came to another high six figure sum!

I lost everything and was forced to sell my prized property portfolio including the family home. My family and I became homeless!

The good news is I have since rebounded and rebuilt my property portfolio, bigger and better than before.

The event was also a watershed moment in my life. It inspired me to specialise in debt

and commercial law as a barrister and solicitor and become of Australia's leading authorities in wealth protection.



**DOMINIQUE GRUBISA is a barrister and solicitor with more than 20 years of experience specialising in debt and financial law. She is regarded as a leading expert in asset protection and has privileged insight into what's happening in finance.**

**Could this happen to you?**

Believe it or not, we could be on the verge of a NEW global financial crisis and most investors are disturbingly unaware! History is repeating, just look at the figures:

❑ Global debt was recently estimated at \$152 trillion – about 225% of global domestic product. Roughly two thirds is private sector debt which is hampering recovery!

❑ US debt just passed \$20 trillion, roughly equal to one quarter of global GDP!

❑ China and Japan's debt levels have surged passed 220% of GDP – more than Greece!

❑ European banks are so indebted that many analysts predict a total collapse – while European nation states are still drowning in debt.

❑ To top it off many believe Australian property is overheated with Sydney and Melbourne now the world's 2nd and 5th most expensive housing markets.

Unless you are aware and prepared for the possible crisis ahead, you could be wiped out like I was!

That's why as a concerned financial law professional, I am holding a time-sensitive webinar to update you on the potential debt disaster ahead. You'll hear:

❑ What's really happening in the world economy today.

❑ What it means to you as a property investor.

❑ What to do now to protect your property wealth and position yourself for greater riches.

Crisis also means opportunity to those who prepare. This is your one chance to get your house in order and position yourself for greater prosperity in the turbulence ahead.

The webinar is free and can be watched from your home computer.

**Go Here To Join:**

[www.wealthcontrolwebinar.com.au/pn](http://www.wealthcontrolwebinar.com.au/pn)

Visit [www.wealthcontrolwebinar.com.au/pn](http://www.wealthcontrolwebinar.com.au/pn) to view our time-sensitive webinar



# DEBUNKING COMMON MYTHS

ARE AGENTS ANY BETTER AT SELLING?  
IS PRIVATE SELLING HARD?

LET'S DEBUNK SOME OF THE MOST COMMON MYTHS  
AROUND SELLING YOUR OWN HOUSE!



**“You can’t access realestate.com.au without a traditional real estate agent”**

Before 2004, you were blocked from accessing crucial agent-only websites like realestate.com.au as a private seller. But now you can get onto these sites by listing with an agent assisted company. These companies level the playing field for anyone wanting an alternative to the traditional system. They do so by offering commission free Agent Assisted Sales at a low, fixed price. The result being that sellers save many thousands of dollars. Agent Assisted companies charge fees in the range of \$600 (for the key service) and up to a few thousand for some extra bells and whistles. So, you can get as much value as a traditional sale, but without the twenty-thousand-dollar price tag!



## “It’s harder to sell without an agent”

Consider this carefully: What’s the number one thing that affects the sale of a property? It is the price that the seller is willing to accept! Whether you use a fixed price, commission free agent for less than \$3,000 or pay an old fashioned real estate agent \$20,000, you will still be the one who decides what price you will accept. So you alone will determine how easy or how hard it is to sell your house! Of course agents need you to believe that only they have the “secret knowledge” needed to sell your house.

continued on **page 10**

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*“Of course agents need you to believe that only they have the ‘secret knowledge’ needed to sell your house”*

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# DEBUNKING COMMON MYTHS



**“You’ve only got one chance”**

Despite all the fear mongering around selling without using a traditional agent, the truth is there is no danger in giving this approach a try. If for some reason, after all the support you get from your agent assist company, you still don’t sell then you always retain the opportunity to go with a traditional agent instead. That’s something that doesn’t work in reverse: when you sign an agency agreement with a traditional agent there is no turning back until the agency period expires.

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*“Agents aren’t ‘professional negotiators’ and are in fact in a worse negotiating position than you are”*

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**“People don’t like dealing with the owner”**

This one is almost laughable. Think for a moment about how ethical and trustworthy most people would consider real estate agents to be. Beyond this, when dealing with an owner directly, buyers know they can generally get an on the spot answer to any questions they may have and they don’t have to worry about agents harassing them in the future.



## **X MYTH**

**“The paperwork is too complicated”**



Agents are not solicitors. What most people don't realize is that solicitors and conveyancers generally do most or all of the heavy lifting when it comes to signing paperwork and finalizing a sale. You don't have to understand the legal process at all with an agent assisted sale because your solicitor handles this part and can guide you through each step, just as they would if you were selling with a traditional agent.

## **X MYTH**

**“Agents are expert negotiators and can secure a higher price”**

Let's put this ridiculous myth to bed immediately. There is not a single shred of evidence anywhere that this is true. It's a story that agents tell you to vindicate their use and costs. Even if agents could achieve a better sale price (zero evidence) for your property, don't forget that they generally have to achieve a price of \$10,000 or \$20,000 more just to cover their commission. Aside from this, most agents don't have any dedicated training in negotiation skills. Agents aren't 'professional negotiators' and are in fact in

continued on **page 12**



# DEBUNKING COMMON MYTHS

a worse negotiating position than you are. They are less motivated than you, they need to go back and forth between the two parties which causes delays and know less about the property than you do. Most sellers have more than enough skill to manage the simple negotiation process and this is especially true if their chosen agent-assisted company can provide tutorials, over the phone advice or a professional negotiating service.



## “You won’t have enough time”

If selling a property was as time consuming as some people make out, agents wouldn’t have time to manage their numerous listings. You only have one listing and you have the advantage of only needing to coordinate with one party (the buyer) for private inspections.

Other time consuming tasks such as engaging a solicitor, preparing the property for sale, cleaning up for inspections, and discussing offers are all things you would have had to do anyway when selling with a traditional agent. It’s debatable as to whether there is any extra time commitment. If there is, then it’s minimal and well worth the savings you make!





**“Agents have more listings so they get more enquiries”**



Of course, a real estate agency with 50 listings will on average get 50 times as many enquiries. But dividing these per property gives the same net balance. Private sellers won't receive any less enquiries when compared with the same house listed in an agency simply because the enquiries usually come from the same place, i.e. the online real estate portals, such as [domain.com.au](http://domain.com.au) and [realestate.com.au](http://realestate.com.au).



What the  
**AGENTS**  
won't tell you



WHILST TRADITIONAL AGENTS ARE HAPPY TO WAX LYRICAL ABOUT THE DANGERS OF SELLING PRIVATELY, THERE ARE A FEW THINGS THAT THEY DELIBERATELY LEAVE OUT REGARDING SELLING WITH THEM

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*“You also won’t be told that agents will likely use the enquiries on your property for their other properties as well”*

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**F**irstly, their advertised commission almost certainly won’t include advertising costs. These extra costs can run into thousands of dollars. That’s thousands above and beyond the huge commission!

Their high-profile newspaper presence is often paid for upfront by their current clients, and yet this presence serves to promote themselves, more than it does your property. There are no special tools that agents possess that will make a person buy your house.

continued on **page 16**

# What the **AGENTS** won't tell you



As an agent myself, I can assure you that agents seldom have any significant database of buyers and what buyers they do have are available to all the other agents and to you as well. If the agents have any database at all, you should know that realestate.com.au and domain.com.au have a far bigger database and it's essentially yours for the taking.

You also won't be told that agents will likely use enquiries on your property for their other properties as well. For exam-

ple, if they have a buyer who likes your property but isn't especially keen, they may redirect this buyer to another property on their books that is an easier sell.

Another thing you will rarely hear from an agent is that they aren't needed for any of the sales paperwork. In fact, a solicitor or conveyancer generally handles all, or most, of the legal paperwork.

Just remember - **Houses sell themselves!**

# BEYOND THE SAVINGS

OTHER REASONS  
OWNERS CHOOSE TO  
SELL IT THEMSELVES



## Greater Privacy and Control Over Your Sale

**M**any people still fear that an agent may sell another property off the back of their home, by using the enquiry generated from their home and applying the enquiry to another property in their portfolio. Selling with a traditional agent can also mean having to work around their schedule, being beaten down on price and losing privacy. For these reasons, many people value the sense of control that running their own show brings.

## Avoiding Agents

Money isn't the only motivation to sell privately. It's a sad fact that many people just don't like agents. Real estate agents are consistently ranked in the top three least trusted occupations. Selling privately allows you to avoid dealing with agents altogether, and it provides your prospective buyers the same benefit.

continued on **page 18**

# BEYOND THE SAVINGS



## Learning New Skills

The skills you build in selling your own home will give you greater confidence in future endeavours. You will certainly get a wonderful sense of accomplishment and also a skill set that you may use more than once during your lifetime. Should you not succeed in selling your own home within a reasonable space of time, you always have the option to go with an agent immediately. If this happens you will be in a far better position to price and market your property with the agent because of the knowledge you have gained during the process of trying to sell.

## The Final Word: Should You Sell it Yourself?

We'll let you make up your own mind about this one but there is absolutely nothing stopping you. It is neither complicated nor is it especially difficult to sell your own property.

You will, through your success and through your example, join an ever-increasing number of successful agent-assisted sellers.

You will also help to dispel forever the notion that it takes particular expertise to sell your home and better yet, to sell it at the highest possible price in any market.



SELLING YOUR HOME  
*USED TO MEAN* PAYING  
AGENTS COMMISSIONS...

**PropertyNow**<sup>®</sup>  
Agent Assisted No Commission Sales

**SOLD**

## DID YOU KNOW?



You need an agent to list on realestate.com.au but you don't need to pay commission!

## CUSTOMIZATION



Change your ad anytime you like. Unlimited free revisions and a simple to use website.

## LOCAL SUPPORT



You'll always be speaking to a staff member, not a call center.

## ...NOT ANYMORE

Smart people (thousands of them) have found a better way to sell or to rent out a property without paying a single dollar in agent commission.

In 2004 PropertyNow invented an innovative new way of selling and leasing property called "agent assisted" sales and rentals.

Since then PropertyNow has saved Australians over **70 million dollars** in commissions.

We also list real estate in every state and territory, so it doesn't matter where your property is located- we can help you sell it!

**PropertyNow**<sup>®</sup>

Phone: 1300 664 773  
sales@propertynow.com.au  
www.propertynow.com.au



# BEFORE YOU LIST



AGENT-ASSISTED SALES SAVE YOU HUGE COMMISSIONS AND OFFER MANY OF THE BENEFITS OF A TRADITIONAL AGENT BUT WITHOUT THE BIG PRICE TAG

**T**here are only a handful of situations in which people should not sell their own property using an agent-assisted sale but for the vast majority of people it is the best way to sell.

The steps to selling your home are really easy and require no special skills at all. A good agent-assist company should place all the necessary resources and support at your fingertips.

Each step can be as thorough or as relaxed as you care to make it. You could accomplish all the steps in a day if you chose to but if you want to take your time and do your homework, that's fine too!

The amount of assistance you need will vary from person to person. Most people will be very happy to do their own negotiations, whereas others will receive a benefit from having a third party negotiate on their behalf. Likewise, most people will

be quite content to spruce up their own property while others will engage a home stager to advise on presentation. Similarly, the overwhelming majority of people will write their own ad but a few will want or need some assistance. In practice, homeowners mostly write great “copy” for their home because they know it better than any agent ever will.

Keep in mind that for several of the steps you don’t need to actually know or learn anything. For example, you don’t need to understand contract law in order to hire a conveyancer, you just need to phone the conveyancer. You simply explain to them that you are selling your own property and give them the details they require to prepare a contract. So, by now you can see the trend: everything an agent does, you can either do entirely by yourself or outsource it very cheaply.

If you have a perception that any of these things are hard, then that’s purely because you have been brainwashed by either a real estate agent or the media interests that support them. You should be aware that most of the real estate media is indirectly either influenced or controlled by agents. The last thing they want you to know is that selling is a simple process that you can do yourself.

Notice we said selling is simple (and it is), but simple and easy are two different things. How easy it is to sell your property will depend almost entirely upon the local market conditions for selling and that is something which is completely independent from the actual method that you are using to sell.

continued on **page 22**



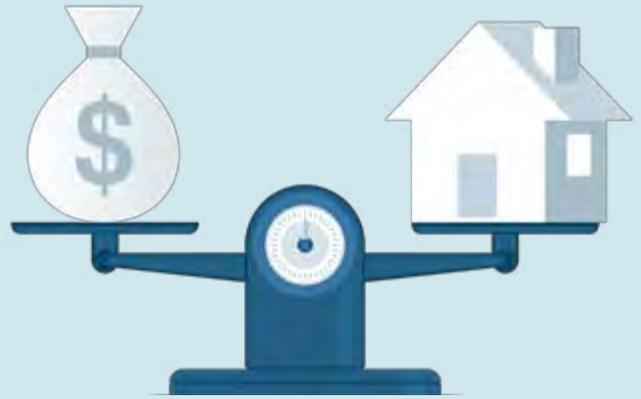
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*“The last thing they want you to know is that selling is a simple process that you can do yourself”*

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# PRICING: WHAT'S YOUR PROPERTY WORTH?



**B**efore you can list your property for sale, you need to find out what your property is worth. Some people are very nervous about their ability to correctly set the listing price. Once you realise that any error in price can be easily corrected after the market has spoken about your property, then you can be a little more relaxed about the pricing process in the first place.

Should you manage to over-price your property significantly, buyers will let you know. You may be told in no uncertain terms via phone, e-mail or in person that your price is simply too high in comparison with the other homes in your area. Alternatively, buyers will simply navigate away from your listing online and gravitate to another listing which they feel is priced correctly.



The end result of this will be no enquiries and that in itself is your feedback on price. It's all useful information to you, even though it may feel unpalatable.

Should you under-price your property, then there are also sure to be clues about that from your buyers. However, under-pricing is not always as obvious to a seller, as over-pricing is. Generally, if you under-price a property you'll have multiple buyers who are somewhat over eager.

Thankfully, if you gain a sense that you have put too low a price on your property then you can adjust it upwards, even though you may well upset or even lose a potential buyer in doing so. It is still preferable to lose buyers than it is to significantly under sell your property.

With that out of the way, let's look at some of the strategies you can use to determine your price.

## Strategy 1: Ask an Agent (or three)

Whilst fairly commonplace, asking an agent for a market appraisal is probably the least effective of the three possible ways to price your property.

The reason for this is that someone who is seeking a marketing appointment can't possibly be impartial in the market opinion they give.

continued on **page 24**



# PRICING: WHAT'S YOUR PROPERTY WORTH?

The first problem is that the agent wants the job and knows perfectly well that owners will generally go with the highest appraisal. The appraisal process becomes like an auction in which the highest appraisal is likely to end up scoring the job. That in itself is more than enough reason for using almost anyone else, besides your listing agent, to help you to set an asking price.

But there are further problems. For example, the agent also desires a quick sale, which introduces another dilemma. While the need to secure your signature for the listing will mostly drive the price up, the need to earn a commission (and sell as quickly as possible) can also cause a hungry agent to list your property at a low price.

In other words, there is strong potential for agents to get your price wrong in either direction.



## Strategy 2: Ask a Registered Valuer

For the sake of convenience and to eliminate any chance of owner or agent bias, it stands to reason that using a registered valuer to price your property is a smart move, but one which few people will consider. Whereas agent appraisals are free, having a valuation done by a valuer will set you back a few hundred dollars. However, a good valuer is worth every penny as they are completely independent and qualified for the task.

Keep in mind though, that a valuer's stated opinion of your property's value, may well err on the low side simply because valuers can be held personally liable for any assessments they make.

