

 **REINSW** | for members since 1910

MEMBER ONLY  
REAL ESTATE

# Journal

APR 2013  
VOL 64/03



# winning revelations

Take a closer look at your business

**Heavenly homes**  
How to sell a church

**Inspirational interiors**  
Design for everyday living

**Real estate 101**  
Residential sales and property management fundamentals

agency

adapt

analyse

awards

staff morale

new clients

retention

kudos

discuss

improv

evolve

edit: b:it

THE MOST IMPORTANT  
THING ABOUT REAL ESTATE  
ISN'T REAL ESTATE.

IT'S PEOPLE.



At realestateview.com.au we understand that property is bought and sold by real people, with real hopes and dreams. And we know your job is central in bringing those people together. Our audience is growing rapidly, and we'd like your agency to grow with us. So call 1300 695 645 or email [success@realestateview.com.au](mailto:success@realestateview.com.au) and let us change your point of view.

realestate view  
.com.au



35



38



22

Callagher Estate Agents Principal Cary Giezekamp uses the awards application process to evaluate his business.

# Contents

APRIL 2013

## REGULARS

- 05 President's message
- 05 CEO's message
- 06 In brief
- 40 Training calendar
- 44 New members
- 45 Research
- 46 Last word

## NEWS

- 8 Mediating retail lease disputes  
Who you can turn to for mediation at no cost to your clients.
- 9 Battle against NOLS continues  
REINSW takes the fight to Leader of the Opposition Tony Abbott.

## INDUSTRY FOCUS

- 10 Don't fall foul of identity fraud  
Agents need to be on high alert for identity fraud.
- 12 Renewal reminder  
What is the process for renewing your Licence or Certificate of Registration and what if you forget?

- 14 How to stand out in a crowd  
John McGrath talks defining career moments.

## IN BUSINESS

- 16 Is your business fully insured against loss of income?  
What happens if you can't access your premises?
- 18 Strata management — another layer for your agency  
Add to your revenue streams.

## LEGAL

- 20 Material or not? That is the question  
What exactly is material fact and how does it affect your agency?

## TECHNOLOGY

- 26 Untangle the World Wide Web  
Attract clients with a powerful website.
- 28 Technical tactics  
Discover what you should consider when investing in new equipment.

## DIVISIONS

- 34 Working to grow the community  
The Orana Division marks its 30th anniversary and welcomes a new Chair.

## CHAPTERS

- 36 Commercial confessions  
Everything you need to know about commercial warehousing.

## ON THE COVER

- 22 COVER STORY  
Winning revelations  
Take a closer look at your business through the awards application process.

- 32 Real estate 101  
Residential sales and property management fundamentals.

- 35 Heavenly homes  
What makes churches so unique and how to sell them.

- 38 Home improvements  
Increase sales success with inspirational interior ideas.

REINSW Major Partners



The Real Estate Journal is a member only publication from the Real Estate Institute of New South Wales. To find out more about membership, call (02) 9264 2343, email membership@reinsw.com.au or visit www.reinsw.com.au



The Real Estate Journal is printed on paper that is derived from resources which are managed to ensure their renewability for generations to come.



CIRCULATIONS AUDIT BOARD

Average monthly distribution 4,243 copies

## Professional Indemnity Insurance is now mandatory for all agents

Realcover's professional indemnity insurance  
provides the protection you need.

It's your business  
It's your reputation  
It's your future

**Why risk it?**

Contact Realcover for a  
no-obligation quote  
Call 1800 988 396  
Visit [www.realcover.com.au](http://www.realcover.com.au)

**REINSW member discounts apply\***

\* REINSW members receive a discount off Realcover's standard professional indemnity insurance premium (excluding charges)  
[Quote: Why risk it]

## PRESIDENT



# Awards and their benefits

At REINSW we relish the opportunity to acknowledge our industry leaders. Our peers who continually excel within the profession were recognised last year with the 2012 REINSW Awards for Excellence.

Becoming a finalist — or even better, a winner — is the obvious benefit of entering a business award. What else could build your brand and your credibility within the marketplace like being recognised as the best at what you do?

The process of entering an award can have its own benefits, whether or not you come out victorious on the awards night.

Entries open for the 2013 REINSW Awards for Excellence on 1 May 2013, so start planning your submission now.

### Benefits of entering awards

- Investing your time in the awards application process will help you to compare your business with others in your field. This 'benchmarking' is good practice when analysing your successes and weaknesses.
- If you are shortlisted for an award, your business is then promoted and profiled by the award organisers, helping raise brand awareness of your business. It also gives you an opportunity to share this good news story with your client base and the wider community.

- An external industry body endorsing your business gives you credibility. Clients like to deal with a business that they know has been praised by others.
- While internally an award nomination will give employees a motivational boost, awards can also attract new talent.

### Woodrow Weight Award

Kymbal Dunne is no stranger to awards, being a seven-times winner of the REINSW Award for Excellence in Project Marketing and twice the winner of the Commercial Sales & Leasing Award.

At our 2012 Awards for Excellence, Kymbal was awarded REINSW's prestigious honour, the Woodrow Weight Award for outstanding service to REINSW and the profession.

As Kymbal will attest, capitalising on such an award is paramount. The process required when completing an awards application gives entrants the perfect chance to critically analyse their business.

