

# Our Property Tips

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**Curious as to what your property is worth?**

Pop into the office and have a chat to one of our friendly team members.



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Selling your home can be a nerve racking, exhausting experience. The stress of being on the market can certainly take its toll. Luckily, there are some steps you can take in order to make this process as smooth and painless as it can be.

The difference between a profitable, smooth transaction and a miserable experience can straddle a fine line. Many home selling horror stories are caused by a lack of knowledge. Below are 7 mistakes that many sellers make, which can easily be avoided.

- 1. Incorrect Pricing** Setting the correct price for a new listing is critical – set the price too high early in the campaign and it will remain unsold and develop the identity of a “problem property”. Likewise, if you set the price too low you risk attracting the “wrong” buyers and selling below market value. Setting the appropriate price involves evaluating numerous different factors, and is critical. Your agent should be able to suggest an appropriate advertised price and provide examples of how comparable properties were advertised.
- 2. Not providing easy access** In today’s market, many buyers are time poor and unable to attend scheduled open for inspections. If they can’t organise a viewing of a home, they will look at other properties and purchase elsewhere. Making your home as accessible as possible (within reason) for midweek and weekend inspections is a major key for a profitable sale. The more accessible your home, the better the odds are of finding the person willing to pay top dollar.
- 3. Bad housekeeping** First impressions are often the most important – many home sales have been lost due to “fixable” things such as unmown lawns, cluttered rooms, bad stains, dirty kitchens and bathrooms, pet odours etc. Imagine you are the buyer and look at your home with a critical eye – clean your home from top to bottom, military style.
- 4. Failure to make repairs** Buyers buy what they see – if they see a house in poor repair, this will have a significant impact on what they perceive the value of the home to be. Even minor improvements to a home can yield as much as three to five times the repair cost at the time of sale.



- 5. Making selling decisions based on emotion** Selling a home is a very emotional experience, however underneath it all, selling your home is a dollars and cents business transaction. Don’t let your emotional ties to the home cloud your judgment, and always remember that purchasers are not buying your home, they’re buying a house to make into their home.
- 6. Not understanding market conditions** Just like the stock market, the strength of the housing market is determined by supply and demand. Many buyers look at dozens of homes, comparing their values, before they make a final decision, so it is difficult to find a buyer willing to pay more than the current market value. No single person, agency or agent has any control over the market.
- 7. Picking the wrong real estate agent** Not all agents are the same. The agent’s experience, knowledge, marketing and skills can have a huge impact on the success of your sale. Signing up with the right agent can make all of the difference.

Being armed with the right knowledge can make all the difference in how your home sale turns out. Make the right decisions. A little time spent now can save many hours of frustration down the road.



# 36 Ways to sell your home faster

# 36 Ways to sell your home faster

Having your home on the market can be exhausting and stressful for those that aren't familiar with the process, so we have prepared this check list to help you identify any areas you can easily improve on, prior to going to market which, if done correctly, will result in a smoother selling process.

1. **Light and bright will create a positive mood** – When your photography is being taken and you are having your open for inspections, turn on all the lights and any lamps you have. This will brighten your home immensely.
2. **Declutter, Declutter, Declutter!** – The less clutter you have in each room, the larger they will feel. Less is best. Remove all unnecessary items from your rooms. If you don't want to get rid of your 'stuff', consider renting a storage unit
3. **Change your light globes** – Ensure all your light globes are the same, this will create a uniform light throughout your home – the higher the wattage, the better!
4. **Move your furniture** - Try moving some of your furniture around to help make the rooms look bigger and highlight the best features of each room.
5. **Remove cobwebs** – Dust your home regularly and clean out any cobwebs, paying close attention to the corners near your ceiling, around the legs of furniture and fans/air conditioner ducts
6. **Vacuum regularly** - Particularly in high traffic areas.
7. **Have a family “game plan”** - Sometimes you will have short notice for private inspections. Have a plan in place to get your home “inspection ready” at short notice.
8. **Let in the sunshine and air out your home** – Whenever possible open all windows, doors and curtains for half an hour before any inspections, to freshen up your home and air out any lingering food or animal smells as well as let the sunshine in. Reed diffusers and scented candles can also help with this, ensuring you don't go 'overboard' which could lead to buyers thinking you are covering something up.
9. **Make your master bedroom a sanctuary** – Show off your main bedroom and create a “master suite” effect if possible removing any unnecessary furniture and ensuring anything that can be stored away is.
10. **Beds** – Make sure your beds are all neatly made and the linen is clean, double pillows and a decorative cushion to give the home a “hotel” feel