If you are concerned about this, you might ask the valuer to provide a range of prices which might reflect the normal value of your home, as well as a price that might be paid by a "heart buyer". A heart buyer is one who has a greater interest in your house than might be expected from the broader market. A valuer might not generally factor "heart buyers" into their equation, but there is nothing wrong with asking for an "off the record" verbal opinion along with their written one.

continued on **page 26**



# PRICING: WHAT'S YOUR PROPERTY WORTH?

The upside of having an official valuation done is that, if you're happy with it, you can choose to share this with buyers as proof that the price you're asking for is reasonable and evidence based.

On the other hand, if you disagree with the valuation, that's fine and you still list at whatever price you wish. Unless you choose to share it, the valuation is for your eyes only and it's simply a guide to take the place of the free agent appraisal... which you can still get in any case.

## Strategy 3: Do Your Own Research

### Look at the overall market in your area

The most effective way to research your local market is to purchase a suburb or town sales report from an aggregator of sales data company, such as RPData, Price Finder, or Australian Property Monitors. Any report from companies such as these will still require interpretation and additional research in order for you to arrive at an accurate pricing.



*Important Note: Compare apples to apples*

*When looking at market data to determine your price, you need to make sure what you're considering is both relevant and recent. For example, you must compare three bed houses to other three bed houses, houses with ensuites must be compared alongside others with ensuites.*

*You should also take into account house size differences, garaging, land size, and additional amenities. Most importantly, the locations need to be very similar as well. When researching recent sales in your area you should be looking no further back than six months and properties as close to your house as possible.*

Naturally in some areas it can be very difficult and even impossible to find comparable sales within these guidelines. If this is the case, you will be forced to rely more heavily upon researching the current properties for sale in your area.

**Try to obtain an individual Property Value report**

Some providers can now supply an automatically generated property value report either for free or for a small fee.

Property value reports will typically include an estimate of how much a property is worth, the level of confidence in that estimate, a history of what it has previously sold for, the estimated rental value, comparable properties for sale, comparable sold properties and information about the local area. This data is very useful and is great information to share with buyers later on should you choose.



# GETTING THE PRICE YOU WANT

## Don't Stress!

**A**rmed with the knowledge of what your property is likely to be worth, you can choose to set the price wherever you want and move it up or down as you need. Remember that there is no absolute value of any property prior to an actual sale. No concrete figure exists. Valuers, agents, and sellers can all make mistakes on price and in the end, all that exists is a seller, a buyer and a negotiation. The only meaningful price is the one that a person will pay on a given day. Appreciating that there is no “right price” can make deciding on your pricing much less stressful.

## Price-Baiting and Other Rules

When choosing how to display your price to buyers, be sure to check on any state government rules as to how you can display your price. No price can ever be misleading but in some states the rules are even stricter and you are not allowed to use certain phrases like “Offers Above”. If you’re unsure, your agent-assist company should be able to guide you in this area.

*Note: PropertyNow has built in protection to prevent sellers making such errors.*

## Your Initial Price

Agents make far too much of the fact that properties are most likely to sell when initially listed. Apart from stating the obvious, it also takes no account of the fact that there are always new buyers entering the market. No irreparable harm is caused by over-pricing. Keep in mind that the vast majority of properties sell at a price point that’s different from the listing price, (this is called Vendor Discounting), so you could argue that the majority of people “over-price”. But remember that people making lower offers can’t harm you and it’s how you react to that feedback which is more important.

## Marketing Without a Price

What if you don’t want to display a price at all? Is it a good idea to market without a price? People sometimes do this via a Price On Application approach. This approach is much more suited to traditional agents than to private sellers as it tends to get a lot more total enquiries (which makes the agent look good to the owner). If those buyers aren’t interested at the price the owner wants, the agent can easily redirect them to another property and can use the buyer’s disinterest as proof that the owner should be reducing the price.

The bottom line is; if you market your property without a price you may get a few more enquiries but the majority of them will probably be from buyers who can’t or won’t pay the price you want. Be clear upfront and save everyone the hassle.

### Final Word

Don’t get too complex around pricing. Keep it simple. Make your property easy to buy and don’t confuse your buyer with pricing gimmicks or distractions. Tell them your preferred price and then listen to what the market has to say about it.





# BUILDING AND PEST INSPECTIONS: A NEW WAY

WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF SUDDENLY WHEN PEOPLE LISTED A PROPERTY FOR SALE, THEY DID A BUILDING AND PEST INSPECTION AT THE VERY OUTSET?

**T**he first outcome would be that people who sold their homes with an ability for buyers to view an independent and existing building and/or pest inspection...would be in the box seat.

The current state of play is that the buyers will do the building inspections at their cost and determination (banks often insist on having them done). In the new way of selling this need not change- buyers can and still often will get their own building inspection. They pay for it and they own it and they interpret it as they see fit.

But what if prior to getting your own building inspection as a buyer, you had the opportunity to view an existing one? You could as a buyer rely on the existing one and simply waive the need to have your own.

Or you could use the existing one to determine whether your own is warranted.

In other words just because a building inspection is already available that won't preclude you from obtaining your own should you want to.

Think of it this way. If two cars were for sale and they were both the same model, price and condition but one of them came with a Revs check and the other didn't which one would you lean towards buying?

More and more people will adopt this idea of the vendor obtaining a building and pest inspection as a way of upselling their own property. This will differentiate it from the vast sea of sellers who won't go that extra mile for the buyers convenience.

We can hear the agents already saying to their sellers “what buyer is going to rely on an inspection paid for by an owner” - at some point in the future when an agent tells you that, you will know you are witnessing the death of an old school of thought.

Only good can ever come from having an upfront inspection and here are some significant reasons to consider this rather innovative approach to selling (either with an agent or a private sale).

- Buyers will have more confidence in placing an offer.
- Buyers will have more confidence in going to the expense of securing their own inspection.
- A notoriously slow to innovate industry takes a quantum leap forward.
- Auctions could be bid on with far greater confidence.
- Properties sold in this manner will stand out from all others.
- Properties sold in this manner may appear more blue ribbon (at any price point) and also potentially attract a higher price.

- The entire marketing, sales, negotiation phase and also lending delays... may be reduced. The result would be the speeding up of offer and acceptance and overall sale time.

The only argument we can think of not to do a building and pest inspection is the cost. Today however with the advent of streamlined and efficient national businesses such as Jims Building and Pest Inspections, the cost to benefit ratio is excellent for sellers to utilise these trusted service offerings.

If you want to not only sell your own home and save commission but also like being a trail blazer in providing a far better outcome for your buyer (better for you therefore) then we encourage you to take a look at Jim’s inspections.

Get a building inspection done at the beginning and be ahead of the curve, this will make your property stand out from day one.

The other sellers will be playing catch up, while your conveyancer is banking your deposit money. When this is the new normal just remember where you heard it!



**BEFORE YOU BUY  
BEFORE YOU BUILD**

***Jim's Building Inspections provides industry leading building and house inspections. Using an industry leading iPad application, we deliver our reports in an easy to read format – free of fine print and jargon – within 24hrs***

## **WHY CHOOSE JIM'S?**

- 1. Reliability Guaranteed** – All Jim's Building Consultants are vetted, checked and we make sure they have full professional indemnity insurance so you don't have to.
- 2. No Fine Print** – most inspection reports have pages of limitations, exclusions, qualifications and conditions. We have just a few which are easy to understand.
- 3. No Jargon** – you don't need to be a builder to understand our reports, we use diagrams, photos and every day words to explain what is wrong and what you will have to do to fix it.
- 4. Timely Reports** – we have an industry leading building inspection application. It means we can complete your report in a timely manner and email it to you with no fuss.

Property purchasers and investors can get immediate information, critical to property negotiations. Agents and vendors save time and the hassle of multiple inspections.

## **REPORTS IN 24 HOURS**

### **Services we offer include:**

- **BUILDING INSPECTIONS**
- **BUILDING & PEST INSPECTIONS**
- **ASBESTOS INSPECTIONS & TESTING**
- **RENTAL SAFETY INSPECTIONS**
- **NEW CONSTRUCTION INSPECTIONS**
- **DILAPIDATION REPORTS**
- **PROPERTY INSPECTION REPORTS AND MORE!**

For more information visit our website:

**[www.jimsbuildinginspections.com.au](http://www.jimsbuildinginspections.com.au)**

**[www.jimsbuildinginspections.com.au](http://www.jimsbuildinginspections.com.au)**

**CALL 131 546**

Advertisement

# ECOMMERCE REPORTING



## 1. OPEN FOR INSPECTION

Prospective buyer attends the OFI and desires additional information about the condition of the property to ensure that it is worth the asking price.



## 2. WE MAY HAVE ALREADY INSPECTED THE PROPERTY YOU ARE INTERESTED IN. IF NOT WE CAN ARRANGE AN INSPECTION

Jim's Building Inspections has a large data base of fully insured reports available online for sale. If you cannot locate a report of the property you are after, we will arrange for a fully qualified Jim's Building Consultant to conduct an inspection of the property.



## 4. BID WITH CONFIDENCE

A Building Inspection removes fears and doubts, so that prospective buyers can bid with confidence

## 3. BUY THE REPORT ONLINE

Prospective buyers can purchase the report online and with ease at a discounted price.

Our reports are free of jargon and contain easy to read diagrams and photographs.

The building consultant is able to talk the buyer through the report and ensure that they understand it fully.



**HAPPY VENDOR!  
HAPPY AGENT!  
HAPPY BUYER!**



# **HOME PREP: DRESSING YOUR HOUSE FOR SUCCESS**

PREPARING YOUR PROPERTY FOR SALE OR RENT (ALSO KNOWN AS HOME STAGING) IS ABOUT DOING WHATEVER YOU CAN REASONABLY DO TO PRESENT YOUR PROPERTY IN ITS BEST POSSIBLE LIGHT. EVEN THE CHEAPEST HOMES WILL BENEFIT FROM A SUITABLY PLANNED PRESENTATION. ISN'T IT LOGICAL TO PUT IN SOME EFFORT WHEN SELLING A PROPERTY WORTH HALF A MILLION DOLLARS? HERE ARE SOME THINGS YOU CAN DO TO IMPROVE THE APPEARANCE OF YOUR PROPERTY AND TO HELP ACHIEVE A HIGHER PRICE.

# Deep Clean, Tidy, and Minor Repairs

Although you can do all deep cleaning yourself, you may also wish to engage a professional cleaner to do so. If you choose to do this, try to find a cleaner who specialises in or has experience with end of lease cleaning for rental properties.



## Whole of house

- Vacuum entire house
- Mop and/or scrub all uncarpeted floors
- Wash windows and fly-screens
- Remove cobwebs throughout
- Remove and wash all light fittings, replacing any broken globes
- Remove dust, dirt and marks from windows and blinds
- Wipe down walls, fans, smoke alarms and air conditioning units
- Remove any old bits of tape, blue tack, or thumb tacks on walls
- Wipe down all window sills, skirting boards, and door/window tracks
- Polish mirrors until they are mark and streak free



## Kitchen and Bathroom

- Clean and disinfect all surfaces of shower, laundry, kitchen, and toilet
- Scrub and remove any mould with a mould cleaner
- Wipe down inside and outside of all cupboards
- Deep clean oven with oven cleaner
- If you have a dishwasher, buy and run a cleaning rinse through it - make it shine!
- Wash stove top with a non-scratch sponge removing any baked on food
- Use mould cleaner or bleach to brighten drains and grout



## External Areas and Gardens

- Assess your property from the street and from your yard, as well as inside.
- Remove all rubbish and tidy any toys in a family home
- Mow and edge the lawn and consider doing your neighbours too! Your neighbouring homes affect your value
- Remove any weeds and cut back overgrown plants and trees
- Clean those marks off the driveway
- Oil the noisy gate in your yard as well as the squeaking door hinges inside
- Remove any cobwebs in corners and clean out light fixtures
- Sweep out garages/carports, patios, and pathways

## Basic Home Staging

- De-clutter and store all knick-knacks, appliances, and furniture that's unappealing, controversial or is just taking up too much space. An overcrowded room can appear much smaller, darker, and less appealing to buyers!
- Have your carpets cleaned to show them off and to reduce any pet or household odours
- Apply a fresh coat of paint - use a quality, low odour paint so that the house smells like a new one. Lighten homes that are dim and reduce glare in homes with too much sunlight.

- Replace tap fittings to upsell your bathroom or ensuite. Also consider re-grouting tiled areas.
- Enhance or tone down natural light as needed. Windows and blinds might be better removed to increase light and expose a great view.
- Install a well-placed skylight, if you have a very dimly lit room which might lower a buyer's mood and opinion of the property.
- Install a split system air-conditioner to enhance value and solve the problem of a bedroom being west facing. If that is too expensive, an alternative would be to install some attractive ceiling fans instead.



· Consider installing awnings to cut down on afternoon sun

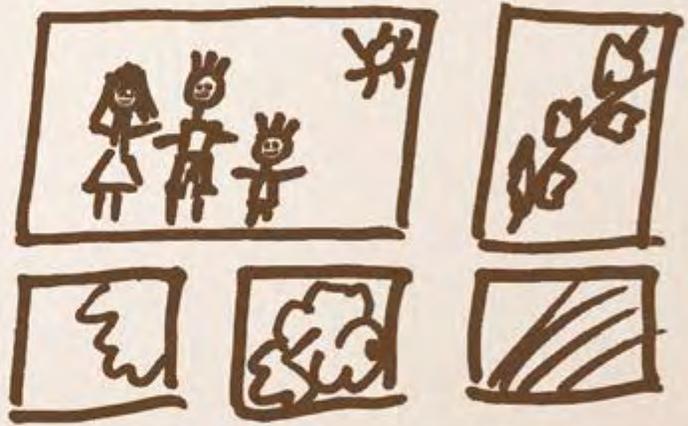
· Pay close attention to the various entry and exit points of your property. First impressions really count and if possible you want that instant “wow” factor, either when someone pulls up in front of your home or when they first enter it. You might consider having a stunning painting, flowers, or a decorative coat hanger in your entry. Even your choice of an attractive, high quality doormat can set the right tone for everything that follows.

· Consider replacing curtains/blinds if they have become dated or tattered.

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*“First impressions really count and if possible you want that instant wow factor, either when someone pulls up in front of your home or when they first enter it”*

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## Radical Home Staging Ideas

If it's warranted to do so due to the price of your home, then you can get radical in your efforts for big results. Whatever room you are evaluating, try to consider it in terms of light, heat, smell, sound, space and colour.

See your home once again with a fresh set of eyes and try to visualise what a complete newcomer will make of your house.

## Radical Whole House Ideas



- Rent furniture – a better or more appropriate style, colour, or smaller size to make a room appear larger, particularly in bedrooms and lounges.
- Knock out an internal wall
- Render a dated internal brick feature wall
- Replace a worn and tired looking garage door.
- Old carpet can smell, emphasising the age of a property. Replacing carpets, polishing floorboards or even tiling the floor are possible options.

## Radical Bathroom and Kitchen Ideas

- Update or enhance bathrooms and kitchens. These are key areas to impress buyers and offer the best bang for your buck.
- Re-tile walls and floors.
- Replace cupboard handles.
- Installing brighter lighting can work wonders in a kitchen.
- Replace external doors with windowed doors, to let in more light.



## Radical External ideas



- External rendering of an old brick veneer home can be quite inexpensive relative to the change in appearance that is gained.
- Replacing old windows can also have an incredible effect on a dated property.
- A shiny and freshly painted tile roof with its mortar repointed, can do wonders for an older home.

# HOME STAGING

## TIPS FOR SUCCESS



## Ask For Outside Opinions



Sometimes you can be too close to the action and you may overlook some things that may be obvious to others.

Having a fresh set of eyes taking a critical look over your property is worthwhile. Consider asking friends or family members to give you their thoughts on how your property does or doesn't appeal to them. Explain to them that you are inviting comments from them about things which you can readily alter and improve, not the things you can't affect such as neighbourhood noise, graffiti, parking and so on.

