

A silver step ladder stands on the left side of the frame. To its right, on a yellow protective mat, are various painting supplies: a large white bucket, a smaller silver bucket with a red handle, a silver spray can, a silver paint can with its lid off, and a red-handled roller. The scene is set in a room with light-colored walls and a wooden floor.

# A guide to preparing your home for sale

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# Time to move on

This booklet contains suggestions on how to create value in your home. By following our advice you could add thousands of dollars to your sale price.

It's time to let go, it is no longer your home, it is a house for sale. Your goal is to present your property to its full potential, making sure that it appeals to a wide variety of people in your target market.



# Targeting buyers and positioning

## You first need to put yourself in the shoes of the buyer

Your sales consultant will ensure the sale of your home becomes a team exercise, but in order to maximise the sale price, you will need to let go emotionally. It is important to take an objective approach towards your property and adopt a can-do attitude to correcting your property's weaknesses and promoting its best attributes.

Compare your property to similar properties currently on the market. This will help you identify the target market that your property will most appeal to.

This process will give you a strong starting point on what you need to address in your property to ensure it appeals to your particular buying audience.

Receiving a great price and quick sale is much more likely to come from good planning and preparation, rather than luck.



# What buyers look for

Buyers value good investments, such as modern appliances and devices that simplify our lives. Insulation and heating that makes for a more comfortable existence and thoughtful zones to allow for rooms to be used for many different purposes to accommodate the changing needs of families.

## Finished homes

Unless buying a do-up, people expect homes to be completed and in a liveable condition.

## Good outdoor living

Specific areas for outdoor dining and lounging. Landscaped grounds accommodating both sun and shade. Planting to complement the property.

## Multiple bathrooms

Master bedrooms with en-suites are very desirable. A second toilet is on many buyers' checklist.

## Multiple living rooms

Many desire open plan living, but it's also an advantage to have spaces that can be divided into adult or child friendly zones. Having a home that can accommodate a media room or a home theatre is fast becoming standard rather than a future trend.

## Bedrooms

The general rule is the more bedrooms on offer, the higher the value.

## Garaging and parking

Off-road parking for two cars is desirable.

## Home office

The internet is part of everyday life for today's busy family. This technology allows working from home. A dedicated office area can be easily created in a quiet corner of the living space, hallway, nook or guest bedroom.

## Storage

Good storage is easy to achieve. Inexpensive options are available at most DIY stores. From wardrobe shelving systems to flat-pack cupboards to put in garages and laundries and more.

# Getting started

The following pages will take you step-by-step through each area of your property. Work through the pages and make a checklist of all the areas you believe need work.

Once you have completed the checklist, it's time to prioritise your to-do list. Focus on what will deliver you the best return on your time and money invested.

Remember, first impressions count. Buyers will be assessing your property's suitability in seconds. When it comes to property hunting, it's all those tiny details that add up to the vibe buyers get off your property. No matter the space, keep this in mind...

**... Clean, declutter, fix, maintain, brighten!**



# Exterior and entrances

## Street appeal

First impressions are lasting. Make sure your house creates a special sense of arrival.

- Mow lawns
- Weed and cultivate gardens
- Trim overhanging foliage along paths
- Sweep driveways and paths free of leaves, weeds and debris
- Clear rubbish from the roadside and ensure rubbish bins are tucked neatly away
- Tidy or touch up steps, paths, railings, fences and gates
- Ensure the mailbox is in good condition, with clear and readable numbers - paint or replace if needed

## Exterior structures and eaves

- Wash down and remove any cobwebs
- Ensure paint is fresh and well maintained
- Clean windows, inside and out
- Free gutters of debris
- Trim back plants from windows and doors to create light and space

## Entrance and doorways

- Keep entrance swept and cobweb free
- Get a smart doormat (replace if old or tatty)
- Ensure paths are free of moss and void of hazards
- Consider painting your front door and step if needed
- Check doorbell, security and outdoor lights are working
- Brighten up a dull entrance with furniture and pot plants that can be taken with you

