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## Why it could be a good time to jump on the property bandwagon

Buying a home during a global pandemic might not seem like the best idea to some, but there are plenty of eager buyers across the country more eager than ever to get their foot on the property ladder.

Despite stories of doom and gloom and a huge hit to the Australian economy, the Australian property market has remained relatively resilient.

There has yet to be the huge drop in house prices that some experts have predicted, and in fact even when lockdown restrictions were in place in April, property prices were still up nationally by 0.3 per cent, according to CoreLogic data.

Market activity was down for the month, but we are starting to see it pick up again now that restrictions are easing and people are gaining confidence again.

Here are some reasons why buyers are excited about property right now:

### 1. They've had time to plan

People may have been spending more time at home of late, but they haven't been sitting by idly.

Many have been using their time to research the property market and see what is out there. This can be seen in

figures from realestate.com.au where it was found that search activity was up by 50 per cent on what it was this time last year.

Those who need to sell their property before being able to buy have also been able to use their extra time to get their house renovated and ready to be put on the market.

### 2. Restrictions are opening up

A lot of people chose to wait on the sidelines while strict social distancing restrictions were in place, but now that these are starting to ease many are seeing it as a green light to put their plans into action.

There is a lot of pent up demand from both buyers and sellers, and now that auctions and open homes are possible again, people are starting to get more engaged with the market.

### 3. Mortgages are cheap

The cash rate is sitting at a measly 0.25 per cent right now, making for the cheapest mortgages rates in history.

Those who do take up a mortgage right now may have the opportunity to pay their home loan down relatively quickly.

### 4. A tangible investment

Property prices have held up well during this crisis, despite other investments such as stocks proving extremely volatile.

During uncertain times people that have the money to spend often prefer to park it in bricks and mortar



investments like property, as it proves again and again that it is more resilient than other investment types.

## 5. The chance for a lifestyle change

The way we live has changed dramatically, and that means what we want from our homes has changed too.

More people are working from home now and there's a chance the typical 9-5 office day will never return to the way it was.

This could mean we'll see remote workers looking to move away from their offices and into regional areas, where properties are generally more affordable too.

## 6. Less pressure

While there is rising confidence in the market, things are still more quiet than usual. This gives buyers the time to look around and find the property they want without the pressure of having to quickly snatch up a property for fear of missing out.

Keep in mind however that every property market is different and there might be a lot of buyers in the wings waiting to get out and start bidding very soon.

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## Who's responsible for mould in a rental?

Mould is a common problem for properties that can show up at any time of year, however it often presents itself in winter.

That's because people tend to spend more time indoors when the weather is cool and they may not open up windows and doors as much as usual. This prevents proper ventilation and can create a damp and dark environment for mould to thrive in.

## Is the tenant or landlord responsible?

Figuring out the source of the mould will help you determine who might be responsible.

Generally, if the mould is due to an issue with the property itself, such as a leaky roof or a faulty pipe, then it is up to the landlord to fix the resulting damage and make the property clean and fit for habitation again.

However, if mould has occurred because a tenant hasn't allowed a property to ventilate properly, or because condensation has had a chance to build up, then they might be at fault.

It isn't always clear cut who's responsible, but it's in the tenant's best interests to inform their property manager of any potential mould issues as soon as possible to prevent a bigger problem from occurring.

## How to prevent mould in the future?

- Report potential mould or water issues as soon as possible, particularly any water leaks in the roof or walls
- Dry wet areas right away
- Use an exhaust fan (if there is one) when showering or cooking or open windows as much as possible
- Clean up small spots of mould as soon as you see them
- Improve air flow in the property by opening doors and windows
- Use moisture absorbers

For more information or advice it's best to talk directly with your property manager.

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## How much can you find out about a property online?

With social distancing now a way of life, many people are choosing to do a lot of their real estate research online before fronting up to a property in person.

Luckily, modern technology and property websites allows us to find out a great deal about individual properties – from what the neighbourhood is like to how much they have sold for in the past.

There's plenty to learn about a property before you take the next steps to inspect it in person.

Here's where you can start:

## View property profiles

You've no doubt looked over a property's online listing in detail, but there's still a lot more information you can find out about it by looking up the address on other websites.



Sites such as [realestate.com.au](https://www.realestate.com.au), [onthefloor.com.au](https://www.onthefloor.com.au) and [domain.com.au](https://www.domain.com.au) all offer property profiles that might provide you with information such as past sales and rental history, an estimated price range, and maybe even past photos of the property. This can be useful in determining if the property has been renovated recently or not.

These websites will often also show nearby properties that have recently sold to help with determining a property's price.

### **Get to know the neighbourhood**

Another way to learn about a property is to find out about the area it's located in.

[Microburbs.com.au](https://www.microburbs.com.au) is a useful website that provides detailed demographic information about suburbs and neighbourhoods. You can find out the population density, the leafiness of the area and where local shops and cafes are located.

It's also well worth searching for property information on the relevant local council website. You will be able to check whether any relevant zoning rules apply and you can also search for nearby development applications.

### **Contact agents**

If you're after any particular details about a property before you want to commit to seeing it in person then don't be shy about asking the selling agent.

There's a good chance they'll be able to obtain any extra information for you, and provide you with any details you're looking for about the area you plan to buy in general.

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### **Are dual-income properties a way to get ahead?**

Whether you're a homeowner or an investor there's a good chance you want your property to work harder for you and earn some extra income.

One way to do this is by purchasing a property that allows for dual living, which is essentially when there are two-self-contained dwellings on one property title.

If you're an investor then this can mean double the income, or if you're a homebuyer you could live in one part of the property and rent out the other.

Common dual-living properties include properties with granny flats, or there are also duplexes or dual-key residences where there are separate locked off living quarters and common areas within the same property.

### **The benefits of dual-income properties**

Obviously the big drawcard of a dual-income property is the increased income potential. Plus, if you have any vacancy periods for one of the dwellings you will still have some cash flow coming in.

A dual-income property also allows you to maximise the potential of a property without having to subdivide, which means less holding fees, insurance costs and council rates.

### **What to look out for**

The drawbacks of a dual-income property depend on the individual situation. One of the big questions you need to ask yourself with a dual-income residence is how appealing the property will be to the local buying market, as sometimes these types of properties mainly appeal to investors and not to owner-occupiers.

You really need to research the local market and assess its desirability and potential for capital gains, when compared to other property types. It's also worth noting that not all councils support dual-income properties, so find out what rules apply where you live.

Every situation is different. Ask yourself what your property goals are and make sure you talk to experts such as local real estate agents and financial advisors to get the best possible advice.

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