## Consider Expert Help



Like so many things, home staging represents a good, better, or best approach.

As a private seller, you stand to save massive amounts of commission and some of those savings could go towards paying a professional staging business to both assess your property and also point you towards the most cost effective solutions.

Because these companies specialise, they may well have contacts for products and services that you may not come across as easily yourself.

## Target Your Efforts



The main principle of home staging is to know your property's strengths and weaknesses and to think about those in terms of who is the person that will be your most likely buyer.

Your objective is to spend the least amount of money to create the desired effect in either accentuating the positive side of your home, or else removing or reducing the impact of the negative attributes of your property.

## Stand Out



Most people won't attend to the finer points of property presentation so if you do you will gain a competitive advantage over the less prepared property sellers, regardless of whether they are private sales or agent sales.

Remember; houses sell houses, so make sure your property is putting its best foot forward!

## Take Your Time



If the cost of staging is recouped in the sale (and perhaps much more) then your time has been well spent. But even if you lose a few thousand dollars by improving the property and because of that you get a successful or faster sale, then you still achieve a worthwhile outcome.



# PHOTOGRAPHY

IF YOU HAVE ROOM IN YOUR MARKETING BUDGET, WE STRONGLY RECOMMEND HAVING PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY DONE. THE REASON FOR THIS IS SIMPLE: LOW QUALITY, UNFLATTERING IMAGES TURN BUYERS OFF.

WITH MOST BUYERS BROWSING ONLINE NOW, YOU MAY LOSE THE BUYER BEFORE THEY EVEN CLICK IN TO VIEW YOUR WHOLE LISTING, LET ALONE BEFORE THEY EVEN HAVE A CHANCE TO MAKE AN ENQUIRY ABOUT YOUR PROPERTY.

# Professional Photography or DIY?

## Professional Photographers...

- Have high quality equipment and software
- Have the skills and experience to capture your property at its best during the shoot
- Can professionally retouch images before supplying them to you in order to correct any issues with lighting, contrast, or brightness
- Can ensure images are cropped and resized professionally and to RealEstate.com.au's requirements
- Can generally complete your shoot and provide images in under 48 hours, which is often quicker than it would be for you to skill up and complete the shoot yourself

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*“According to RealEstate.com.au, buyers are 60% more likely to view homes online when they have been photographed professionally”*

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Most of the product and service providers that agents use can also be approached by private sellers. Some of them may charge a higher price to you as a one-off job and a few may even be disinclined to assist you given that agents are their bread and butter.

Shop around for a good deal and insist on the same price the agents get, while factoring in that yours is a one-off job. The suppliers have to make a living and, as a private seller, you don't have the economies of scale that some large agents possess when dealing with various trades.

Whilst we do strongly recommend booking professional photography, if this isn't an option for you or you'd rather do-it-yourself, that's ok too, just be sure to follow these tips!

continued on **page 44**



# PHOTOGRAPHY

## Taking Your Own Photos

**F**irstly, you'll need to do some preparation for your photoshoot. Make sure the property is well lit with natural light and/or electric light. A good time of day to maximise natural light is around noon. Next, make sure to remove bits and pieces lying around that won't increase the appeal of the room. Think of things like garbage, clothes, dishes, mail and toys. All of these can really bring down an otherwise great shot.

If you want to go a step further, you might even consider staging your home with a few added props such as wine glasses on the table to encourage buyers to imagine their life in the house, or maybe adding new cushions to revitalise a tired room.

Where possible, you should try to maximise the impression of space. You can do this by removing all the clutter and furniture from the room before you photograph it, standing as far back as possible when you take the photo, and shooting towards the corner of a room.

You should also experiment with different angles. As a general rule of thumb, rooms will photograph best when you have the camera at around shoulder height.

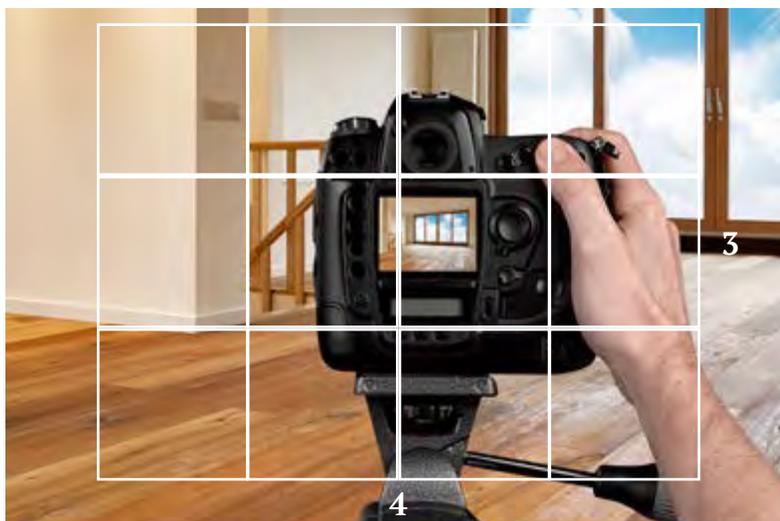
Watch out for simple mistakes such as including yourself in the photo by way of a mirror, taking photos without holding the camera straight, or taking photos with a camera or phone held vertically instead of horizontally as each of these mistakes are going to make your photos look amateurish. Also, vertical images may display very badly on many websites like realestate.com.au

Include all the basics but none of the unnecessary stuff. Buyers will generally expect to be able to see an outside shot, as well as photos of the kitchen, lounge room, bedroom and bathroom. If one of these shots are missing, they may feel you're trying to hide something. That said, don't overload the buyer with photos. One photo of each space is enough, however, that does not mean you shouldn't take a ton of photos. We don't live in the age of film anymore and you are better off taking too many photos and selecting the

best ones than finding out later that the only photo you took of the living room was blurry.

Carefully review the photos you decide to use and make sure they're not at all blurry or crooked. It can also be a good idea to take these finished photos and make slight adjustments to brightness or contrast to increase their appeal if you know what you are doing.

*If you decide to crop a photo, make sure that you keep it to a ratio of 4:3, as different aspect ratios will not display well on realestate.com.au.*



## **In What Order Should You Show Photos?**

Most people use an image order that walks people from the property entry and systematically through the house as though physically walking through the front door. Typically that means a shot of the front façade, the entry, lounge room, kitchen, bedrooms and bathrooms and then out to a verandah, balcony, pool or backyard.

## **How Many Photos Should You Show?**

There is no perfect number of photos to show, so just use what works best for your property and keep the following points in mind.

### **MANY PHOTOS**

- Buyer is fully informed from the start about your property's style and amenities
- Won't waste your time with questions that are evident from the photos
- Won't waste your time with inspections if your property does not meet their criteria

### **FEWER PHOTOS/TEXT**

- Leave the curiosity factor in play to encourage a potential buyer's phone call
- Buyers may fall in love with your property upon inspection, when photos may have interfered by not gaining their interest or even turning them off the property too soon.

# SIGNBOARDS



## YOUR SILENT SALESMAN

WHAT OF SIGNBOARDS?  
SHOULD YOU HAVE ONE AT ALL?

DOLLAR FOR DOLLAR AS A RETURN ON INVESTMENT  
THERE IS NOTHING OUT THERE THAT BEATS A SIGN.  
NOT HAVING ONE HARMS YOUR CHANCE OF SELLING.

**A** signboard is a silent salesperson working for you day and night. Selling without a sign isn't classy - it's ill advised.

## Gain Extra Exposure

Consider this scenario – your buyer has been searching on realestate.com.au in the general area but not under your specific suburb and they don't find your home. Luckily, you have a For Sale sign and one of the buyer's friends sees it on their way to work and lets them know. Thanks to the sign, neither you nor the buyer have missed out. Having a sign up means more people will know your property is for sale, and this increases the chances of it being sold successfully.

## Help Buyers Find You

Many buyers do a drive by before booking an inspection and you don't want them struggling to find your property, or thinking it has gone off the market. Signs also make it easy for buyers to contact you as they can take down your number and call you straight away.

## Extremely Cost Effective

Most professional signs will last until your property is sold. Given that there are no ongoing costs it's hard to understand why anyone would choose not to use them.

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*“Given that there are no ongoing costs it's hard to understand why anyone would choose not to use them”*

---

## Show You're Serious and Professional

Anyone can post a Gumtree listing or a classified ad, and buyers occasionally will still have qualms about private sales. Having a professional sign erected does confirm to the buyer that the property is legitimately for sale, and that professional services have been engaged to market it.



# DESCRIBING

## YOUR PROPERTY

IF YOU WANT BUYERS TO SUBMIT AN ENQUIRY ON YOUR PROPERTY, THEN YOU NEED A DESCRIPTION THAT REALLY SELLS. EVEN IF YOU'VE NEVER WRITTEN A DESCRIPTION BEFORE, YOU CAN NAIL IT BY FOLLOWING THESE TIPS.



**S**tart by asking yourself some key questions about your property. Why did you buy it? What do you love about it? What are its strongest features? What sets it apart? And what type of buyer would your property suit best? Note your answers down in a bullet point list.

When you're ready to write, start with your headline. This needs to jump out at people and make them want to read more.

Most importantly, your headline should include whatever is the strongest selling feature for your property.

The rest of the description should be made up of a few paragraphs of text, as well as a short list of bullet points for buyers that prefer to skim. Make sure that you don't start off with any boring or repeated information. Instead, describe your property's key features right at the beginning.

When writing, be sure to avoid clichés, jargon, uncommon abbreviations, overly wordy sentences, and the use of all-capital letters – these are all huge no-no's. Additionally, make sure you use paragraphs – nobody likes to read an unbroken wall of text!

Finally, keep in mind that you can't use any formatting like bolding or italics on websites such as realestate.com.au as they will simply strip out all formatting.

You want to try to paint a picture for the buyer and emotionally engage them. What are the best things about living here? Is there a particularly lovely place to enjoy a morning coffee? Tell them about it! Be sure to make use of adjectives as you do this. For example, words like lovely, pristine, gorgeous, spacious, and stunning.

Wrap up your description with 1-2 lines reiterating your biggest selling feature and closing on a strong call to action.



For example: *A family home in such an amazing location won't last long so send an enquiry now to book a private inspection!*

When you've finished writing, read your entire description aloud to make sure it sounds ok and also check it thoroughly for errors as these are very off-putting to buyers. Also, make sure that the agent-assist company that you engage reviews your description since a second set of eyes can pick up anything that you've missed.

If you stick to these guidelines you should have an outstanding description in no time!

## Display Your Street Address!

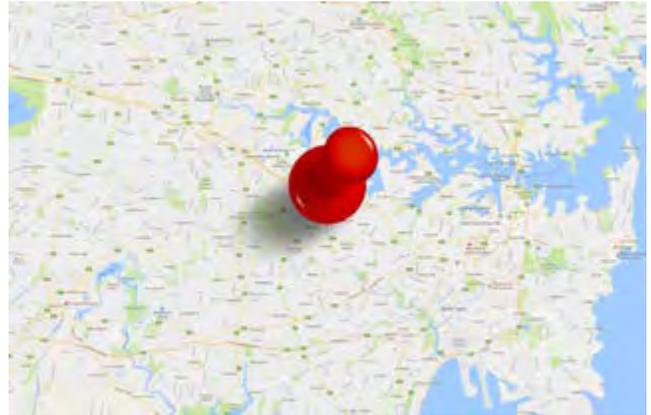
If you're wondering whether or not to display your street address – the short answer is: YES you should!

If you don't display the street address you're sending buyers a message straight away that you have something to hide. They may decide not to enquire, figuring that your property is probably located in a bad area.

Hiding the street address also makes it harder for buyers to find and view your property, which is the opposite of your goal.

Another downside of hiding the street address is that the automatically generated map on your listing will show an entire suburb view, and the centre point of that view may well be in a much less desirable location than your home (such as on a main road).

There is a school of thought that if you hide your address you'll experience more enquiries as buyers will want to know where your property is. The idea is that you can then use this opportunity to pique the buyer's interest and convert them into a solid lead. This practice is suited to a real estate agency because they have numerous listings that may interest the buyer but it's not much help to you as a private seller.



The reason for this is that even if you do get more enquiries, they're useless to you if the buyer is really not interested in your street. More importantly, hiding the street address irritates buyers and really doesn't help to get the process started off on the right foot.

A concern a lot of people have about displaying their address, is that they'll get people just showing up and expecting to be able to inspect the property on the spot. In reality this is extremely rare, particularly if you market your property in such a way that it is not immediately evident that it is a private sale.

The only time you shouldn't be displaying the address of your property is if you have some kind of special circumstances involving your personal safety as this needs to be paramount.



# PAPERWORK

MANY NEW SELLERS ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE CONTRACT PROCESS AND LACK UNDERSTANDING OF THE PAPERWORK AND STEPS INVOLVED.

**T**he great news is that your legal representative will handle all this for you.

Know the basics and leave the details of the process to the professional whose service you will pay for.

We recommend choosing a licensed solicitor, conveyancer, or settlement agent (depending on your state) before you list your property for sale so that they can have the paperwork drawn up ahead of time.

In fact, in some states (such as NSW) this is a legal requirement.

Even if this isn't a legal requirement in your state, it's important not to delay as your solicitor will need to do various searches and acquisitions of documents that will be included in your contract. Some of these can take a week or more to arrange.

If you leave these tasks until you have a buyer, then you will delay the sale and risk losing them entirely.



## REALESTATE.COM.AU IS THE MOST POPULAR WEBSITE FOR HOME LISTINGS SO YOU NEED TO KNOW AS MUCH ABOUT THIS WEBSITE AS YOU CAN.

**R**ealestate.com.au is very unique in the world of property portals. It is easily the most recognisable and coveted real estate website in Australia. Domain tries to create a buzz that they are catching the leading site however we have seen nothing much change in the pecking order over the

past decade. Realestate.com.au is virtually synonymous with real estate in Australia and its dominance is unmatched by any other portal in any other country to our knowledge.

Many agents express great dissatisfaction with the site and its pricing and yet they are powerless to do anything as they realize fully

that without realestate.com.au not only would they get far fewer enquiries but winning a listing would be almost impossible.

As a private seller you need to be on realestate.com.au, without question. You know it, we know it and realestate.com.au certainly know it. This means that they can charge extraordi-

nary amounts of money for their upgrade products such as feature, highlight and premiere listings.

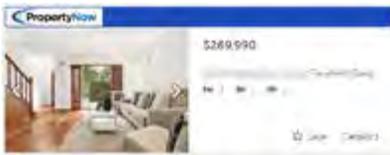
Love or hate them, the simple fact is that realestate.com.au is indispensable to sellers.

## Upgrades and Sort Order

Many owners find themselves confused about the different types of realestate.com.au listings that are available, and how realestate.com.au sorts its search results for buyers. By default, when a buyer searches for properties, realestate.com.au displays the results sorted by “Most Relevant”.

What this actually means is that the results are being sorted by which listings have purchased which upgrades, and secondarily by the date the listing was upgraded.

There are three upgrades available:



**Feature** ads are the most accessible upgrade in terms of affordability. Feature ads are always displayed above standard ads in the results, but after any other upgrades. With a featured ad, the photo displayed in the search results is only slightly larger and the listing is a little more prominent than a standard ad. Yet according to realestate.com.au, these ads get twice the views of standard ads.



**Highlight** ads appear towards the top of the list, after any Premiere ads. The size of a highlight ad is double the size of standard ads. According to realestate.com.au this creates up to 7 times more views.