11. **Organise your cupboards** - People WILL look inside your cupboards and wardrobes! Keep your cupboards as organised as possible and ensure nothing falls out of them when they're opened! This is a great time to dispose of any excess clothing or out of date food
12. **Declutter your bathrooms** – Please put any products from your shower or bathroom benches out of sight for photography and inspections. Also ensure your toilets are all flushed!
13. **Check your silicone** – if the silicone in any of your wet areas is missing, mouldy or discoloured, consider redoing
14. **Clear your benches** - Move as many appliances or clutter off your kitchen benches as possible, to better highlight their size.
15. **Have your carpets and tiles professionally cleaned**
16. **Rearrange your furniture** – Rearrange (and remove if necessary) the furniture in your living areas, especially those with high traffic, to improve flow and highlight the best features of each room
17. **Avoid the ‘sterile’ feel** – When decluttering, don't declutter too much! We want your home to be clean, but also feel lived in!
18. **Have your oven and range hood professionally cleaned** – Buyers notice grease!
19. **Buy a new door mats** – Put a new mat at your front door, as well as at every other external doors, to avoid dirt being walked on your clean carpet!
20. **Wash all your windows** – Wash all windows (inside and out) just before photography
21. **Eliminate smells!** – If you're a smoker or have inside pets, do your best to remove these smells
22. **Clean your walls** – Remove anything that is stuck to your walls with blu-tac such as posters. If you can't clean it, paint it!
23. **Fix cupboard doors** – If any of your cupboard doors can't close, fix or replace them so they can open with ease
24. **Check your windows** – All your windows and doors should be able to open with ease. Repair or replace any damaged fly screens





# 36 Ways to sell your home faster

25. **Check for cracks and water damage** – If your home is showing significant cracks or any water damage, consider having a building and pest inspection completed prior to going to market
26. **Replace your shower curtains**
27. **Gardening** – Keep your garden neat and tidy at all times. Lawn care is of utmost importance, as is removing any dying plants
28. **Put away toys and garden equipment** – Bikes, outside toys, unused outdoor furniture, hoses and garden equipment should be stored out of sight
29. **Put away pool equipment** – Pool equipment should be stored out of sight – especially for photos. Don't forget the creepy crawly!
30. **Clean your outdoor furniture** – Outdoor furniture should be kept clean and/or repainted if necessary
31. **Letterbox** – Your letterbox is one of the first impressions of your house, so it should be evaluated with a critical eye. If it can't be repaired, replace it.
32. **Check out the exterior** – Make any minor repairs to the exterior of your house if necessary. Ensure your gutters are clean, and there is no rust or missing paint.
33. **The front** – Porches, steps, verandas, balconies, patios and other areas to the front of your home should be kept uncluttered, swept and in good condition
34. **Bins**- Keep your council bins clean and out of sight
35. **Check your roof** – Replace and secure any broken or loose roof tiles. Any extra dollar spent now may add thousands later.
36. **Paint is cheap** – Investing in painting your home can make the difference between “turning on” the buyer and sending up a red flag about the condition of your home



# How to: Make the moving process easier on your kids

Selling a house and moving can be stressful for all members of your family. A bit of forward planning can help to minimise the disruption to routines and make the process easier on the youngest members of your family. Below are some tips that we hope will help your family.

## Don't delay on breaking the news!

Just like adults, kids need time to get used to the idea of moving, particularly if the move will involve changing schools/kindergarten/daycare, so we suggest you provide them with as much advanced warning as possible.

## Explore your new neighbourhood

Provide them with as much age-appropriate information as you can, regarding why the family is moving, and what they can expect to experience in their new home and new suburb.

Once you've chosen what suburb or town you're moving to, show your children maps and pictures of where you'll be living. Talk about local attractions that may be interesting (such as beaches or parks), and if you have the time take them for a day trip to the suburb to show them all of the highlights.

## Be cautiously optimistic

As with many life changes, your children's attitude to the move will likely mirror yours, so it's important to be optimistic and positive about the move. Keep in mind that even if the new house is perfect for your family, it will still take some time for everyone to adjust to living there.

## Involve them in the process

Depending on the age of the child, you may be able to involve them in the packing process, as this may help them to understand that even though they'll be living in a new home, all of their belongings will come with them.

Once you've moved into your new home, get them to help unpack their things and decide how to arrange their bedroom. If funds permit, having your child decorate their own bedroom can go a long way in helping them settle in to their new home and new routines.

