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## Is it a Good Time to be a First Home Buyer?

Property prices are sliding, interest rates are at record lows and there are great first homeowner incentives on offer, making it a great time for new buyers to get in on the property action.

First time home buyers have a lot going for them in the current property market. There may be a few reasons as to why some may be holding back on making their move, however, more often than not, general fear can be overcome with a little bit of research.

### Are you getting the timing just right?

Buyers entering the market for the first time hope to get in at an ideal point – that is when the market has reached its absolute bottom point before going up again. With further price declines possible for major cities like Sydney and Melbourne, many are holding out

hope that property prices will go lower still.

While this sounds good in theory, buyers shouldn't get too caught up on timing the market perfectly because it can change quickly and if you've missed out, chances are you'll pay more than you'd planned for.

In fact, the most important factor when it comes to timing is for the buyer themselves to be ready to jump into the market. Don't hold out for a possible better deal that may or may not exist, if there's a property right in front of you that ticks all the boxes. There are always great buys around, irrespective of what is going on in the property market.

### Is affordability still an issue?

Unfortunately, even when prices settle down affordability is still an issue for first home buyers who want their dream home first go.

Lowering expectations is not an ideal isolated to today's generation. Past generations

started out by compromising in order to break into the market. Looking in the outer suburbs, choosing apartment living or possibly even rentvesting are all options that allow for affordable home ownership.

Remain realistic and don't judge your situation against others, and you will find that there are plenty of options out there for who are willing to get into the property market.

### What about Lenders and Interest Rates?

Interest rates are at an all-time low and competitive deals are there for those that take the time to shop around. If you haven't started researching what your loan options are then there's no time like the present. Start chatting to lenders and banks and find out if 2019 is the year that you can buy your first home.

You can also look at what savings you have, whether you have a good credit score, and how long it may take you to raise a deposit.

## How to Style a Rental Property (without upsetting the Landlord)

Renting a property can offer a lot of freedom and flexibility but a common bugbear of tenants is that it can be hard to decorate and make the space feel more like their home.

A tenant is required to leave the property in the same condition as when they moved in, so additions, alterations or renovations generally can't be carried out even if you feel they'll add value to the property. Property Managers can seek the owner's approval for these types of works, however, they are under no obligation to agree to them.

Alternatively, there are things that Tenants can do to update a space or add their own personality to it.

**Inject Colour with Textiles** – Clever use of rugs can transform the flooring of your rental home and brighten up its entire atmosphere. Using the right texture can warm or cool an area significantly. Adding cushions or throws or new curtains can also give a property more homely personality and provide you with a better sense of belonging and comfort.

**Lighting and Mirrors** – Sort of like a magic show, you can make a statement with the right lighting and mirrors. New light shades can bring a room into the 21st century, and



strategically placed free-standing or wall-hung mirrors can bounce light through darker areas of a home, making it feel larger and brighter. Floor or desk lamps can also look great and add needed light.

**Make an Artistic Statement** – Even if you're not allowed to use picture hooks, there are plenty of places you can place artwork. Use shelves and bookcases or place items against a wall. Self-adhesive hooks may work well for small items as long as they don't leave a mark – try using light coloured felt on the back of frames to avoid damage to walls from frames rubbing on paintwork.

**Furniture with Storage** – Functional furniture that serves the double duty of style and storage can change a room's look and feel dramatically. A bed with hidden drawers, stools with lift-up seats and tables with cupboards or drawers will help minimise clutter and unsightly items being in view.

**Greenery** – If you like nature but don't have a yard, adding plants can bring life to a room. Some properties don't allow indoor plants, but there are realistic fake plants that can add just as much atmosphere. Research suitable plants first and check your lease before adding pot plants in your rental property.



## 5 Tips for the Perfect Autumn Open Home

Everyone knows that spring is a popular season for selling property, but autumn can prove to be just as fruitful.

Similar to spring, autumn is a season with temperate weather conditions across most of Australia. Gardens can look picturesque and open homes aren't as hampered by big storms or heat waves.

Being at the start of the year, autumn also sees people putting New Year's resolutions into action. Sellers may benefit from our 5

top tips to having the best Open Home this Autumn:

**1. Maintenance:** Property issues may stand out more depending on the season. In autumn you may need to fix up gaps around windows or doors that will let drafts in. Flaking paint, mould, broken lights, uneven pavers and more can detract from your home's charm if not tended to. Leaves can also be unsightly, so it's wise to clean gutters and drains.

**2. Street Appeal:** Autumn's rich golden tones and falling leaves can make for striking front gardens, or they can leave a home looking a little bare. Take photos from the street to see obvious improvements you can make to the property's kerb appeal.

Colourful new autumn plants will make your front garden shine, or you may simply need to do a bit of a tidy up of fallen foliage.

**3. Let there be Light:** As days shorten, lighting becomes increasingly important. Ensure doors and windows allow natural light into the property. For particularly dark rooms, consider repainting in lighter colours or adding feature lamps to style the room if needed.

**4. Add Seasonal Accents:** As seasons change pack away summery gear and bring out cosy autumn items such as throws and rugs. You may also want to add in some decorative items with autumn colours like burnt reds or oranges, or play up greens to conjure up a sense of nature. Avoid clutter or over-styling the property.

**5. Get the temperature right:** Autumn weather can be unpredictable. By assessing the comfort level at the property on the day of an open home, either through the use of open windows, heaters, fans or air-conditioners, potential buyers will feel at home.

With the right agent, sellers should be able to make the most of any season by preparing their property to suit the climate and environment they're in. Paying attention to small details that mightn't be important to you as a homeowner, can make all the difference to potential buyers and shouldn't be ignored. Contact us today if you're thinking of selling this autumn and we can guide you through the selling journey.

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