**Premiere** ads are displayed at the very top of the list. Premiere properties also have a very large ad size and photo on the search results page encouraging buyers to take note. According to Realestate.com.au, Premiere properties offer up to 21 times more views than standard ads.

continued on **page 53**

*TIP: When thinking about where your property will be displayed in the list on realestate.com.au keep in mind that buyers may change the default sorting to instead sort by price or latest listing. A normal buyer will also typically add in some filters (such as property type, price range, or number of bedrooms), meaning that you're likely competing with less properties than it appears when you search the whole suburb with no filters.*

## The Acceptable Use Policy

The rules for agent-assisted sellers are the same rules that all real estate agencies are supposed to follow. Despite this, many traditional agents will often get away with breaking some of these rules as there are just far too many for realestate.com.au to police (according to staff that work for realestate.com.au). Although it's unfair, we recommend you play by their rules, as your listing may come under extra scrutiny by disgruntled agents in your area who aren't happy to be missing out on your commission! Some of realestate.com.au's rules make good sense to us and some less so, but it's their way or the highway – so take heed of the following rules!



### General Rules

- You can't list your property under a false street or suburb name in the hope of getting more viewers. You must list the address shown on your rates notice, contract or title certificate
- You cannot place your contact details directly inside your description or the heading
- You cannot remove a listing and then immediately recreate a new listing (for the same property) so that it appears to be new

*TIP: This list is accurate at the time of publishing. Please check with your agent-assist provider for the most up-to-date information. Only the conditions likely to be relevant to you as an owner are listed here.*

- You cannot use any fields for something other than the intended purpose, e.g. a website link in your description, instead of in the 'external link' area
- You generally cannot have more than one listing for the same property



- You cannot put a listing under the wrong property type (e.g. commercial property under the residential section)
- You cannot include information which misleads or deceives buyers
- You cannot reference a third party other than the subscribing real estate agent
- You can't use any formatting such as bolding, underlining, or italicising in your

ad as realestate.com.au wants to keep the buyer's experience standardised across all listings

- You cannot create a generic listing that isn't in relation to a specific lot number or address

**TIP: BE HONEST.** *Beyond these conditions, it should go without saying that you must only ever portray your property accurately and truthfully. You should also, where possible, avoid any statement that can't be backed up, such as regarding a potential council zoning approval. If you say something and you can't back it up with facts, then not only may your listing disappear, but you may have the Fair Trading authorities to deal with as well.*

- You cannot put up a listing for something which doesn't have a residential property title (e.g. caravans aren't allowed nor are transportable homes, in general)
- You cannot use your listing for anything illegal, malicious, or improper
- You cannot display a price that doesn't represent a price that you would actually accept

continued on **page 56**

## Things You *Can* Do



- Access just about every potential buyer for your property anywhere in Australia
- Be seen by buyers for far less money than any kind of equivalent listing in a newspaper
- Display up to 36 photos of your property
- Display floorplans, aerial views, room sizes, land sizes, and videos of your property
- You can get property enquiry reports and heck, you can even get completely unsolicited offers from random real estate agents to help you to sell your property

## Rules About Photos

- Your images should be in JPG format with a ratio of 4:3 (4 pixels wide for every 3 in height)
- You generally cannot add text or banners onto your photos (with some minor exceptions)
- You cannot edit in multi-coloured borders around your photos
- You cannot upload a photo that is a collage of multiple photos
- You cannot place large or solid watermarks onto your photos
- You cannot use a lifestyle image or photo of a nearby area as the first image in your listing
- You cannot upload a generic image, cartoon image, coming soon image or similar
- You cannot use photos that are smaller than 800 by 600 pixels or larger than 5MB in size



### **The Bottom Line – Play By the Rules**

There isn't an equivalent site in Australia to grant such access to potential buyers. At some point in the future there may be viable alternatives to listing on Realestate.com.au but at present and for the foreseeable future, there just isn't anything else as valuable.

Given this fact, it is prudent to play by realestate.com.au's rules and it's pointless and potentially costly to try to find ways around them. You will get caught and your listing will get canned. It's their website so you must use it carefully and respectfully. Using an agent-assist type of company, with proper quality assurance protocols, means you won't need to worry about compliance since they should be continually checking your listing and all your updates.

On the other hand, should you choose the wrong company, the chances of your listing being suspended will be increased.

AGENT-ASSISTED  
OR AGENT  
DE-LISTED?

# CHOOSING THE RIGHT COMPANY

AVOIDING DAN-  
GEROUS, SECOND-  
RATE SUPPLIERS!

Most people realise the absolute importance of listing on Realestate.com.au. However, because private sellers are not permitted to list their property on Realestate.com.au what remains is to find the best way to access this mission critical website. The only way to gain access is to work with a licensed real estate agent that subscribes to Realestate.com.au.

There is nothing to say you have to pay an agent a commission for the privilege though– those days are long gone! You are now able to list your property on Realestate.com.au through an agent, via an agent-assist model.

There are many companies who can now provide such a service, but a simple listing service is just *not good enough*. There are a great many pitfalls that await should you select the wrong provider – from your listing being suspended to potential issues with Fair Trading authorities and many more. This is why it's so important to choose a quality provider.

The following are some things to look out for.

## Quality Assurance

The real estate industry is fairly heavily regulated, and each property website also has its own set of rules that all listings must abide by.

Agents have been ignoring some of Realestate.com.au's less strict rules in quite large numbers but you, as an agent-assisted private seller, can't afford to do this, because even minor breaches will likely be reported by spiteful mainstream agents.

If a company allows you to make unlimited changes and to do so at any time of the day or night, then it's crucial that the company watches and regulates every single change that is being made in order to ensure compliance with the site rules.

Anything less than a continuous observation of your listing updates will inevitably result in something being missed. Even if you don't break any rules on your own listing, other owners will do so unwittingly or deliberately on theirs. If the rules are broken enough times then you might find your provider's real estate license or Realestate.com.au account in hot water. This could result in your listing disappearing from property websites altogether and leaving you holding the can.

But simply keeping an eye on listing changes is not enough. A provider wor-

thy of your trust needs to be constantly abreast of changes to Realestate.com.au's rules and guidelines and needs to be actively engaged with Realestate.com.au's Quality Assurance team. Why? Because the website guidelines can sometimes be like moving goal posts, so much so that from time to time Realestate.com.au staff haven't been entirely sure what constitutes a breach of its rules.



### Case Study: The importance of your provider having proper protocols

To illustrate how the poor protocols of a private sale company can bring you unstuck, consider this chain of events. A scammer decides he wants to either steal personal information for identity theft or that he wants to illicit money from unsuspecting buyers or renters.

The scammer uses a credit card (stolen, of course) to sign up to a private sale com-

continued on **page 60**

pany that you have used for your property, and in this case, he lists a completely random property for rent on one of the private sale websites which feed into the Reales-



tate.com.au listings.

The private sale company lists the property and then applications start to come in for the property. The scammer can then use all the information that he receives from prospective tenants to engage in identity theft. On top of that, the scammer will seek to have many of these unsuspecting tenants put up thousands of dollars upfront to secure the rental property. The scammer makes the property super attractive for desperate tenants. For example, he picks a property in Sydney that would normally rent for \$1200 a week and lists it at just \$500 a week. The company he's using, doesn't have the protocols to detect the scam and bam! .... the company has its account terminated by Realestate.com.au.

Your listing goes down with the sinking ship of this private sale company and no refund is offered to you. The company may

have offered a "money back guarantee" but, of course, they aren't about to refund a thousand clients something like half a million dollars, so they cite their Terms of Service as the reason they won't refund you. We have seen this happen.

### **Sound a little far-fetched? It isn't!**

Agent-assist provider, PropertyNow was approached by one such scammer during 2014 and they caught him in the act of trying to steal from unsuspecting tenants. They smelled a rat immediately through several protocols that are built into their system. These include the requirement of sellers and landlords to identify that they are the owners of a particular property or have the legal right to sell the property.

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*"An extremely on the ball PropertyNow staff member did some extra checking, which revealed that the property the scammer was seeking to lease had been advertised for \$1200 a week previously and was now to be advertised at half that!"*

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In this case, an extremely on the ball PropertyNow staff member did some extra checking, which revealed that the property the scammer was seeking to lease had been advertised for \$1200 a week previously and

was now to be advertised at half that! The scammer was advertising it for half the proper amount so that tenants would flock to the fake listing.

A few routine checks performed by staff, along with the requirement for the listing party to show proof of ownership, was enough to prevent this guy from fleecing tens of thousands of dollars from innocent people.

This same scammer then tried his luck with some other private sale companies the very next day, who had no adequate protocols in place. Meanwhile PropertyNow reported him to the police and posted the details of the scam on the Scamwatch website. They also reported it to Realestate.com.au who said that it “wasn’t their problem”. PropertyNow didn’t accept that answer from Realestate.com.au and eventually encouraged them more strongly to contact the agent-assist companies who had already fallen for the scam and which had instantly listed the rental property. Half an hour later these listings were removed by all 3 of the Victorian private sale companies.

Given the lack of protocols of some private sale companies, it’s likely that this same thing has played out again and again since then. At some point, some company

will run out of luck and we’ll be watching the fallout on A Current Affair or Today Tonight. Then, of course, the agents will have what they consider to be the perfect excuse to again seek to divest you of your right to sell and lease privately on Realestate.com.au.



This will happen despite the same situation having already occurred via mainstream agents, not to mention the stealing of Trust Monies and the illegal Auction processes that are happening with mainstream real estate agents (in Victoria and NSW) as this article is written.

# CHOOSING THE RIGHT COMPANY

## Enquiry Handling

An absolutely critical point to consider is how your chosen service provider is going to attend to the enquiries generated by the real estate agent websites. Before signing up with any company to help you sell your home, you should investigate precisely how their enquiry systems operate!



It's a sad fact that, in the last few years, many new agent-assisted sale players have entered the market with a view to profiteering at the expense of providing a genuine, proper and reliable service. The vast majority of these companies have structured their businesses to be suspiciously low cost and do so at the expense of the enquiry and support systems that are essential.

## Phone Enquiries

The only appropriate way for your phone enquiries to be handled is for the buyer to receive your contact details immediately or for them to be connected to you directly. Unfortunately many companies who value profits before people simply direct your buyer to an answering machine that advises them to go back to Realestate.

com.au and email their enquiry instead. We feel that to be astonishingly bad service for either a seller or landlord and it's simply not worthy of your money – no matter how cheap.

## Online and Email

All buyers should be able to submit an enquiry via Realestate.com.au or any other website, and this should be directed to you immediately and automatically.

## Accessible 24/7

Any enquiry system must be available seven days a week and 24 hours a day for the utmost effectiveness. Anything less will only result in your buyer becoming frustrated and potentially moving on to another property as a result.

## Auto-Notifications and Responses

You can't afford to miss a single enquiry or have it delayed from reaching you. You should receive an instant notification and be able to access a permanent record of all enquiries for both phone and online enquiries. It's important that you push your provider for a clear answer on how phone enquiries are to be handled, as many companies try to make it seem like they have automated systems in place, when in fact their automated systems only apply to online or email enquiries. You should clearly ask about this and expect the response that you get from the company to be incomplete and guarded.

## Website Listings

It is crucial that your chosen provider is able to put your listing on Realestate.com.au, Domain.com.au, and others. Find a provider who not only subscribes to these websites but has done so for a long time. Make certain they have a large number of active and sold listings on Realestate.com.au.

## Timely Updates

The ability to easily and quickly amend your property listing at any time and without notice is an absolute necessity. A good many companies which facilitate listing on Realestate.com.au still process their client's changes manually. By this we mean that you are required to email any changes to the company and then you have to wait for them to attend to the work.

Apart from being very inefficient, it is also likely to introduce a significant time-lag between you making a change and this change being made on your listing on Realestate.com.au – any proper agent-assisted sale business should give you the ability to edit your ad in real time and to have that change propagate to all the various sites in a timely fashion (this process should only take minutes or hours, not days).

## 24/7 Real Estate Advice



It should also be a given that your chosen provider can offer support and advice about the marketing and the private sale process. They should also be competent and helpful in dealings with not only your prospects but also with the portals where you list.

continued on page 64

# CHOOSING THE RIGHT COMPANY

Sadly, we have noticed that most of the major companies make a pretence of being available for advice and support seven days a week when, in fact, their hours are actually 9 to 5, Monday to Friday.

It's a reality that most real estate is transacted on the weekends and it is precisely at these times that you are likely to need the most support.

## Proper Licensing/Insurance



Since the ability to list your property on real estate agent websites is restricted to licensed real estate agents, it obviously should imply that you are dealing with a real estate agent, via your agent-assisted sale company. In other words, it follows

that you should be able to speak with an experienced agent about selling and negotiating at any time. If you can't, then it's possible that the company is essentially renting someone else's real estate licence for the purpose of accessing the website portals. If Realestate.com.au finds a company that is listing properties for anyone except the owner, they will dismiss that account. You might want to avoid any such company.

We also recommend only using a company that not only has a real estate licence (one for every single state) but also carries Professional Indemnity Insurance. This is required by law, so if the company doesn't carry that insurance, it should set your alarm bells ringing.

If in doubt, please ask them for their licence and insurance details before listing through them. Then check the information given via Fair Trading.

## Customer Service

As we've already mentioned, it's very important that you are able to get qualified real estate advice from your provider whenever you need it.

Beyond this, your provider should offer stellar customer service.

You should avoid any providers that place limits on the assistance you can receive

(such as being limited to a certain amount of time, or certain contact methods).

A good provider will be able to help you via whatever medium you choose – (e.g. phone, email, live chat, or SMS). Finally, where possible, try and identify who is going to be providing most of the support? Is it by experienced staff members located in Australia?

Unfortunately, we're aware of some companies who direct phone calls to call centres who can do little more than take a message, or have live chats handled by cheaper offshore staff. You can generally tell by the quality of spoken English.

## Proven Track Record

There is only so much you can tell about a company from speaking to them directly. Before listing with any provider, be sure to check out their presence on independent review websites such as TrustPilot and ProductReview.

Whilst some companies are able to boast five star ratings across the board, other seemingly suitable providers have been plagued with one star ratings and terrible feedback that reveals the lack of quality in their service.

You may also be able to find video reviews, written testimonials, or might even be able to speak to a provider's current or former clients.

## Price

As they say, "you get what you pay for". Be very wary of anyone offering extremely cheap deals. Companies doing so are often operating just as a means to sell home loans rather than focusing on their clients selling a property.



At best it's simply not possible for them to afford to offer you quality systems or support you throughout your sale. At worst, they may be scammers, or they may be operating an agent-assisted service purely as a sideline business whilst selling your buyers' contact details as mortgage leads. One Victorian company has already admitted to us that this is their business model.

continued on **page 66**

# CHOOSING THE RIGHT COMPANY

## Easy to Use Website

When we say ‘easy to use website’ we’re not referring to the glossy front page of your provider’s website. No, we’re talking about what’s under the hood. In other words, the pages where you will be creating and editing your listing.



If your preferred company provides a quality account interface which allows you to edit your listing in real time, they should be comfortable with you testing this before you part with your money. Sadly, many companies have only invested in their initial image, leaving you with difficult and time-consuming forms to use when you want to update your listing when it’s live.

## Company Name

You may not have given much thought to it yet but the name of the provider you choose is also important. We recommend choosing a provider with a professional and generic name.

A name without an overt focus on your sale being a DIY one, removes a potential barrier that could stop a buyer from enquiring. Simply put, at this stage of the evolution of the industry, it’s better not to be using a company whose name is “private this”... or.... “sell my that”.

## Signboard Contact Details

Having a signboard is generally the second strongest thing you can do (after listing on Realestate.com.au and Domain.com.au) to enhance your chances of selling. Given that the sign is of crucial importance, it makes good sense to us that the owner’s own phone number is seen on the sign.

Bizarrely, many companies place their own phone number on their generic boards. Once again, like the enquiry systems of these companies, this is just an easy way to lower their costs as they do not have to personalise each board.