## Rear and front sections

- Keep fencing maintained
- Ensure pools/ponds/water features, outdoor furniture or play equipment is looking clean and fresh
- Remove leftover building materials, broken toys, sports equipment and any decaying structures
- Weed and cultivate the garden, consider resilient plants that require less maintenance
- Mow lawns

## Garages, carports, sheds

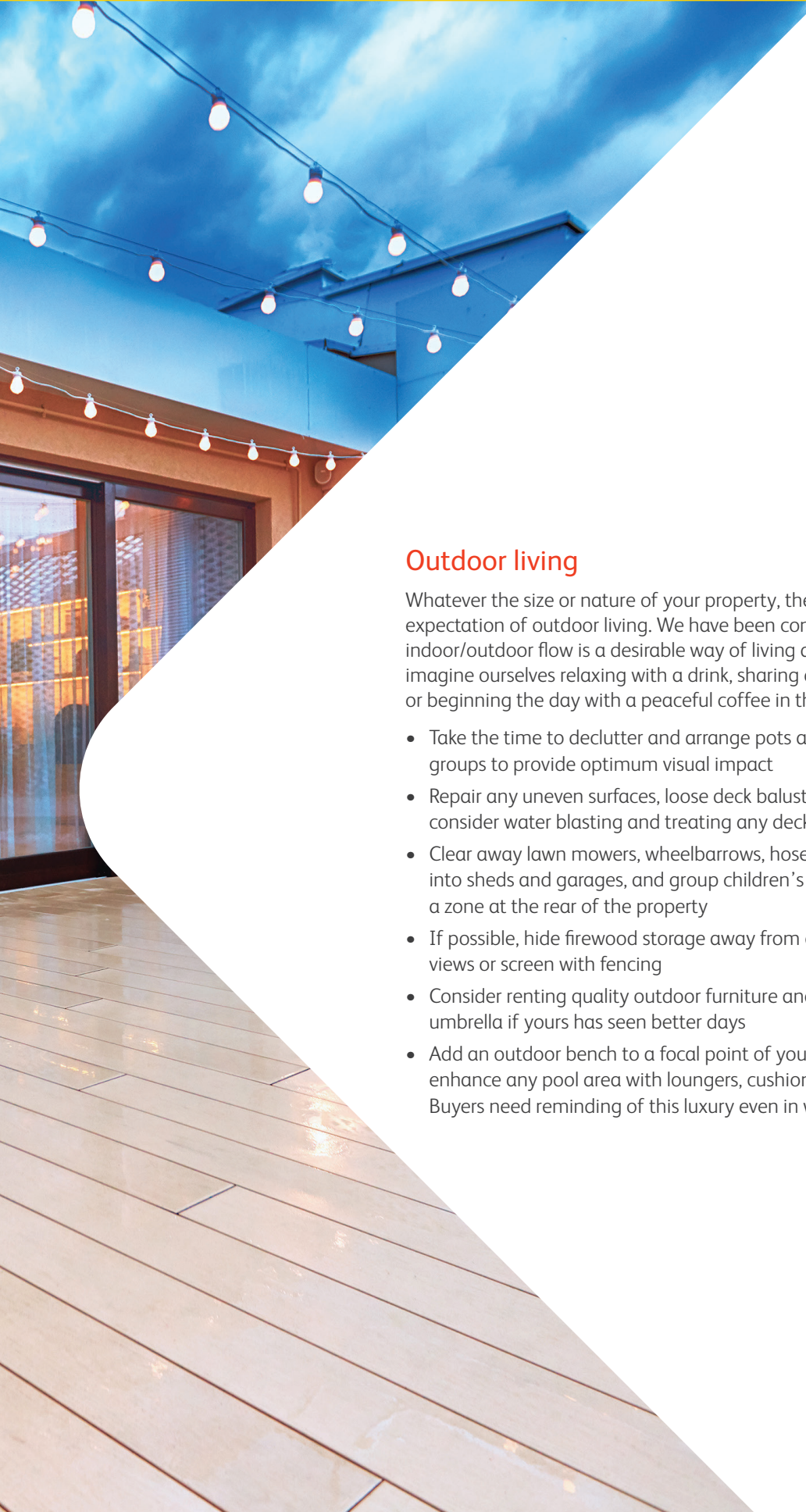
- Buyers will appreciate a well swept and organised garage. In fact, it can add a considerable amount to the value of your property
- Keep benches and machinery tidy and clean
- Make sure everything is stored in an orderly fashion and take advantage of storage solutions
- Ensure there is ample room to park cars
- Sheds, garaging and outbuildings also have the potential of accommodating an office, hobby spaces or rumpus/teen zones