## Keep a routine

Routine is central to a child's world, so it's important to try and keep some normality and routine during this process (particularly if your home is on the market). We suggest that you continue with all of your regular weekend activities during this time.

If you have toddlers, perhaps consider delaying implementing changes such as commencing toilet training until you are settled into your new home.





# How to: Hold a successful garage sale

Holding a garage sale is a great way to declutter before going to market, before moving house, or when you feel you just have too much stuff! Below are some steps to help simplify the process.

- One Month Before

  - Find a space to gather all of the items you wish to sell, such as in a spare bedroom or in the garage
  - Ask your family, friends and neighbours if they have anything they wish for you to sell on their behalf
  - Sort through all of your possessions to locate items you no longer need.
  - Clean all items and price them
  - Work out if you will need any family or friends to be helpers on the day
  - Check your local community newspapers/facebook groups to ensure there are no major local community or sporting events on the day you are planning to have your sale
  - Choose a day and time for your garage sale – Saturday or Sunday are the best days to have a garage sale – you could even spread yours over the weekend if you have a lot to sell
  - Choose a start and end time for your garage sale – we suggest an 8am start to avoid the “early birds” knocking on your door! Having a clearly stated finishing time (perhaps 1pm) means you won’t have people coming too late in the day
- One Week Before

  - Advertise in your local community facebook groups and those of your neighbouring suburbs. Ensure your post is clear on date, time, location and the types of items being sold.
  - Consider advertising your garage sale on community noticeboards such as those in supermarkets and community centres
  - Prepare your advertising signs to place out the night before your garage sale. Keep the, brief with date, time and address. Your local agent may be able to provide you with some directional pointer boards. When putting up your signs, please respect other peoples property and ensure they are not in dangerous locations
- One Day Before

  - Place up your advertising signs the day before your garage sale - put them on the corner of your street and on any roads leading to your street
- Day of Garage Sale

  - Put balloons on your letterbox so people can easily see your house
  - Have all of your helpers wearing a money belt or have just one person handling transactions
  - Have plenty of change available - particularly coins
  - Do not accept cheques. Ensure all items are paid for and taken immediately
  - Have available plastic bags for buyers to take small items home in



# Frequently asked questions

We’re sure you have many questions about the process! Below are some common questions we are asked all the time.

- What do I do during buyer inspections at my home?

Leave them to it! We understand that it is difficult to “let go”, however we strongly suggest leaving for a short time while we are bringing buyers through your home. This will leave prospective buyers free to roam your property and feel at home. Rest assured we will be with them the whole time, and will ensure your home is locked up securely when we leave.
- What do I do with my pets?

If possible, take them with you (particularly dogs). If you are unable to take your animals with you, please provide a safe, secure space we can put them in for the duration of the inspection, to keep them safe and ensure they don’t escape.

With cats, keep in mind that they can be easily spooked by strangers being in their homes. If possible, we recommend taking them with you in a cat carrier for inspections, particularly if they are “inside only” cats.
- Will people really look inside my cupboards?

Yes. We understand you will still need to store things, just ensure they are neat and tidy and any valuables are stored out of sight.
- What do I do if someone knocks on my door and asks to view the home?

We recommend that you don’t allow anyone through your home without one of our agents present. Buyers can be very sneaky and are often trying to get information from you so they can pay the lowest price possible. Your agent of choice will have the skills necessary to deflect any uncomfortable questions, and will be able to expertly handle any negatives the buyers may bring up. Should someone knock on your door, simply give them one of our business cards and request that any discussions about the property be through the agent.
- What do I do if it’s raining on an inspection day?

Don’t despair! Although this may mean you have less groups through an open for inspection, the ‘hot’ buyers will still be out and about. Please leave some old towels out for the agent to place near all of your external doors to avoid muddy footprints inside!







# How to: Self-manage your rental property

If you're choosing to manage the rental of your investment property/properties yourself, it's imperative that you familiarise yourself with relevant legislation surrounding the legal rights and obligations of landlords and tenants. Please find below a short list outlining some of the steps that you will need to take when self managing your property.

## Prepare all necessary documentation, ensuring you have a strong knowledge of the residential tenancies act (1997)

The lease is a legal contract between the tenant and the landlord. It covers the amount of rent to be paid, the length of the agreement, any additional rules and conditions, and the security bond.

There are two types of tenancy agreements – fixed term and periodic term. A **fixed term** agreement is for a set period of time. Even though the lease has an end date, it is still necessary for the tenant to give notice in writing when they wish to move out, or if the landlord wants to remove the tenant after the end of the lease they must provide the tenant with a “notice to vacate” within certain time frames. A **periodic term** lease is set from either week-to-week or month-to-month. Again, the landlord or the tenant needs to give an appropriate amount of notice in writing that they wish to end the lease.