Given that the majority of such companies are not sufficiently contactable, it is not wise to have their contact number on your sign. After all, what is the point in having a person see the sign out the front of your property then requiring them to make an additional phone call to get your number? Surely it makes far more sense for your number to simply be on the sign in the first place.

## Researching Companies From Different Angles

You are unlikely to be told about any limitations or constraints that you will have if you contact the agent-assisted sales business as a would-be seller. When you ring a company and ask them to detail their service they are not going to point out the shortcomings in their enquiry system or in their Quality Assurance processes.

On the other hand, if you make an enquiry as though you were a potential buyer, it is very difficult for these companies to hide how their systems work. Very few people take this step, but it is so worthwhile. We suggest you test the systems of all providers you're considering, both before and after listing, so that you have the utmost confidence that you will receive all the buyer enquiries that are made on your property.

## Takeaway Points

Let's do a quick recap of the key things to be aware of and to consider when choosing an Agent-Assisted Sale company to help you.

They must have:

- Stringent quality assurance mechanisms
- A bullet-proof enquiry system
- Listings on Realestate.com.au, domain.com.au and others
- The ability for you to easily edit your listing in real time
- Genuine advice and support, seven days
- Full licensing/Professional Indemnity Insurance
- A proven track record
- A reasonable price for what they provide

# THE MARKETING PROCESS

## Dealing with Buyers

**D**on't Overthink It You don't need to be a salesman, you just need to be polite and honest.

As much as agents like to talk up their sales skills, more often than not a house will sell itself and you just need to get out of the way to let that process happen naturally.

**Be Prepared** If you're nervous about dealing with buyers, the best thing you could do is a little bit of research ahead of time so you know things like your block size, distance to transport, council approvals and so on.

You can even make up a binder with all the important informa-

tion so that you can easily refer to it when a buyer asks you questions.

Often feeling prepared is enough to allay any nerves but if you're still not feeling too confident why not also try a few practice run phone calls or inspections with friends or family. Houses sell houses, slick sales pitches don't.



**Keep Your Ears Open** When talking with a buyer, listen to their needs and situation.

Do they love entertaining? Do they have small children? Do they have a need to move quickly?

You can then subtly draw attention to the biggest features that your property offers them. For example, you could draw attention to your spacious back deck with outdoor ceiling fans that is great for entertaining friends during summer, or

perhaps the fact that there is a park and playground that is just a two-minute walk away.

gotiating position. For example, if you are anxious to sell or are in a difficult situation such a divorce or foreclosure, you should avoid stating this to buyers. If a buyer is made aware of information like this they could use the information against you during negotiations by placing a lower offer because of your need to sell quickly.

**Be Contactable** It's also a great idea to consider using a temporary, standalone



perhaps the fact that there is a park and playground that is just a two-minute walk away.

When drawing attention to what is great about your home be sure to avoid going over the top. If you overpraise it then it can end up sounding bogus and buyers could begin to doubt any statements you make about the property.

**Don't Over Share** Avoid sharing personal information that could weaken your ne-

mobile number for the duration of the sale. That way if that number rings, it becomes your Hotline. You know categorically that the call is about your property. You will be more likely to pick up and that's useful because you must fully commit to being readily contactable for the duration of your sale. All things being equal (pricing and marketing) the more you are contactable and helpful to buyers, then the quicker you will be putting up the SOLD sticker!

continued on **page 70**

# THE MARKETING PROCESS

## **Buyer is negative about your property?**

- Remain calm and detached
- Don't take it personally
- Let go of the outcome and focus only on the process
- Realise buyers often raise criticisms and objections before making an offer
- Learn from buyers' feedback for the next potential buyer
- Expect success and remain positive
- Ask for help! Your provider should be happy to assist you

## **Dealing with Agents**

Beware of the circling sharks who want your listing. The mental discipline of a private seller is important, especially given that agents are masters at undermining the confidence of sellers so as to convince them to list with their agency. Real estate agents are specifically trained

in ways to do this and it's no coincidence when an agent phones you about your listing and says things like "we have people ready to buy right now" or "we just sold the property up the road so you should list with us".

Real estate agents even rehearse specific scripts that are designed to break down a private seller's resistance and destroy their confidence in their own ability to sell privately.

Protect yourself by watching some of the dodgy tactics that agents use on YouTube, so that you know what to expect. A quick search on YouTube will quickly bring up dozens of videos of agents speaking to FSBO's (For Sale By Owners) in a sneaky and systematic way designed to get the listing by convincing the seller that they need an agent. In Australia, agents are told to scour the papers for private seller ads, contact them, undermine their confidence and sign them up to an exclusive agency with vendor paid advertising.

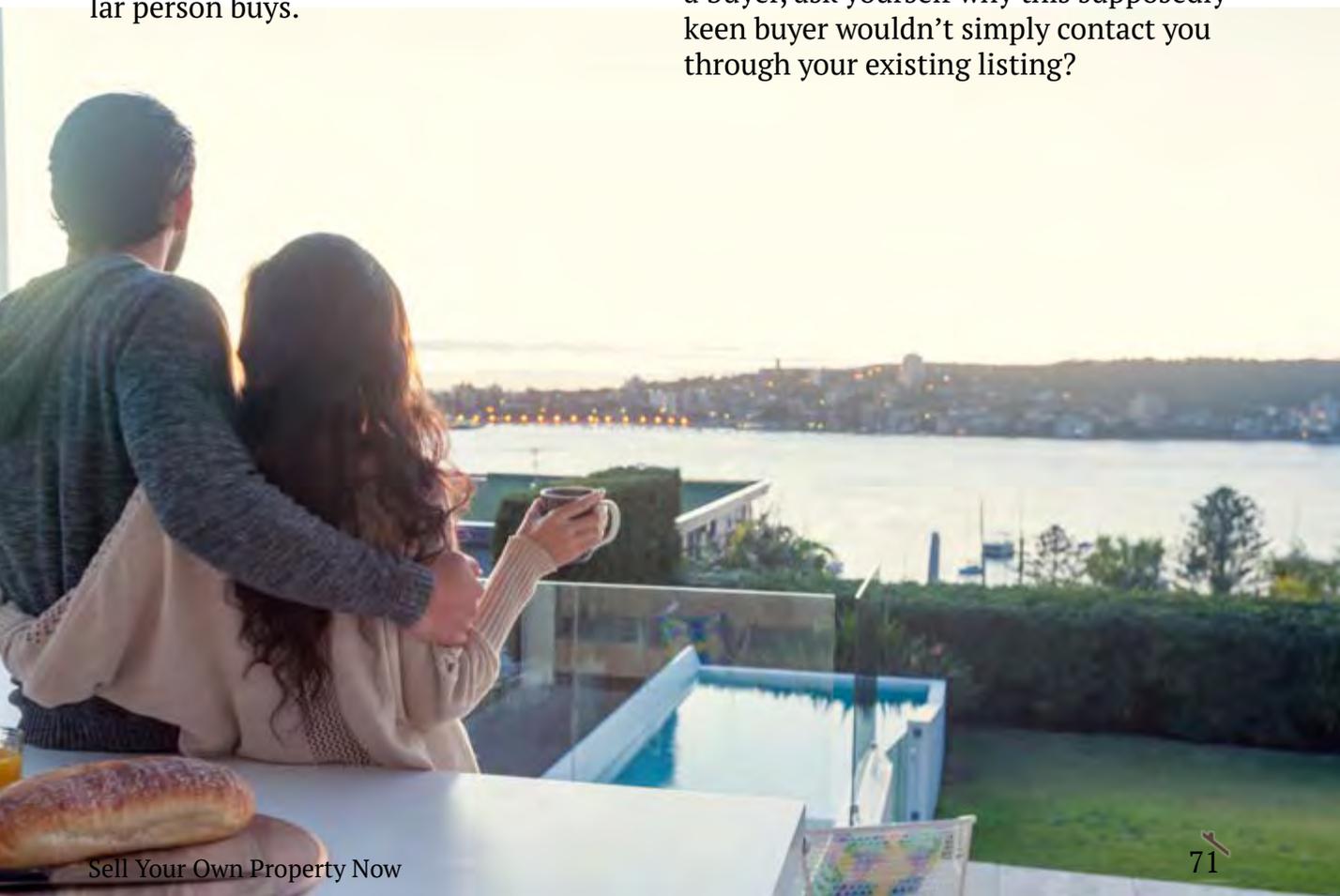
This is common and is actually considered as part of "agent training".



If an agent insists that they have a buyer for your listing, consider granting them a 1 day open or sole agency agreement where you specifically retain the right to sell privately. This would allow them to show that one buyer through whilst ensuring they only receive a commission if this particular person buys.

Make sure you also negotiate the commission to reflect the fact that the agent will not be incurring the usual costs and has not had to market your property at all.

Think critically and be ready to walk away. If an agent contacts you promising a buyer, ask yourself why this supposedly keen buyer wouldn't simply contact you through your existing listing?





**FOR SALE**

## **Going on the Market: Ways to Spread the Word**

### **Realestate.com.au - The One Place Buyers Must See Your Property!**

A buyer for your property can be found in numerous ways but a listing on Realestate.com.au is an absolute must and is your number one “go to” solution.

You should consider a listing on that site as obligatory and you should be aware that there is no other site that even comes close to it in terms of its efficacy in selling your property.

### **Second Tier Websites**

Australia's second-largest real estate site is Domain.com.au. While there is a sizeable gap in importance between Realestate.com.au and domain.com.au, there is a similarly huge gap between Domain and the next rung of real estate listing websites. We strongly suggest that you list on Domain.com.au, since it has thousands of links and traffic from major media websites.

In most states if you are to be listed on one place outside of Realestate.com.au, Domain.com.au should be it.

## Smaller Websites



Most of the major agent-assisted sale companies will list your property on a group of real estate agent websites and it certainly does no harm to be listed on these as well. It's important to keep in mind though, that their usefulness can be somewhat limited as these websites receive far fewer visits from buyers:

- Homesales.com.au
- HomeHound.com.au
- TheHomePage.com.au
- OnTheHouse.com.au
- Property.com.au
- Suburbview.com.au
- Realestateeasy.com.au
- The Trading Post
- Homely.com.au
- Millionplus.com.au
- Juwai (large chinese website)
- MyFun.com
- SquareFoot.com.HK

## Private Sale Websites/Classifieds



A private seller can also list their property on any number of private sale websites and classified ad sites. The most commonly used of these sites would be Gumtree, which has the benefit of being owned by eBay and which does at least enjoy substantial traffic. Just be aware that the quality of that traffic (in terms of bringing genuine buyers to houses) on Gumtree appears to be very poor when compared to dedicated agent selling sites such as Realestate.com.au

Sites such as Gumtree have the disadvantage that they are heavily targeted by countless businesses, (large and small) which seek to do property options and wraps. Rather than finding a buyer through Gumtree, you may instead be inundated with offers to option up your property or else be spammed by other services. Identity theft may also be a reasonable concern for you in considering listing on such sites.

It's fine to have as many irons in the fire as possible, however, be prepared to waste a lot of time and energy if you do decide to list on these sites.

## Other ways to Spread the Word



You can also consider the following ways to find your buyer. They all work to some degree, but none are as efficient and powerful as listing on Realestate.com.au

- Newspaper
- Property magazines
- Leaflet drops
- Noticeboards in shopping centres
- Radio
- Television
- Google AdWords
- Word-of-mouth
- Social networks

*TIP: Any and all of these methods are capable of producing a result and it's great to have multiple enquiry streams.*

# TO SHOW OR NOT TO SHOW

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ARE OPEN HOMES FOR YOU?

## Why Agents *Really* Run Open Homes

Agents run open homes primarily as a way to show vendors that they are doing something concrete in the sale and marketing of the home.

Additionally, if agents can get buyers through the door they can then redirect those leads to other listings if they aren't suited to your property.

Open houses also provide agents with a way of signing up new listings because a number of people who are looking to buy will also be thinking about selling their own property.

Please remember that many of the things that agents do would make perfect sense if you own a real estate agency but make no sense at all to a private seller.



*TIP: Open homes are a meeting point for buyers and sellers, but consider whether they represent the very best meeting point for you both?*

# Pros and Cons



## PROS

- It may allow you to better arrange your limited time to show the property.
- It could gain your property extra exposure by inclusion in open house lists.
- Healthy attendance might promote a sense of scarcity or urgency towards potential buyers and thus encourage them to make an offer or to proceed more quickly.
- Some who attend may not have viewed the property otherwise, and will consider your property simply because they saw it advertised in open house lists or via your open house signage.
- You can leverage foot traffic and print advertisements from other sellers by running your inspection at the same time as open houses in close proximity.

## CONS

- The majority of people would just as readily have inspected the property through an individual appointment.
- You may still need to run private viewings anyway, if some prospective buyers can't attend during your open times.
- A zero attendance will leave you feeling both demoralised and deflated.
- A bumper attendance will mean you have to try and do justice to perhaps dozens of people in a 45-minute time frame. Apart from maintaining security, rampant children and gathering contact details, how does one talk meaningfully to all 20 people and gauge their interest?

continued on **page 76**

# TO SHOW OR NOT TO SHOW

## Preparing for an Open Home



IF YOU DECIDE TO RUN  
AN OPEN HOUSE,  
MAKE IT COUNT BY  
BEING ORGANISED.

**Let people know about it!** Promote your open house as widely and as early as possible. Don't decide to advertise an open house at the last minute and then expect people to show up.

Advertise the open house online a couple of weeks in advance, and consider purchasing an eBrochure mail out, or a clas-

sified ad to get your listing more attention during this period.

**Get Signage** People should be able to find your property easily, and immediately realise that it is open for inspection. Consider having a For Sale sign on your property, as well as one or more open for inspection signs, balloons, and pointer signs on the streets near your property. Again, don't leave this preparation all to the last minute – you don't want to be still waiting on signs when the big day arrives.

**Do your research** Firstly, visit some open homes of similar properties in your area to see what you're up against. Next, make

sure that you know as much about your property as possible. Buyers may have all sorts of questions such as land size, building size, council approvals, and so on. You should be able to answer all these questions promptly. Either memorise key information or keep it on hand so that you can refer to it if needed.

**Prepare a ‘take away’ to help people remember your property** Have either a paper flyer, CD or USB stick to give to all prospects, which includes your name, contact details, property address, photos if possible, as well as a short description and bullet points about the property. This is especially important for weekend open houses where people may be viewing a number of properties in a day.

**Carefully choose the timing** When choosing the time your house will be open consider what time of day your property looks and feels its best. Also, consider at what times your target buyers might be available. You may need to consider holding two open houses at different times to ensure everyone has a chance to get through.

**Consider offering an incentive** If a buyer is interested in a few properties, and open house times conflict, a little extra incentive for them to view yours doesn't hurt. You could offer free freshly

brewed coffee, cupcakes, or finger food. Not only does this make your open house more appealing but it can also help to boost the buyer's mood as they inspect. The scent of coffee or freshly baked cookies can also increase your homes overall appeal.

**Present your property well** This step is crucial: your property should look enticing or at least well maintained from the street, and should be extremely neat, clean, and neutral throughout.

Neutral means you've put away family photos, as well as any art or ornaments that are political, religious, or in any way controversial. Where possible, remove children and pets from the property during the inspection. The aim is to make people feel comfortable, and to help them imagine themselves living in the space. Don't forget to turn on all the lights and open blinds/curtains and windows!



continued on **page 78**

# TO SHOW OR NOT TO SHOW



**Take the time to put away valuables.** You're not going to be doing a background check on everyone who visits your property so make sure you remove valuable items, prescription medications and so on from the property before you open it. Better to be safe than sorry.

**Emotionally prepare.** You may get many people at your open house or you may get none. If you don't get any visitors, don't be discouraged. Instead, carefully review your listing and also go back over our

steps to prepare for an open house to help you figure out what went wrong.