## Outdoor living

Whatever the size or nature of your property, there is an expectation of outdoor living. We have been conditioned that indoor/outdoor flow is a desirable way of living and we all want to imagine ourselves relaxing with a drink, sharing a meal with friends or beginning the day with a peaceful coffee in this space.

- Take the time to declutter and arrange pots and containers in groups to provide optimum visual impact
- Repair any uneven surfaces, loose deck balustrades, steps and consider water blasting and treating any decks
- Clear away lawn mowers, wheelbarrows, hoses and garden tools into sheds and garages, and group children's play equipment in a zone at the rear of the property
- If possible, hide firewood storage away from outdoor living views or screen with fencing
- Consider renting quality outdoor furniture and a large market umbrella if yours has seen better days
- Add an outdoor bench to a focal point of your garden and enhance any pool area with loungers, cushions and towels. Buyers need reminding of this luxury even in winter



# Interior

## Lobby and entrance

Create space and make the entrance easy to navigate. If your entrance or hallway is narrow, paint it a light colour and use furnishings to make an impact. It is wise to be as clutter free as you can.

## Lounges and family rooms

With a diverse variety of living habits, these rooms are best presented to show off an easy, comfortable and social family lifestyle.

Take advantage of new discreet technology. Make sure the room is not dominated by a large television or sound system.

Hide cables and cords away and move any clutter into entertainment units.

As a general rule, the less you have in a room the bigger it looks. Cleanliness and decluttering allows buyers to have a clear view of the potential for their own furniture and possessions. Consider moving furniture into storage if you have too much in the house.

Position furniture to take advantage of the features your house has to offer. This can be seasonal e.g. a cosy fireplace as the feature in the cooler months or a view of your garden framed by a lounge suite and glass doors, in the summer months.



Make your own focal point by adding a statement piece of art and a coordinating floor rug.

Where possible group furniture in conversation areas. Creating these zones can give the impression that many people could enjoy the use of the space. Look to group furnishings in large spaces to create different zones for different family activities.

Dated living rooms can be easily and inexpensively transformed by the use of colours in cushions, rugs and accessories.

A fresh coat of paint gives you the maximum impact for your dollar. Lighter, neutral shades are best.

Remove any family pictures. We want the buyers to be able to imagine themselves living in the house.

## Bedrooms

One of the most important rooms in the house is the master bedroom. Today we regard it as a retreat, and we often model it on luxury hotels.

Do your best to accommodate adequate storage and plenty of wardrobe space.

Put unwanted or seasonal clothing into storage to create space. Organise your wardrobe, e.g. hang shirts together, buttoned and facing the same direction. The more organised the better. Buyers will see this as a reflection of how well you take care of your property. Use storage solutions like plastic bins and shoe racks to make sure everything is orderly.

A corner can usually provide space for at least one chair and a small side table for a quiet read. This can add a tranquil theme to your bedroom.

Clear the room of furnishings surplus to average requirements and take this opportunity to rid yourselves of clothes and belongings that are no longer required.

Dress your beds with clean, fresh linen. Duvet covers, cushions and quilts are an inexpensive way to instantly update bedrooms.

Keep bedrooms looking lived in with flowers and a few on-trend accessories.

Remember to be critical with your lighting. Ugly, dusty and old fashioned light fittings date a property quickly.

Ensure each bedroom has a clear purpose. If it's an office, stage it to look like an office.



## Kitchen

Kitchens are usually a key selling point in most properties as they are the heart of the home. Food preparation and eating has been upgraded from a chore and necessity into a pleasure and enjoyable social pastime.

