



5 simple ways to get a good deal



From the desk of...

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Knowing what to pay can be daunting for start-out property buyers, but armed with the right information you can get yourself a great deal.

#1. Sticking to a budget

One of the most important aspects of buying is knowing what you have to spend. By having strict rules as to what you can afford it will stop you overspending and blowing out your budget. If you overspend, either by getting caught up in the drama of auction day, or being intent on competing with another buyer, you may get the property, but find out you cannot afford the payments.

#2. Knowing the worth of a property

Researching the market prices of an area is vitally important and should be done in depth before making an offer or bidding at auction. Your research should include the property's sale history – which can usually be found online, how much comparable properties are selling for in the area and a history of recent sales in the area.

#3. Know the property inside out

Having a solid knowledge of the property puts you in a better position. While you don't want it to have too many faults, knowing what problems do

exist may help you in knowing how much to pay.

Knowing the history of a property will also help. The best way to do this is by asking a lot of questions. Has it been passed in at auction? What was its sale price when the vendors bought it? How many offers have been made? How many people have inspected it? Has the price been reduced?

#4. Do some due diligence

Have all the relevant inspections been completed, especially building and pest. If so you know you are considering a solid dwelling that is unlikely to fall apart around your ears in years to come.

#5. Don't be in a rush – and don't get too emotional

Doing things in a rush is often a bad idea. No matter how great a deal seems, don't rush in without first doing due diligence. Always ask yourself, could there be a reason if everything seems so good?

It is also important not to get too emotionally attached to a property. You can love it but getting attached pre-sale may mean overspending. Remember, buying or investing should be done by the numbers as well as by heart.

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Top tips for an inexpensive renovation

Add a front fence The frame around the Mona Lisa ... Street appeal, you can't go past it. You don't want a prospective buyer passing by. You want them to stop, and say "Wow, I'd love to live there". A classic, functional and inexpensive front fence completes the picture.

If it doesn't move, paint it! Not quite, but paint gives you more bang for your buck than pretty much anything else.

Add a carport You can put up a carport for a few thousand dollars. And, if there is a garage, you can bet it will be used it as an office rumpus or maybe just storage.

Add a bedroom Most people think "new bedroom that's \$20-30,000" No, it's not! You find an area under the main roof and put up a couple of walls, a door, and electricals if needed and \$1500-\$2000 later you have a bedroom. If it's an investment property you can expect more in rent.

Get the indoor/outdoor look French doors and bifold doors can open it up. Sometimes you can get them second hand from a demolisher. Think creatively. Maybe you can take out a window and put in a door to a deck or courtyard area, an outside area for entertaining which can be created almost anywhere and doesn't cost a fortune.

Update the kitchen You need to get this right but don't let it become a money pit. Update the door handles and paint the tiles. If the kitchen carcass is okay you can just add a new benchtop or change the doors.

Improve the bathroom Update it. Dump those mouldy and limp shower curtains and add a new showerscreen. Trash

that pink vanity and install a new one. White is bright. Tile and laminate paint is the way to go. Resurface the bath and wall tiles. Add shiny towel rails, good lighting and an exhaust fan. Complete the picture with a new WC and a big mirror.

Sand & polish timber floors This is a timeless way to add value to a property. Gleaming floors add so much warmth and character. Just make sure that the timber is sound before you go too far. You might have to bite the bullet and go with carpet over hardboard if it's in poor condition.

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Boring back yard? Then simply turf it!



The problem with lawns is that they can take a lot of hard work to grow. However, a beautiful lawn is actually really good for your property value.

Thankfully, rolling out turf simplifies the process and removes a lot of the hard work as well as giving you 'instant' results.

Before you begin to lay your new turf speak with a landscaping supplier who will be able to advise you on the best type of topsoil and turf to use.

Next you want to make sure that you're raking the soil properly so it isn't too hard and solid. This allows the grass to grow properly. You'll also need a nice sharp cutter – whether it's a spade a knife or a hedge trimmer.

Start by rolling out the turf from the outside of the space working inwards. Lay the rolls out tightly tucked together. Water down the turf as you're rolling it out and water it down again after laying to make sure there's enough moisture to keep the grass growing.

The final step is simply to watch the beautiful new lawn take root.

Harmony in the garden



In designing your garden, be sure to allow gently curving pathways for Chi, or energy, to flow smoothly. Straight lines are rarely present in nature; so use relaxing, flowing shapes and pathways for your 'harmony' garden.

Garden decor can be used based on subtle feng shui

principles. Think of each area and match your garden decor accordingly. For example, an outdoor fountain is excellent for energy, while a metal sculpture can add a feeling of harmony to your garden.

Again, working with feng shui colours is a great way to emphasize various rhythms in your garden. In feng shui, colour is used according to the five elements theory and you can bring harmony and joy to your garden by choosing colours that emphasize these energies. For example, the fire energy in the south with red or purple flower colours or light yellow colours in the southwest for earth energy.

Enjoy creating your harmony garden using shapes, items, colours and nature elements that give you and your family and friends pleasure to look at and spend time in.

The more joyful energy you put into your garden, the more it will reflect back to you, as well as to your home.

What's your home worth?

Houses – March Qtr. 2014. Percentage price changes published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. The weighted average price of established houses for the eight

capital cities has increased 1.7 per cent from the previous quarter. Since the previous quarter, except for Canberra there were price rises across all capital cities.

melbourne

Q'rtley change +2.1%
Annual change +10.9%

sydney

Q'rtley change +2.3%
Annual change +15.7%

brisbane

Q'rtley change +0.8%
Annual change +6.1%

adelaide

Q'rtley change +0.7%
Annual change +4.9%

perth

Q'rtley change +1.1%
Annual change +7.3%

hobart

Q'rtley change +1.4%
Annual change +4.8%

canberra

Q'rtley change -0.1%
Annual change +1.1%

darwin

Q'rtley change +1.1%
Annual change +4.1%

If you're a property investor here are some ideas you can use to slash your tax bill



Some investors fail to capitalise on significant potential tax savings. Income-producing properties incur expenses and investors are entitled to claim these costs.

What you may be able to claim as a tax deduction:

- Advertising for tenants
- Bank charges

- Body corporate fees and charges
- Cleaning
- Council rates
- Electricity and gas
- Gardening and lawn mowing
- In-house audio/visual service charges
- Insurance
- Interest on loans
- Land tax
- Lease document expenses
- Legal expenses
- Mortgage discharge expenses
- Pest control
- Property management fees
- Quantity surveyor's fees
- Repairs and maintenance
- Secretarial and bookkeeping fees
- Servicing costs
- Stationery and postage

- Telephone calls and rental
- Tax related expenses
- Travel and car expenses
- Water charges.

Expenses that are deductible over a period of years include:

- Borrowing expenses (expenses directly incurred in taking out a loan for the property)
- Amounts for depreciating assets
- Capital works deductions.

Make sure your property investment experience is a happy and profitable one. Have a chat with the property management experts at Ray White Bunbury.

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