## Running an Open Home

When it's time for the open house to start you should have everything ready and be present. People should be able to walk straight in upon arrival. Make sure you are present for the entire duration that you advertised the property would be open for.

When people do arrive, you should have a sign in sheet ready for them. Try to get as many people as possible to fill this out with the basic contact details. This will allow you to follow up with each person who has been through the property.

Once people are inside, you shouldn't just stand there! Be friendly and develop a rapport with them. Be on hand to answer any questions that they may have and to point out some of your property's best features



that might otherwise go unnoticed.

Use this time to qualify buyers. This just means asking questions about their ability to buy the property. Do they have finance pre-approved? Do they need to sell their property before they can buy yours? Don't be shy about asking these questions – every agent asks them.

Whilst talking to buyers be sure to listen to any feedback you're given. Not all feedback will necessarily be "correct" – but buyers are entitled to their opinions. At worst, their feedback can give you an insight into how your property is viewed through their eyes, which can help you make your marketing more effective.

At best, feedback can help you address an issue which may stop someone from purchasing in the future. Make sure that when you listen to feedback you remain neutral about it, as hard as this can sometimes be.

As people leave the open house you should ensure that they take a reminder with them. A simple one-page flyer or postcard will suffice. This should summarise your property's key features, price, address and list your direct contact details. This is also another opportunity to incentivise buyers.

Something as simple as taping a wrapped Mintie or lolly to the flyer can ensure buyers take a flyer and will help your property be remembered in a crowded market.

**Follow up!** You could ask buyers to indicate on the sign in sheet if they prefer email or phone contact. If possible, phone is best as a simple call a week later to ask for their impression of the property can go a long way. If they're not interested right now you can also ask them if they'd like to be advised of any price reductions or offers on the property.

# AUCTIONS



## CAN YOU AUCTION AS A PRIVATE SELLER?

**O**rganising your own real estate auction is really quite simple. All you need to do is hire a Licensed Auctioneer. Given the closed nature of the real estate industry, you may need to contact several auctioneers in order to find an independent auctioneer and one that is available on your preferred date.

Book as soon as you can as there are busy periods. Note that the auctioneer's fee should not be commission based. If you're having trouble with this step your agent-assist provider should be able to help you.

### Steps to Auctioning Your Property

- Engage a Licensed Auctioneer. Free online searches exist to check that they hold a current and valid Auctioneer licence.
- Book a date and time (avoid long weekends, major sporting events, and religious holidays when deciding). Schedule yours around competing properties nearby. Auctions are usually held on a Saturday and advertised about 4 weeks in advance.
- Have your Auction contract prepared by a conveyancer or solicitor as required.
- List the Auction details in your advertisements and be available to potential buyers for property inspections. Don't be afraid to take pre-auction bids but don't divulge your reserve.
- Before Auction prepare and stage the property as you would for an open home.
- Run an open home for 30 minutes before the Auction commences.
- Have all the relevant legislated information for your state on display during the open home. The Auctioneer will help you with this.
- Relax in the property while the auctioneer runs the show. The Auctioneer may

make a vendor bid on your behalf to raise the bidding to the reserve.

- During the Auction, the Auctioneer or their representative may come inside to advise if the reserve price has or has not been met. If it isn't reached they will ask you if you will accept the highest bid or wish to pass in or withdraw from auction. Hopefully they will come inside to let you know the winning bid!
- If the reserve has not been met, the highest bidder has the first right to negotiate.

## When is the Property Sold?



The property is not sold unless there is a legally binding contract of sale signed by buyer and seller and a deposit paid (generally 10%). In the case of an Auction, that contract will be in the form of an Auction contract and it will be unconditional immediately upon execution (when signing and the deposit has been taken and receipted). If the property was passed on; don't despair and don't let them get away! Talk with anyone who still remains interested and keep their contact details.

## Receiving the Deposit



Obtain the deposit preferably immediately after signing, usually 10% of the purchase price but whatever is specified in the contract. A buyer may pay via:

- Bank cheque – as this is pre-organised it likely won't be exactly 10%, adjust your contract figures accordingly.
- Personal cheque – be aware there is a risk this could bounce.
- Deposit bond – organised by the buyer.
- Online transfer – this is becoming more common and may not be received until the following Monday morning. Many banks now allow you to temporarily increase your online transfer limit to facilitate a large payment.

Some bidders might ask you before auction whether you would be willing accept a lesser deposit with the remainder payable on a specified date. This would be a change to the contract if you agree. The deposit must be held in trust by an estate

continued on **page 82**



# AUCTIONS

agent, conveyancer or solicitor until settlement (or held in an appropriate Trust Account).

## Key Points to Remember



- You must have an actual auction contract pre-prepared and available at the auction site.
- Buyer and seller should immediately sign the legal documents arranged by your Solicitor or Conveyancer according to the displayed terms.
- Terms can be altered (e.g. settlement period) if both parties agree.

- The contract can't be made subject to conditions (e.g. obtaining finance) unless the seller agrees. The whole idea of auctions is that they are unconditional and instantly binding.
- There is no cooling off period when a property is sold at auction, or in the days before (check your state or territory guidelines as this differs by state). Once the contract is signed, the sale is legally binding.
- Everyone who signs the contract must be given a copy of the signed document.



*TIP: Auctions are a good option if your property is in a sought after area or when there is a lot of competition from buyers.*

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# SAFETY & SECURITY



WHETHER YOU'RE MALE OR FEMALE, YOUNG OR OLD – YOU SHOULDN'T BE AFRAID TO GIVE SELLING OR LEASING YOUR OWN HOME A GO.

**A**lthough there is absolutely nothing inherently unsafe about private selling here are some practical tips to address your privacy, personal safety and home security.

## **Consider How to Display Personal Details**

One thing some owners are concerned about is the display of their name, contact details, or address on the internet. If you're worried about this keep in mind that your listing on Realestate.com.au and other websites won't directly display your contact details, instead an enquiry form and your agent-assist provider's phone number will be displayed which buyers can use to get in touch.

If you're concerned about a buyer receiving your phone number or email address at any point, you could also look at getting a prepaid mobile phone, or a free alternative email address such as a Gmail, specifically to give to buyers. The upside of this technique is that when receiving any call, SMS, or email to this phone or email address, you immediately know that it's a buyer enquiry.

If you're worried about your address being displayed online you can also opt to completely hide your street address and just display the suburb. However, if you choose this option buyers can only find out the address after speaking to you directly.

### **Have Someone Else Present During Inspections**

This might be a friend, family member or a neighbour. If this isn't possible or you don't feel it's necessary for your situation, you might also consider just advising someone else of what time the inspection is and then agreeing to call or SMS them when it's over to let them know it went ok. This way, if anything does go wrong, you have that backup in place.

### **Qualify Buyers Before Inspections**

Try to have a little bit of a chat with the buyer before they attend the inspection, this way you can get a bit of a feel for them and establish a rapport which should make you feel more comfortable during the inspection. It also gives you an opportunity to opt out ahead of time if someone is making you feel uncomfortable. We don't know anyone who has been in that position but there is always a first time for everything.

### **Keep Records**

You should keep a log of all enquiries and inspections (A good agent-assist company will provide tools for this). If you allow group inspections, you should use a guest register. You might note down the buyer's full name, date/time of their inspection, and in some cases, you may wish to ask to see a photo ID.

### **Maintain Your Privacy**

Be sure not to discuss your personal schedule with buyers, or reveal any information which could jeopardise your safety (e.g. it's such a safe neighbourhood, we rarely even lock the front door). You may also wish to double check your social media settings to ensure any information that you share is not publicly accessible.

### **Secure Your Home and Valuables**

Never give anyone a copy of your keys or allow someone to inspect unaccompanied. Additionally, before inspections you should also put away any easily lifted valuables such as jewellery, mobile phones, handheld game consoles, cameras and so on, along with cash, credit cards, prescription medication and any house keys you might usually leave in an easily accessible place.

### **Ask For Support if You Need It**

If you ever feel unsure or unsafe ask your agent-assist provider or the appropriate authority for help right away.

# WHAT IF IT'S NOT SELLING?

## Are Your Expectations Reasonable?

**W**hilst some properties may sell virtually overnight, this isn't the case for everyone. If it's the first week of your marketing campaign and you're already getting anxious about your property not selling, it might be time to review your expectations.

In Spring 2016, CoreLogic reported that for the average capital city, the selling time for a house was 48 days (or six weeks). Average selling times in regional areas are generally significantly longer (more like three months). There is also something called vendor discounting. Vendor discounting is the difference between the price a property is listed for and the price it ends up selling for.

The amount of vendor discount varies between areas but is generally around 5% (or higher in areas where properties are on the market for longer periods). If the market is slow in your area, it may take time to sell – be as patient as you can.

## Review Your Engagement From the Market

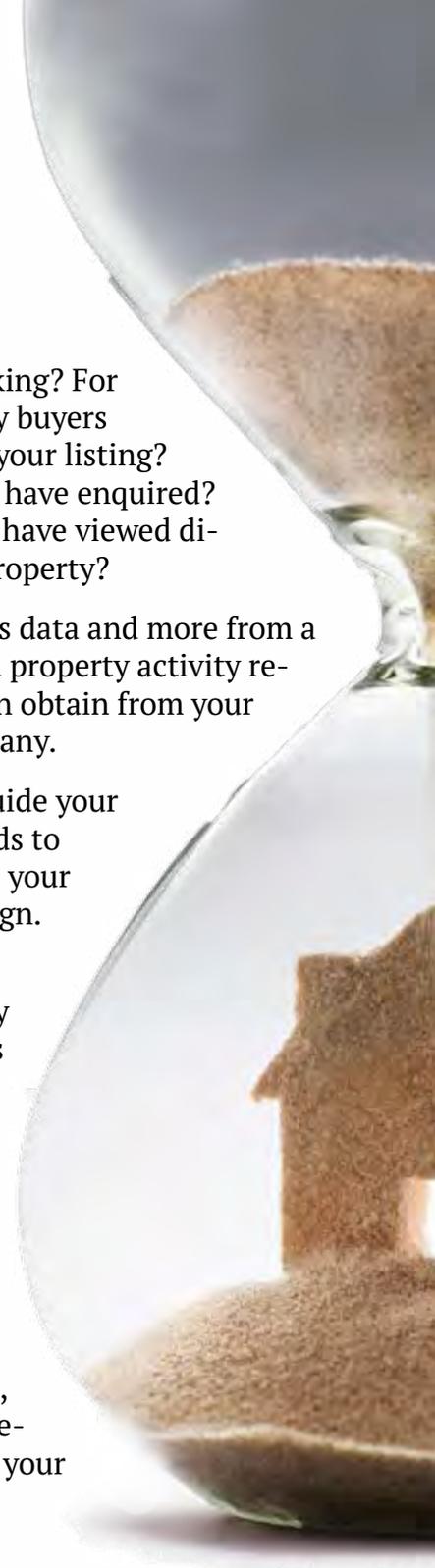
If your property is not selling, the first thing to consider is whether people are seeing it, and if they are, what interac-

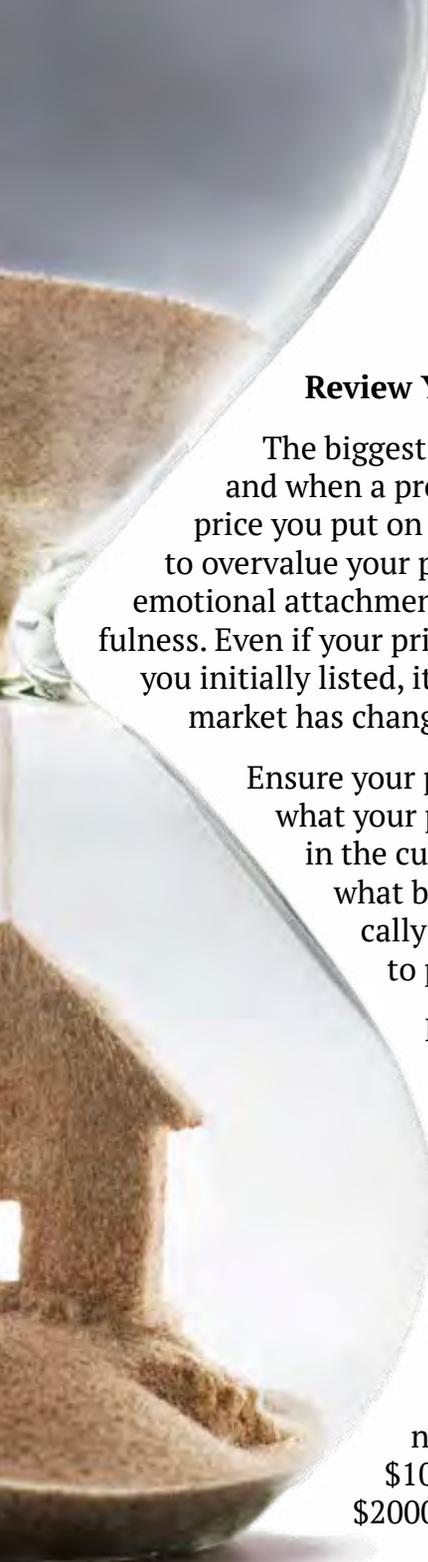
tions they are making? For example, are many buyers saving or sharing your listing? How many people have enquired? How many buyers have viewed directions to your property?

You can get all this data and more from a Realestate.com.au property activity report which you can obtain from your agent-assist company.

Use this data to guide your decisions in regards to what to do next in your marketing campaign.

For example, if you're getting very low levels of views on your online listing, you may need to do something to boost exposure. If you're getting high levels of views but low levels of enquiries, you may need to re-view your price or your ad copy.





## Review Your Price

The biggest determinant of if and when a property sells, is the price you put on it. It can be easy to overvalue your property due to emotional attachment or simple hopefulness. Even if your price wasn't off when you initially listed, it's possible the market has changed since then.

Ensure your price is in line with what your property is worth in the current market and what buyers are realistically going to be willing to pay.

If your price is starting to look like it's too high, consider trying a price reduction using a "chunking" strategy.

For example, if you think you may need to reduce by \$10,000, try reducing \$2000 each week.

Remember there's little point in clinging to a dream price if your property is very unlikely to sell for that price or if that price will cause the sale to take so long that you lose the difference because of costs associated with the delay.

## Shake Up Your Online Listing

Is there anything about your advertisement that could be putting buyers off? Is there a buying group that you may not have thought of and aren't appealing to as best you could?

Now is the time to review and improve on your advertisement. If you haven't already organised professional photography we strongly recommend doing so.

You should also consider changing the order of your images, updating your headline and the description to keep your listing fresh.

## Get Feedback From the Market

You already have some feedback in that your property hasn't sold but make sure that you follow up with any buyers who have enquired and find out why things didn't progress. If you can, encourage buyers to be brutally honest. There may be something you can change about your

continued on **page 88**

# WHAT IF IT'S NOT SELLING?

approach or there may be some small cosmetic changes you could address to make your property more saleable. You might even be able to offer additional information that addresses concerns or any misunderstandings that the buyers may have.

You can also get feedback from the market in a less direct way by keeping an eye on listings as they sell in order to gain insights into what buyers are currently looking for. You might even go so far as to attend open houses of comparable properties so that you know how your property stacks up, and can then address this with buyers directly or in your online ad.

## **Increase Your Exposure**

If you are sure you're getting everything else right and/or there's a lot of properties for sale in your area, it may be that you need to arrange for more exposure for your listing.

You could consider an upgrade on Realestate.com.au to increase the clicks to your listing. You could also consider running a newspaper, magazine, or classified ad in order to target a wider or a different audience. Another option is to put up or hand out flyers for your property.