- First and foremost, clean it; make it sparkle
- Clear as much as you can from the bench without making the kitchen look stark
- Balance accessories to create a warm inviting atmosphere. Flowers, plants or a colourful fruit bowl are always a good touch as is an open cookbook on a stand
- Remove dishes from the bench and empty the dishwasher
- Remove surplus pieces of equipment to create space in drawers and cupboards
- Fix the floor, by replacing vinyl, cracked tiles or by polishing floorboards
- If the bench top is scratched or stained, consider replacing it
- New cupboard and drawer handles are an inexpensive way to add new life to an old kitchen
- Painting will give the kitchen a new lease of life
- Dining these days tends to be more casual. If room permits, dedicate a formal, (usually bigger), and a relaxed (smaller), zone to these purposes. A breakfast bar or small table in a kitchen or family room adds value to a home
- Get rid of magnets, photos or notes attached to the refrigerator



## Bathrooms

Bathrooms, (after kitchens), are targeted by buyers as they are the most expensive rooms to renovate. Cleanliness is at the forefront, so get out those cleaners and scourers and put them to good use.

- Clean until spotless
- Maintain and repair all visible damage and ensure fans, taps, and switches are in good working order
- The appeal of this room is about pampering, as well as function. Add some glamour by refreshing with new towels and rid any clutter into smart lidded baskets
- Give the room a spa feeling, with scented candles, folded towels, handmade soaps and boutique bath products

## Utility rooms

Laundries and utility spaces can easily become dumping grounds, make sure you clean and declutter.

Free these spaces of rubbish and items that are no longer of use.

Consider investing in storage cupboards where you can store detergents and other cleaning items. These are easily transportable to the garage or your next property.



## Empty homes

Empty homes often present a challenge to sellers, sales consultants and buyers alike.

For most, it is difficult to imagine living in a blank canvas. Potential buyers can find it hard to visualise how furniture will fit, its optimum layout and how they will function in the home. These houses will often expose weaknesses to buyers that are perhaps over-exaggerated.

Often, all that is needed to represent the potential of the property is to decorate a few key rooms well.

Leasing furniture from a hire company, home staging business or borrowing from friends or family can be an affordable solution in preference to buying new pieces. Costs for hire is normally about 10-20% of the furnishings value per month, and you can get pieces for specifically dressing your house for its market.





## Open homes

Conduct a trial walk-through of the house as if you were showing someone through. Make sure everything flows and there are no objects restricting natural movement through the house.

Working with your sales consultant, choose an optimal time of the day to show off your home. Think about the time of day when the house is looking its best. Consider traffic noise and when your target audience is most available to view.

Brightness, lightness, and warmth shining into living areas is an asset. Buyers need to be reminded about north facing living and the advantage and comfort it provides.

### The day before your open home:

- Air out your house, display fresh flowers and check that unused rooms are looking presentable
- Clear away recycling, unwanted papers and ensure the house is vacuumed and dusted

### The day of the open home:

- Make the beds and clear away all washing and clothing
- Do all dishes and empty the dishwasher
- Wipe over your kitchen and bathroom surfaces and put away personal toiletries
- Depending on the season, either open windows and doors or turn on heating in plenty of time before your sales consultant arrives
- Turn on all lights in the house
- Check the front porch and entry to the property is sparkling



## Final tips

You have now done all you can to make your house appealing and saleable. Continue the good work by keeping things constantly tidy and entrust the sales process to your sales consultant.

## Talk to your sales consultant, the more they know the better.

Discuss:

- Access to arterial routes, bus/train stops, peak/non peak times
- Access to supermarkets, local cafés and retail shopping
- Parks, beaches, leisure facilities nearby
- Schooling, playgrounds, entertainment within walking/cycling distance
- Neighbourhood security
- Pet enclosure

Updating a house does not always have to cost a fortune. Adding some new modern touches in furnishings can be all that is needed to transform a property.

These new pieces may be the key ingredients that give the purchaser the confidence to continue with the sale. Best of all, you get to take these pieces with you when you move on from the property.

A well maintained and presented property represents good value for money along with ease of sale and happiness. It reduces the risk in a buyer's mind of any future problems.

Best wishes with your sale.



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