Before signing a lease, the tenant must be provided a copy to review. When both parties have signed the lease, the tenant should be provided with a signed copy within 14 days.

## Make sure you cover all of your bases

You will need to keep exhaustive and faultless records to regulate rental payments and maintenance requests. Rent receipts should always be issued, as well as records of bond lodgement and refund, plus detailed condition reports.

These documents are essential, as they will all be required if you have a dispute with your tenant and need to resolve it through a tribunal (VCAT).



# How to: Self-manage your rental property

## Find an appropriate tenant

Finding the “right” tenant can be a hard process. You need to market your property, arrange and conduct inspections, carefully check your applicants references, rental history and ability to meet payment deadlines. High risk tenants often seek out private landlords in the hope that they will be less thorough with the application process.

## Presentation perfect

Before a tenant moves in, you will need to ensure that the property is clean and secure and that every appliance is in safe, working order. Once the tenant moves in, you will need to ensure that all repairs and routine maintenance requests are carried out quickly and satisfactorily.

## Conduct regular inspections

You will need to conduct a routine inspection three months after the tenant moves in, and every six months after that. You should take a detailed condition report accompanied by photographs and provide clear feedback and a copy of the report to the tenant. Take note of any potential maintenance issues during this inspection.

## Collecting rent

When deciding what monthly rental amount to charge, you need to closely monitor the market to ensure your expectations are reasonable. Inspect as many similar properties as you can to gauge what other properties in the area are renting for

You and your tenant will need to decide on a payment method and frequency, and you will need to establish strict measures to avoid arrears.





# What happens on Open Day?

To ensure all open for inspections go as smoothly as possible, we follow the below steps.

## How to prepare for an open for inspection:

- Regardless of the weather, open as many windows and doors as possible the morning of the open for inspection, to get some airflow through the property before buyers come through
- If it's a warm/hot day, please run air conditioners and/or fans for at least an hour prior to commencement of the open for inspection
- If it's a cold day, please run heaters for at least an hour prior to commencement of the open for inspection
- If it is forecast to rain, please leave out some old towels for us so that we can place them at the external doors so people don't walk wet foot prints through your house!
- Move jewellery/portable electronics into secure drawers, or consider taking them with you in the car
- Please turn on all internal lights – this helps us to have your house “buyer ready” in a much shorter time frame

## What happens on open day:

We will arrive 10-15 minutes prior to the commencement of the open for inspection, so that we can set up and prepare for the buyers.

As we tend to schedule our opens in a row, we will send you an **sms** once we have locked up your property with the pertinent information (number of groups, if any showed interest), and will call you later in the day to discuss the open in more depth. We understand that an open for inspection is an anxious and emotional time for owners, and we will do our best to make this as easy for you as possible.



# What happens on Auction Day?

## 1-2 Weeks Prior

We will arrange a meeting with your auctioneer at your property, so that you can meet him/her, they can familiarise themselves with your property and we can discuss what will happen on the day.

## 1-2 Days Prior

We will have a strategy meeting with you to discuss who we believe will be bidding on auction day, and to set your reserve price.

## Auction Day

Our team will arrive **30 minutes prior to the open for inspection time** to set up for the auction.

The auctioneer will usually arrive **15-30 minutes prior to the auction time** – they will have already prepared and rehearsed their auction “spiel”

During the open for inspection, we suggest you go for a short drive or go to a nearby neighbours, and return to your property **5 minutes before auction time**.

During the auction, we will place you inside the property, in a front room so you can hear/see what is happening during the auction, and are nearby if we need to discuss anything with you.

During the auction the auctioneer and the lead agent may come inside to have discussions with you (especially if the auction is stalling). We will discuss this process in depth during our pre-auction meetings.

After the auction – if the property sells we will take the buyers inside to sign the contracts (usually at the dining table) we would appreciate if you could wait in another room while we do this (it will take approx. 15 minutes). You will have a chance to meet the buyers once everything is signed and deposit paid, we just need to have everything formalised ASAP to protect you – our client.

After the auction – if the property passes in, we will take the highest bidder inside to disclose your reserve price and negotiate on the property – This discussion will usually take place at the dining table, and we would appreciate if you could wait in another room while we do this. One of our agents will keep you fully informed through the whole process.





# Want to talk Real Estate?

Come and visit Janice and  
Bec to find out how we can  
help unleash your home's  
potential.

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