## **Take a Break**

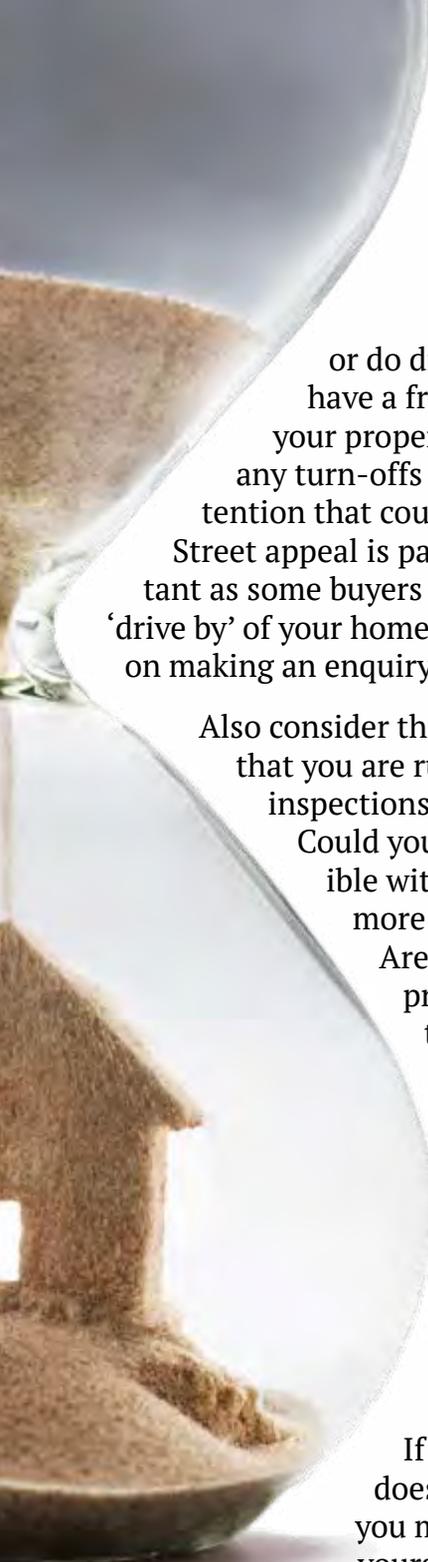
If your property has been on the market a long time it might be worth considering giving it a short break. This means that when you relist your property it'll be brand new to the latest crop of buyers. To list as a completely new property your listing generally needs to be "off the market" for at least two months.

Not only does this allow your listing to be fresh in the market again, it also allows you a break from keeping your property perfectly presented as well as from any stress that the marketing process may be causing you.

## **Is Your Property Looking its Best?**

Hopefully your property is in the best condition possible but ask yourself whether there is anything that you could improve on





or do differently. Perhaps have a friend walk through your property and identify any turn-offs that draw their attention that could be easily fixed. Street appeal is particularly important as some buyers may simply do a 'drive by' of your home before deciding on making an enquiry.

Also consider the times and days that you are running open for inspections/open houses.

Could you be more flexible with times to allow more people to attend?

Are you opening your property at its best time/day? Consider if there's a time of day when it's more pleasant at your property – if there is, then capitalise on that fact!

### **Should You Let an Agent Help?**

If your property doesn't sell quickly, you may begin to doubt yourself and consider

returning to an agent. If this happens, ask yourself: what would an agent really bring to the table? What can the agent do that you're not already doing?

Also, keep in mind that the agent will charge a commission meaning that you would actually have to raise your price (making your property less saleable) just to break even. Instead, we urge you to have patience, have confidence in yourself and ask your agent-assist company for advice on what to do next. If you do wish to let an agent help, be sure to have a sole or open agreement with them that specifically retains your right to sell privately (and not pay them a commission in this event) just in case you do find a buyer before they do.

### **Don't Stick Your Head in the Sand**

If your property isn't selling then it's very likely that something isn't working for you but are you open to hearing what it is? It can be hard to hear criticism of your property, and even harder to hear that your property might not sell at a price as high as you'd like. Ask for advice from your friends, from buyers and from your agent-assist company and make sure that you're open to the answers you receive. You don't have to take everything on board but make the effort to weigh up all the comments without bias.

# YOU'VE GOT A BUYER, NOW WHAT?



WHILST A LOT OF PEOPLE ARE SCARED TO NEGOTIATE WITH BUYERS WHEN SELLING THEIR PROPERTY PRIVATELY, THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO NEED TO BE. YOU'VE ACTUALLY GREATLY SIMPLIFIED THE PROCESS BY TAKING THE MIDDLEMAN OUT OF IT.

## Preparing to Negotiate Know Your Negotiation Position

**B**efore you start considering the various negotiating tactics that you can employ, you should begin by asking yourself just what kind of a negotiating position are you in?

Negotiating Position	
STRONG	WEAK
Lots of equity	Not much equity
No rush to sell	Have to sell quickly
Many interested buyers	Few interested buyers

*TIP: A good negotiation is about trying to create a win-win scenario, not about one side getting everything they want. A little bit of compromise goes a long way to ensuring a successful negotiation with both parties walking away satisfied. This is where you need to focus on your bottom line, and your key priorities.*

You need to consider the lay of the land before venturing forward on the journey. For example, if you are in a great position with strong equity in the property, time is on your side and you have an “in demand”

property, then you are in an ideal position to negotiate a sale. If any one of these or perhaps all of these things are against you then you need to adjust your negotiating position accordingly.

### **Know Your Bottom Line**

It's important that you always be crystal clear about your bottom line before you start. One way to think about this is, if you had someone willing to sign and pay today, what would you be willing to walk away with? Until you get super clear about your bottom line, you will remain confused and lack coherence in your sale. On the other hand, if you know your bottom line and also if you can adjust it up or down depending on any changing circumstances, then you are



automatically in a stronger position in any negotiation than you would otherwise be.

Knowing your bottom line price is not the same thing as setting this as your benchmark price. It simply implies knowing pre-

cisely your final limits to negotiate within and hopefully upwards from. Your bottom line can be, and frequently is, a moving target but it is imperative that in any given week you know your bottom line figure precisely.

### **Understand the Buyer's Position**

Understanding the buyer's perspective can be extremely helpful. For example, if you have a buyer who needs to relocate urgently, they may be willing to pay slightly more if you can settle earlier. Try to understand why the buyer is looking to purchase, how quickly they'd like to proceed, and if they have finance already approved or not.

### **Detach Emotionally**

It's easier said than done but detaching is important as emotions can severely impede the negotiation process. Often changing the way that you look at the negotiation can help with this. You could look at it as a business transaction where you're as cool as a cucumber, or you could look at it as a game that you and the buyer are playing.

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*“This is one of the biggest purchases most people will ever make so tensions can run high”*

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*TIP: If you are going to play “hard to get” then you’d better be good at it and you should know that it could work for you or against you.*

continued on **page 92**

# YOU'VE GOT A BUYER, NOW WHAT?



## During Negotiations

**Play Your Cards Close to Your Chest** You should keep information about your negotiating position close to your chest. Once you reveal that you're selling due to divorce or financial issues you've immediately given away most of your negotiating power. If the buyer pushes you on why you're selling, try to use open-ended answers that don't make it sound like you're in a desperate situation. For example, "we've been thinking about it for a while, and it's just time now".

**Keep Things Moving** A quick negotiation is a good negotiation. The longer you take in negotiating, the more likelihood there is of agents placing other properties in front of your buyers. You can't do anything about this at all except to get your buyer to a definite yes or no in the shortest possible time.

Taking excessive time just increases the amount of time in which a buyer could find another property they like or have someone undermine their decision to purchase.

Even when you can't give an answer right away, still try and respond promptly and advise the buyer the exact timeframe in which you will be able to give an answer.

Where possible speak to people directly rather than emailing or texting but follow up in writing for clarity. You should also be easily contactable during this time.

**Keep Things Clear** Never let a buyer wonder for a moment longer than necessary what price will buy your property. Confusion in a buyer is a sales killer. Even when deflecting about price do so in a very systematic and clear manner

and with an agreed time-frame or scope for further discussions.

**Encourage Serious Offers** Anytime you have a buyer that genuinely wants to make an offer, just request that they put the full details of their offer in writing. This is not legally binding but helps to make everything feel a little more real and promotes a sense of seriousness, urgency, and clarity. The written offer also gives you something to refer to at the next step, especially if the buyer has any conditions attached to their offer.

**Be Professional** Your demeanour with the buyer should be confident, polite, and positive. You should never personally attack a buyer over their offer. If you feel confronted by something a buyer has said, always respond calmly and politely. The last thing you want to have happen is for negotiations to fall apart because the buyer made an

ill-considered remark on your choice of carpeting. Remember; this is one of the biggest purchases most people will ever make so tensions can run high.

### **One Size Won't Fit All**

There are a myriad of possible negotiating positions but none are perfect and none work in all situations. If there are two owners you can play good cop and bad cop. You can be a hardball negotiator or you can be an empathiser. You can stipulate all the conditions and price, or you can be very flexible. Most people will only do this once or maybe a couple of times in their lives and so we suggest that you keep the negotiations as simple as possible.

**Listen and Deflect** There is a long held theory that the first person to speak in a negotiation loses. To be more accurate, the first person to divulge their bottom line may lose. Whilst this tactic isn't going to be ideal for every negotiation, it is deceptively simple to employ and is a particularly good strategy for situations where the buyer is asking "fishing questions" instead of making a legitimate offer. If a buyer is doing this, you can simply deflect the question and repurpose it back to them. For example:

**Buyer** – "What's your bottom line here?"

**Seller** – "I would much prefer that you just place your best offer in writing and allow me to consider it, how does that sound to you?"

That might be all that is needed and the conversation (negotiation) might continue like this.

**Buyer** – "Sure I'm happy to put it in writing but I need a ballpark figure from you first."

**Seller** – "That's why we set the price where it is. It doesn't necessarily mean that we won't listen to offers but it's a price that we think is fair. If you don't agree with our assessment then we'd like you to put forward your own figure in writing and then we can consider it."

**Negotiations Stuck?** One option is to try changing the focus of the negotiation. For example, you could agree to accept an offer on the proviso that a deposit is put down, or contracts are signed within a certain timeframe. In the buyer's mind, this creates a reason for them to move onto the next step and a reason for you to accept their particular offer. Provisos that aren't related to price also give both you and the buyer a bit of a relief valve if you're getting stuck on the price negotiation alone.

If your negotiation is stuck on all points, try "splitting the difference". This is as simple as it sounds: you and the buyer simply agree to meet in the middle in terms of price, settlement date, inclusions or whatever you're stuck on.

continued on **page 94**



# YOU'VE GOT A BUYER, NOW WHAT?



## If You're Ready to Accept...

Note down the buyer's contact details as well as full details of the offer including price, inclusions, conditions, and settlement timeframe. You also need to ask for the details of the buyer's solicitor and give them the details of your own legal representative. Your agent-assist company should be able to provide you with a free form that you can use to gather these details.



Phone your solicitor, conveyancer, or settlement agent and provide all the relevant information.

The exact conveyancing process varies state to state but now that you have armed your solicitor with all the information they need they will arrange the necessary paperwork and advise you of anything further that you need to do and when you need to do it. You don't need to fully understand the legal aspects of conveyancing in order to sell your home. However, it is not recommended that you try and do it yourself.

Why? Because buyers won't mind buying from the owner directly but will likely take issue with the same owner also holding the deposit and doing all the paperwork! Approach a conveyancer who can also accept a deposit as soon as you decide to sell to allow enough time for them to prepare their paperwork ready for your sale.

# SELL YOUR OWN HOME

## CHECKLIST



### Before You List

#### Paperwork:

1. Engage a conveyancer or solicitor and prepare the necessary documents.
2. Engage a Trust Account holder company if your chosen solicitor does not have a Trust Account.
3. Book a licensed Auctioneer if you are intending to hold an auction.

#### Home Prep:

4. Complete any renovations or home staging that you wish to do.
5. Complete a deep clean, declutter/tidy and any minor repairs of your property.
6. Consider the unusual step of obtaining a building and pest inspection report to detect and fix any issues and provide to prospective buyers. Few people will do this but maybe you are a star and ahead of your time.

#### Providers and Materials:

7. Choose an agent-assist company (such as PropertyNow) to help manage your listing, marketing and for the provision of advice and support.

8. If not doing your own, have professional photography of your property already completed.
9. Arrange a For Sale sign, photoboard, and/or open house signs for your property.

### Listing Your Property

#### Deciding on Marketing:

10. Engage a valuer or review a Property Value Report to determine your price.
11. Decide on how you want to communicate your price to buyers (rules vary by state).
12. Write your advertisement.
13. Upload your advertisement online via your chosen company.
14. Print brochures to distribute at open homes and inspections, via your agent-assist provider.

#### Going Live:

15. Conduct a final check of your advertisement.
16. Ensure you have all signage delivered and placed.
17. Complete any last minute

touch-ups so that your property looks its best.

18. Activate your advertisement with your chosen company.
19. Advertise any open home inspections you wish to have, at least a week in advance.

#### During the Sale Process:

20. Each week, review your marketing campaigns performance honestly.
21. Reassess and know your lowest sale price at all times.
22. Be available to respond to enquiries from buyers.
23. Conduct any open houses or private inspections.

#### Finalizing the Sale:

24. Upon receiving an offer, negotiate and solicit additional offers.
25. Host your auction, if applicable.
26. Sign sale contract.
27. Receive deposit from sale.
28. Settle the property sale.



# I SOLD IT MYSELF!

## GENUINE TESTIMONIALS AND EXPERIENCES FROM REAL EVERYDAY AUSTRALIANS

**Ian:** Because my property was in a high demand area, I couldn't see any reason why I needed an agent to sell for me so I paid for a valuer to give me a value of my property and then listed it. It sold quickly because the price was what buyers expected and there were limited number of properties coming on to the market in that area. The eventual buyer contacted me within 1 hour of the property being listed and I had at least six serious buyers within 24 hours. I received good service from Property Now and it was good to be able to talk to a real person and not a computer. The web site is easy to use. I would recommend PropertyNow, particularly if you were in an area where agents are filling your letterbox with requests for properties to sell.

**Renata:** This was a great experience. We chose to rent our apartment ourselves, and with PropertyNow, we were able to list our property on a number of "estate agent only" sites like realestate.com.au as well as giving the ad a professional look. The online application form is also an excellent service. There was loads of interest and we rented it out within the first week. Thank you!

**Graham:** After interviewing four real estate agents, we decided to list our property for sale through PropertyNow. The process was extremely easy and the response from all the people who contacted us was that it was a great idea to sell this way. Not one person had a problem that there was no real estate agent involved. In fact, most



commented that they preferred dealing directly with the owner. We put a lot of effort into making sure that our house presented well, we had quality photos (done ourselves) and that we had a conveyancer in place well before listing the property. Hence, everything went smoothly. We had eight individual inspections the first weekend after listing on a Tuesday. We sold to one of those eight people in five days! The sale price was a little over what we wanted too, and we weren't slugged with a real estate agent's fee for doing all the things that we were more than capable of doing ourselves. Overall, if we sell again it will be this way. Happy house selling!

