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6 ways to show your home some love before selling

Thinking about selling your home this year?

Luckily for you it's a seller's market in many corners of the country right now, however that doesn't mean that you shouldn't take the time to give your property a bit of tender loving care before listing it.

A little bit of effort in preparing your property for sale can go a long way in helping buyers fall head over heels for your property, which will ultimately help improve your sale price.

So where should you concentrate your efforts?

1. Clean like you've never cleaned before

We're not talking about a standard vacuum or just wiping the counters - you need to get into every nook and cranny of your home to make it shine again.

Clean out often-neglected areas like garages and sheds and do those chores you might reserve for spring-cleaning, such as window or oven cleaning.

2. Minimise

Get a head start on the moving process by sorting through your things and selling or throwing away anything that is no longer wanted or needed.

Getting rid of large bulky items like unwanted furniture will make it easier to present your home for open for inspections, and will save you from having to move so many items to your next home.

3. Work on kerb appeal

The front of a house sets the stage for the rest of the property, so you want to make sure you get that first impression just right.

Tidy up landscaping and make everything at the front of the property look neat and tidy. Clear footpaths and driveways, ensure the front fence is sitting straight and the property's numbers can be clearly identified.

4. Get out the paintbrush

The front of a house sets the stage for the rest of the property, so you want to make sure you get that first impression just right.

Tidy up landscaping and make everything at the front of the property look neat and tidy. Clear footpaths and driveways, ensure the front fence is sitting straight and the property's numbers can be clearly identified.

5. Add flowers and plants

Bring a bit of nature indoors to add a bit of energy to a space and draw attention to areas you want people to focus on. For instance, you may want to take some flowers from the garden and place these in a vase on your dining room table.

Large pot plants are also good for filling empty spaces around the home, or can be used to frame doorways and entrances.



6. Make some small tweaks

You need to be careful of overcapitalising when preparing your home for sale, but you might want to change a few small things to help make your home feel a bit more modern. For instance new light fixtures or fans can bring an older home into the 21st century, or you might like to replace old faucets or door handles.

What options do first home buyers have apart from the First Home Loan Deposit Scheme?

The First Home Loan Deposit Scheme (FHLDS) came into effect on January 1 2020, allowing eligible buyers to purchase a home with as little as a 5 per cent deposit.

The scheme has already been popular, with 3000 of the 10,000 loan guarantees already reserved on day one of the scheme becoming available, according to Domain data.

But the FHLDS certainly isn't for everyone. If you miss out on the first round of the scheme, or find that you aren't eligible, you still have a lot of options for breaking into the property market.

Keep saving

While it may sound appealing to be able to jump in the property market with a meager 5 per cent deposit, the reality is that the bigger a deposit you have saved, the better off you could be in the long run.

Ideally you should be aiming for about a 20 per cent deposit to avoid paying Lenders' Mortgage Insurance (LMI), but another reason to pay more is because you won't need to borrow as much from your lender.

The more you need to borrow, the more interest you will need to pay, and it may put you in a tight financial situation. So unless you are especially eager to jump into the property market you might be best waiting until you can save up a little more first.

Pay for LMI

If you only have a 5 per cent deposit for a home you may still be able to take out a loan without being approved for the FHLDS, however you will need to pay LMI.

This is a one-off fee applied to a home loan to protect the lender in case there is a default in payments.

LMI can cost thousands of dollars, but every lender has different requirements so you will need to check with your to find out what your obligations might be.

Take advantage of other first home buyer incentives

If you're a first home buyer then you may be able to take advantage of a state government grant or a stamp duty exemption to help you get into the market sooner.

Grants and stamp duty exemptions vary from state to state so visit www.firsthome.gov.au to find out what you could be eligible for.

Keep in mind however that most incentives are available to first home buyers purchasing a new property.

If you're interested in finding out more about the First Home Loan Deposit Scheme visit www.nhfc.gov.au/what-we-do/fhlds/.

Need to break your lease early? Here's what you need to know

Whether it's for a new job, to take on a gap year, or because of changing family circumstances, there are plenty of reasons why a tenant may find themselves in a situation where they need to move out of their rental home before their lease agreement ends.

Ending a rental agreement prematurely isn't something that should be taken lightly, but there are steps you can take to help minimise the disruption to your landlord, and hopefully any costs too.

Check your state's rental laws

Rental laws differ from state to state, but in general there will be a specified period of notice that you will be required to provide, and probably break-lease fees that will cover the cost to re-advertise and re-let.

You may also be required to continue to pay rental costs until a replacement tenant can be found, or until the end-date of your agreement.

There may be legal circumstances that allow you to leave the property early, such as financial hardship, so you really do need to check the rules that apply in your state.

Provide as much notice as possible

To minimise any possible costs it's best to notify your landlord or property manager of your intention to leave as soon as you can. The more notice you provide the easier it will be to provide a replacement tenant for your rental, meaning less is likely to be owed.

Official notice should be given in writing and should at the very least outline the date you intend to leave and forwarding address if you have one.

Work with your property manager and landlord

You may be able to come to a mutual agreement with your property manager and landlord and be able to end your lease early, or reduce any associated costs.

Regardless, it's worth making your best efforts to help find a new tenant for the property.

This might mean keeping the property clean and presentable and allowing regular property viewings to take place so that the property gets leased again quickly.

Moving with kids? How to find a family-friendly neighborhood

Trying to find a property as a single or a couple can be hard enough, let alone when you add kids into the mix.

Once you have a family there are likely to be certain features you want in a new neighborhood, such as good schools, plenty of places for kids to run around and a family friendly community.

With that in mind here are some things you might like to look out for before you find somewhere to settle down:

School zones

Being in the right school catchment is at the top of most parents' property wish lists. But how do you know what school you want to send your kids to?

Before you decide on a particular property it might be worth visiting the local schools and doing some on-line research to help you decide if there is one particular school that would be suitable for your child.

Keep in mind that some schools strictly enforce their catchment zones, meaning you might not be able to enroll at the school unless you're living within a specific boundary so it's important to get your school choice right from the start.

Childcare centres

If you'll be dropping your kids off at childcare during the week then you'll need to find out what providers are available in the area.

Childcare centres located in highly populated areas might have long-wait lists to join, so this is something to keep in mind. You may need to look at alternate options in these cases such as family daycare or local babysitting services.

Local demographics

Are you looking to live in an area popular with other young families? Websites such as realestate.com.au provide demographic data for most suburbs so you can find out the percentage of families living in any given suburb.

Visiting a suburb and hanging out at its local shops and cafes can also give you a general feel for the types of people living in the area, and help you decide whether or not the area will be suited to your family.

Nearby amenities

Kids tend to get bored easily, so you'll probably want access to things that will keep them entertained such as parks, pools and shopping centres.

This is particularly important if you intend to live in an apartment or small house, as you may not have a lot of room at your own property for your kids to be able to run around freely.

Do you like it?

At the end of the day kids are pretty adaptable, so if you like a particular property or suburb that ticks a lot of boxes for you happy then your kids will probably be just happy too.



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