

Rural and Regional Property Focus

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How to: add value to your kitchen

Kitchens are widely touted as a room of a house that can add value when it comes to selling your property. But not all kitchens are created equal. What can you do to yours to catch a potential buyer's eye and persuade them to make a good offer?

As with any pre-sale renovation or spruce up, keep a tight rein on budget. Talk to your sales consultant about what your asking price should be before and after a kitchen makeover.

Then set your budget at a portion of that difference that you're comfortable with. You don't want any makeover plan to eat too far into that financial gain or there is no point at all in doing it. Your sales consultant will also be able to give you a good idea of some quick changes to your kitchen that may

help. You may find very little financial outlay can make a huge difference; avoiding anything that involves changes to plumbing and electrical wiring is another way to keep costs down.

HERE ARE A FEW IDEAS:

- Freshen up cabinetry, and walls with a coat of paint and new cupboard or drawer handles. As a rule, if you want to create the illusion of a bright, airy, spacious kitchen opt for light neutrals. You also want to keep the palette fairly neutral so potential buyers feel they can stamp their own personality on it. Don't get too hung up on decorating to your own personal taste.
- Decluttering and cleaning is another cost-effective way to spruce up a kitchen. Keep open shelves, cupboards, and pantries looking orderly and functional instead of crammed full of your own belongings. Make sure all surfaces are clean and unmarked. If benchtops are looking old and marked, consider replacing them if you can afford it. There are a huge range of different options available these days for benches, in a range of prices. You don't have to choose the most expensive. A new, unmarked

cheaper option will still be better than older, stained or chipped surfaces.

- The same is true for flooring and wall tiles. If you can, replace or at least repair old, stained, worn flooring or cracked tiles and peeling lino, and make sure tile grouting is looking clean and fresh.
- Look up. Don't forget about ceilings and lighting. Kitchens should be well lit to be at their most functional – but good lighting can also make them seem bigger and brighter. And don't forget to at least clean, and preferably paint ceilings.
- Think about flow. Can the way you move around the kitchen be improved by shifting the dishwasher, fridge or oven? Do doors clash? Is the fridge in the wrong place? If there's something about the way you use your kitchen that has always irritated you, it may well irritate buyers as well. If you can change it, within your budget it is worth doing.
- Sinks are not as sexy as some kitchen essentials to replace but can make a big difference. A good size sink makes a big difference to kitchen functionality – particularly if you currently have an older kitchen which often have small sinks. Tapware should also be well-maintained and clean.
- Replacing ovens should probably be a last resort, simply because of the cost. A cutting edge new oven in an old, tired kitchen will be far less likely to add value than an older oven in a smart, tidy, light kitchen.
- Before you start, make sure you know exactly what you want to do to your kitchen and why and stick to it. It's very easy for a kitchen makeover to turn into a personal project – a chance for you to add all the things you've ever wanted in a kitchen and suddenly you find your budget is blown. Thinking about what you'd like in a kitchen is a good place to start, but don't fall into the trap of making it too personal to you. Thinking about big picture, general improvements such as space, storage, functionality and light. Make your plan around achieving these as cost effective as possible and stick to it.
- Think carefully about what you're going to include as chattels in the kitchen. If you have a difficult space designed around a particular fridge for example, consider leaving it behind as part of the kitchen. Anything difficult to replace that is a key part of the kitchen should be included in the sale if possible.

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- Only heat the rooms you are using – it sounds basic, but why heat the parts of the house you’re not using?

KNOW YOUR APPLIANCES

- You might think you’ve turned the television off, but it might just be on ‘sleep’ mode, which means it’s still consuming power. Using the ‘off’ button on an appliances remote control won’t turn it off completely. When you are not using your television, stereo, video, computer or other appliances, turn them off at the wall.
- Walk around the house and you will be surprised at how many appliances are still on and therefore using power. Unplugging them at the wall will save power.
- Plan ahead when you use the oven to cook more than one item at once.

LIGHTS

- As it gets darker earlier in the evenings and later in the mornings our lights stay on a lot longer and chew up a lot more electricity. Make sure you turn the light off in rooms you are not using. You can always turn it back on every time you re-enter the room.
- If you have an older-style home, it’s a good idea to invest in energy-saving bulbs which also reduce costs. Newer homes will most probably already be using these, but they can easily be purchased from hardware stores, and even supermarkets.

Save on Winter Warming Costs

At this time of the year we are amazed that every time we get another electricity or gas bill in the mail it just seems to get higher. But the question we should be asking is how can I make the next one lower?

It is possible to maintain a good level of comfort in your home while decreasing your power bill. Some small and mostly unnoticeable changes will make a difference:

WATER HEATING IS ONE OF THE LARGEST POWER OR GAS USERS

- Check your hot water taps and hot water cylinder for leaks.
- Look at installing an insulating wrap on your hot water cylinder and the hot water pipe from the top – these are reasonably priced and easy to install and will reduce precious heat loss from your cylinder.
- Laundry uses a huge amount of water – with so

many excellent cold water laundry detergents on the market there is very little need for hot washes.

- Look at what temperature your water is set at – do you really need it that high?
- Take showers instead of baths – and resist the urge to linger.

STOP YOUR HEAT ESCAPING

- Install insulation wherever you can around the home.
- Make sure your curtains are closed when the heater is on.
- If purchasing new window dressings, the thicker your curtains and the closer fitting they are to the window the less heat you will lose.
- Seal drafts around doors, and if you aren’t using a fireplace, seal or cover that up as well – you’ll be surprised at how much heat can escape up the chimney.

Market Facts

Agricultural properties 12 months to February 2017

	Agricultural properties sold	Sales between 4-40 Ha	Agricultural property sales
New South Wales	\$8.5b	68.6%	12,407
Victoria	\$3.8b	79.2%	8,068
Queensland	\$2.0b	13.5%	1,747
South Australia	\$956m	52.7%	1,697
Western Australia	\$1.9b	63.4%	2,544
Tasmania	\$554m	93.8%	1,639
Northern Territory	\$350m	87.2%	344

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