**Neil Morgan:** Wow - that wasn't so hard after all. After hearing how hard it might be to sell and getting price estimates lower than what we had expected, I thought I would at least give it a go myself with the thought that it would cost a couple of hundred dollars plus real estate commission if I couldn't sell it at worst.. or if I did sell it, then I would be at least \$10K in front. So we advertised it on PropertyNow, which went to Realestate.com.au and we sold it one week later during the first inspection at \$25K higher than the agents said we could sell it for. We did it without even putting a sign up in the front. Maybe we were lucky, maybe not, but we are now \$10K better off and we sold the house after just one week with minimal fuss, stress and in the end, it is a whole lot easier than I had imagined.

continued on **page 98**

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*“So we advertised it on PropertyNow, which went to Realestate.com.au and we sold it one week later during the first inspection at \$25K higher than the agents said we could sell it for.”*

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**Lisa:** This was exactly the site I was looking for but didn't know existed, nor did I know how EASY it was to sell your own property and save tens of thousands of dollars in the process - All you need is a conveyancer and this website. At first, I was sceptical of the site because it all sounded too good to be true. I was sure the site would want commission once I sold my house, but no, there are no hidden fees. What you pay for upfront when listing your house is all you'll ever pay. Anytime I was unsure or had a question, the company was always quick to respond. The owner of PropertyNow was often on hand to speak to. He was personable, helpful, and knowledgeable. It was an interesting and insightful experience to act like an agent. A house sells itself; all you need to do is be there to answer any questions. Plus- who knows the ins and outs of your house better than you? It felt like a huge achievement to say to my family and friends that I sold a house.

**Cattalia:** Unlike real estate agents, I only have this one house to sell so I wouldn't be tempted to say I have another listing that I can show you. If I sell again in the future, I would definitely do it myself.

**David and Sophie:** Great service and support! So easy to use and fun to do! We had a great experience and will never use an agent to sell one of our properties anymore. We sold our investment property in 8 weeks for the price we wanted. We enjoyed every open house and prospective buyers were very positive and interested to talk directly to the owners. Good luck to everyone trying to sell his or her property this way. It may seem a bit scary at first if you are new to the concept but if you are in the right price bracket and know what you can realistically get, with a good ad and decent pictures: there no reason why you cannot do it yourself. Don't let any agent convince you otherwise. The only difficult part was to deal with the numerous agents who kept hassling us to list with them and were negative about our decision to list with an agent-assisted sale company. They were wrong, so wrong. Do your research and trust yourself. We send a big thanks to PropertyNow, who answered all our questions promptly and professionally along the way. Last but not least we saved around \$15,000 in agent fees!

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*“...who knows the ins and outs of your house better than you? It felt like a huge achievement to say to my family and friends that I sold a house.”*

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**Rob:** We were absolutely blown away by the staff at PropertyNow.

Whilst we were in the middle of setting up our listing we got a personal call from the lovely sales girl who walked us through the whole thing because it was our first time. Once we were done, they had us up on realestate.com.au within an hour and shipped our sign the same day.

Whenever we had a question we were able to quickly speak to real people, and they were always happy to help, even on the weekend. which is a rarity these days.

Best part was putting the SOLD sticker on our house 11 days later. Will definitely use them again when we sell next.

**Joss:** We are thrilled with PropertyNow, and recommend the service to everyone!

Potential buyers were surprised and then super happy that I was not an agent.

It is brilliant to have face-to-face contact with buyers, provide that intimate and genuine insight into the property and life in the area.

We were then able to build a great relationship with the successful purchaser, providing ad-hoc visits and regular phone contact.

TIPS: get great photos (we built up a cache over many months/seasons), and work out the 'angle' or Key Selling Points of your property and make sure your description and photos align.

Don't hesitate. Trust yourself. Trust PropertyNow!

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*“I was sure the site would want commission once I sold my house, but no, there are no hidden fees. What you pay for upfront when listing your house is all you'll ever pay.”*

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**David:** When we first considered selling our house ourselves we weren't sure if we could, but the first time we called gave us the confidence we needed, they talked us through everything, we didnt even get around to having opens, the first person who came around for a private inspection was able to talk directly to us the owners there was no going back and forth through the agent with questions, we could answer all their questions straight away and agree on a price. SOLD!

# LEASING YOUR PROPERTY

EVER WONDERED EXACTLY WHAT AGENTS DO TO JUSTIFY THEIR 6 – 10% FOR COLLECTING YOUR RENT MONEY? NOTHING THAT YOU CAN'T EASILY DO FOR YOURSELF.

Private owners have never been permitted to list their property for rent on Realestate.com.au and yet for a small fee, you can certainly list it on there by using an Agent-Assist company. You can access that crucial “agent only” website for a rental property by virtue of the same systems that are used when selling with that company. Below is a guide as to what you should do to get the best tenant without experiencing any of the disadvantages in comparison to using a traditional agent.



02

## DECIDE ON THE RENT

Research similar properties online and decide on your weekly rent.

Ideally, compare those with the same number of bedrooms, bathrooms, car spaces and in a similar condition and location to yours.

## 01 PREPARE THE PROPERTY

Complete any repairs, cleaning, tidying, and rubbish removal that is needed. Consider going the extra step and making improvements to the property (such as new carpet or a fresh coat of paint) in order to increase your likely rental return.

## 03 ADVERTISE

List your rental property on the mainstream real estate portals (Realestate.com.au, Domain.com.au, rent.com.au and more) to attract the most tenant applications. You will need to use an Agent-Assist company to access most of these. Write a description of your property and take photos or arrange professional photography.

A ‘For Rent’ sign is optional.



## 04 FIELD ENQUIRIES

Respond to tenant enquiries as quickly and as helpfully as possible. This will give you an edge as often agents take tenants for granted and fail to deliver a quality customer service. Responding to a tenant quickly means you might just get in before they even see another property.

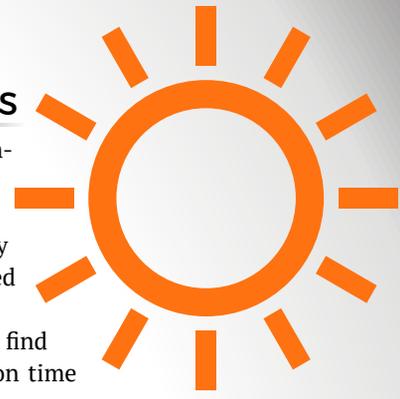
## 05 SHOW THE PROPERTY

Hold an open home or arrange private appointments for rental inspections. If the property is currently tenanted, make sure you give the appropriate notice and abide by all relevant local legislation. Talk with the new potential tenants to get a feel for them.



## 06 TAKE APPLICATIONS

Any decent agent-assist company should allow your tenants to apply online so that you can receive tenancy applications via email. You can also request a paper tenancy application if you would rather use this with tenants.



## 08 TENANT CHECKS

Have your provider run a tenant check which includes:

- Identity verification.
- Rental history to know if they have broken a lease, damaged a property or been evicted.
- Rental payment history to find out if they paid their rent on time and in full in the past.
- Personal history to find any bankruptcy, court judgements, or summons recorded in their name.

This is invaluable as it gives you the same level of protection as using a real estate agent.



## 10 INITIAL DEPOSIT

The tenant will generally need to pay at least 2 weeks in advance as well as 4 weeks rent to the rental bond board, so you will be seeking the equivalent of 6 weeks rent. Again, check on the requirements and allowances in your state with your provider. Be sure to provide a receipt for any payments that are made.

## 11 REMOVE ONLINE LISTING

Once you have the lease signed and have received the initial deposit from the tenant, you can remove your listing from the internet. Be sure not to do this too early as changes of mind are common! Where possible, keep a copy of your listing for re-use after this tenancy ends.

## 12 RENT COLLECTION

If possible, consider implementing a direct debit arrangement through an online provider to collect the rent. This makes paying the rent both easy and automatic from the beginning.



continued on **page 102**

## 09

### PAPERWORK

Meet with the successful tenant/s as soon as possible to get their deposit and signatures on the lease (sign or initial every page).

The exact paperwork required varies from state to state so be sure to ask your agent-assist provider about everything you need.



### CHECK DOCUMENTS

Select and review your top one or two online applications. If they have adequate income to cover the rent, call their employer if possible and ask also for personal and rental references. If they have leased with an agent, ask that agent whether they would lease to that tenant again.

While obtaining rental references, you should also seek an employer's reference. Tenants could easily arrange rental references from friends and acquaintances, so an employer's reference will generally be more valuable to you in assessing potential tenants. Make certain the employer's contact details are genuine.

## 07

14



### CONDITION REPORT

Prepare a condition report detailing the state of every room and outdoors. You can download one from your state's rental authority web-

site. Include all fixtures and fittings, both indoor and out. This step is compulsory if you have collected a bond. You should take photos of the property so you can demonstrate its original condition. The tenant should return their completed and signed copy within the required timeframe of your state or territory. A condition report should also be completed when the tenant exits the property.

18



### PROTECT YOURSELF

Using a combination of proper documentation, screening, tenant checks, professional references and gut instinct, will serve you well in obtaining a great tenant. Doing these things won't guarantee a quality tenant but will go a long way towards it. Follow these instructions and protocols and we believe you will be afforded even more protection than that given by any agent.

Don't imagine for a minute that having an agent involved will guarantee a better tenant. Despite every effort, private landlords and also agents can strike troublesome tenants.

### 13 FINAL PROPERTY CLEAN



Ideally, give your property a good clean or get an exit clean professional. Here are some items people 'forget':

- air conditioning filters
- dishwasher filter
- ceiling vents
- light fittings
- ceiling fans
- windows
- oven
- walls
- cupboards and robes
- steam clean carpets
- weed garden
- mow lawn

If your house has been vacant for a period, you should give it a going over even if it was cleaned when your last tenant left, as dust builds up.

### 15 PROVIDE THE KEYS

On the day of lease commencement, provide keys, remotes, any special instruction manuals or cleaning instructions and two copies of the condition report to be completed (for tenant and landlord). Take note or photocopy evidence of items provided (including a photocopy of keys).

Retain your own full set of keys.

### RENTAL INSPECTIONS 16



It is worth completing rental inspections at least every six months to ensure that the tenant is adequately maintaining your property and nothing serious is amiss. Advance written notice must be provided with an indication of your expected inspection time.

Check your state websites for guidelines.

### 17 MAINTENANCE/REPAIRS



Provide your tenant with an emergency contact number and a list of your preferred tradies for emergencies such as a water leak should they not be able to reach you. Typically, if the renter has incurred a call out fee for their own faulty appliance then they will be liable for this cost. Consider setting up pre-authorised amounts for specific common faults.

*TIP: Having comprehensive Landlord Insurance will ensure you will be protected at least as well (and probably better) than any agency can protect you.*

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# APPENDIX

## Interview Your Agent-Assist Provider:

Make sure you don't end up with a dud. Interview your agent-assist provider before you part with your hard-earned cash!

- ◇ Do you have a real estate licence in my state? What is the licence number?
- ◇ Do you have licences in all other states? (if not, they may get removed by Realestate.com.au)
- ◇ How long have you been in business?
- ◇ Do you have professional indemnity insurance?
- ◇ What is the full and final cost of your services including GST?
- ◇ What is included in your services?
- ◇ What websites do you list my property on?
- ◇ What limitations surround my online ad?
- ◇ Is there anything the cost of your services doesn't include?
- ◇ Do you have your own Realestate.com.au and domain.com.au accounts?
- ◇ How do you handle phone enquiries?
- ◇ How do you handle email enquiries?
- ◇ Do you keep a permanent record of my enquiries?
- ◇ Can you save my rental property for reuse again and again?
- ◇ What kind of support do you offer?
- ◇ Can you provide me with a value report for my home?
- ◇ How do you handle listing changes?
- ◇ Do you provide signage and can this include my own details?
- ◇ Where can I find reviews of your business?
- ◇ How do you protect me in regards to Realestate.com.au's acceptable use policy?
- ◇ Can you put me in touch with a current or past client of yours?
- ◇ Can I demo your system and preview my listing before I pay?



### Forms and Legislation:

Forms and legislation regarding real estate sale by private treaty, auction legislation, condition reports, tenancy agreements and more.

State	Website
ACT	<a href="http://www.act.gov.au">www.act.gov.au</a>
VIC	<a href="http://www.consumer.vic.gov.au">www.consumer.vic.gov.au</a>
NSW	<a href="http://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au">www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au</a>
QLD	<a href="http://www.qld.gov.au">www.qld.gov.au</a>
SA	<a href="http://www.sa.gov.au">www.sa.gov.au</a>
WA	<a href="http://www.commerce.wa.gov.au">www.commerce.wa.gov.au</a>
TAS	<a href="http://www.consumer.tas.gov.au">www.consumer.tas.gov.au</a>
NT	<a href="http://nt.gov.au">nt.gov.au</a>

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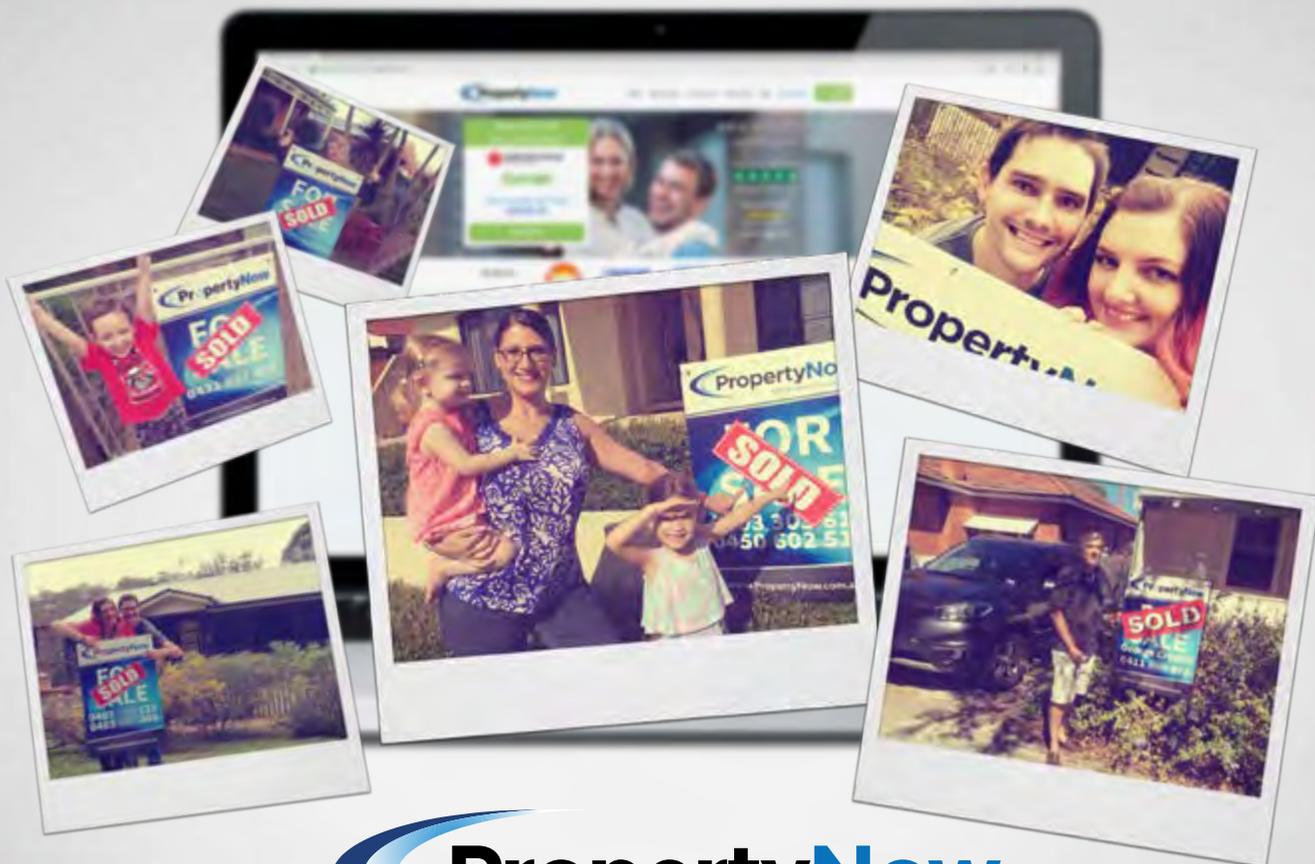
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