Whether you win on the night, or not, there is much to be gained from this process.

**Christian Payne**  
REINSW President

## CEO



# Elevating consumer confidence in real estate

It is an unfortunate reality that in recent years respect for our profession and the perceived value of the professional services delivered by agents has diminished somewhat.

At REINSW, we are working to turn this negative into a positive.

We believe that by restructuring the regulatory environment, agents will be better able to deliver a high standard and professional service to their clients. The flow-on effect will be an increase in consumers' confidence and the importance they place on the value agents bring to property transactions.

But we don't just want to stand back and wait for the regulator to get it right. We believe that REINSW has an important role to play. We want to work with NSW Fair Trading to deliver a targeted education program to agents through a variety of channels; one that will respond to your professional needs as an agent, and will proactively improve professional conduct and address compliance issues before they attract adverse consumer attention.

By taking an active role in the regulation of the profession, REINSW can work with you to address any issues before they impact the general public, which in turn will help increase consumer confidence.

In short, we want to stand at the coalface with the profession and work with our members to better our industry, both for agents and the wider public.

### A targeted solution

To achieve our goal, REINSW has consulted widely to assist in the development of an appropriate suite of services to complement the government's regulatory activities. We have been guided by the relationship other professional associations have with their regulatory authorities.

We see this as a genuine partnership between the profession, ourselves and Fair Trading. REINSW's solution will provide a targeted education program derived from industry knowledge and experience. In addition, it will provide a window into the needs of the industry and profession, allowing Fair Trading to respond with any necessary regulatory reform.

REINSW's solution will enable us to detect and clearly understand issues in the marketplace and develop education programs to ensure that these practices are addressed. Within this new structure, consumers' attention will be drawn to the significant value agents can bring to the property transaction.

This is an exciting time for our profession. We will keep you updated as things develop and we hope to make a positive change to the inadequacies of the current regulatory system.

**Tim McKibbin**  
REINSW CEO

# Flood affected to receive state help

Natural disaster recovery assistance has been extended to a total of 17 locations across NSW following severe storms and flooding in the state.

Attorney-General Mark Dreyfus QC and NSW Minister for Emergency Services Michael Gallacher added Greater Taree, Kyogle, Lismore, Lithgow, Richmond Valley and Hawkesbury to the Natural Disaster Declaration.

Mr Dreyfus said: "These measures will help families, business owners, primary producers and local councils to repair damage caused by the severe storms and flooding and ease some of the associated burden."

The state experienced both storms and flooding, as well as bushfires, as extreme weather systems tore across the state at the beginning of the year.

Mr Gallacher praised the efforts of communities in dealing with the disasters and thanked the NSW SES volunteers and emergency services for their tireless efforts.



**Keep your finger on the pulse**

Fortnightly member enews

**Call (02) 9556 9105 for advertising opportunities**



Laing+Simmons General Manager Leanne Pilkington sporting a sneak peak of their brand's new look.

## A refreshed brand for a bright future

Set to launch mid year, Laing+Simmons' new brand aims to reinforce the boutique nature of the company. The fresh branding coincides with its focus on growth, as Laing+Simmons seeks new partnership opportunities with top performing real estate professionals in key markets.

Laing+Simmons General Manager Leanne Pilkington said the re-branding was necessary to respond to the changing nature of the real estate market.

"Real estate has become more sophisticated and continues to evolve. The behaviour of buyers, vendors, landlords and tenants is changing in the context of access to new technologies and online opportunities," Leanne explained.

"We also recognise that people are increasingly time poor and that the nature of

the workforce is shifting, with more and more people working from home. The concept of the 9 to 5 working day is also not as relevant as it once was."

The new brand communicates the advantages of partnering with a real estate professional with an intimate knowledge and a genuine passion for the local market of which they are a part.

“Real estate has become more sophisticated and continues to evolve.”

Combining sharp visuals with concise copy designed to elicit an emotional

response from customers, and using consistent themes throughout, the marketing templates and supporting collateral have been developed to more effectively reach and communicate with target markets.

This alignment extends to the fresh appearance of the entire Laing+Simmons office network as refurbishments incorporating the new branding roll out to all offices, thereby ensuring franchisees maintain a strong presence in their local markets.

Leanne said 2013 represents an exciting phase in the history of Laing+Simmons.

"We have finalised a growth plan for this year that involves developing new partnerships with respected real estate operators identified for the selective expansion of our office network."

# NBN news

Rockets will launch two satellites for the National Broadband Network (NBN) in 2015 to bring high-speed internet to some 200,000 remote country homes, farms and businesses across Australia.

The satellites are part of a \$300 million contract with European satellite company Arianespace and are scheduled to launch from French Guiana in 2015.

Under the scheme, the NBN service will offer wholesale download speeds to broadband providers of up to 25 Mbps and upload speeds of up to 5 Mbps.

NBN Chief Executive Mike Quigley said the NBN will bridge the gap between the city and the bush.

“It will give people in the Outback, remote regions and Australia’s overseas territories access to economic and social opportunities that the rest of us take for granted.

“Faster speeds will allow people in regional communities to work from home like they would from the office, access video-based health services and make high-quality video calls to family and friends.”



Two satellites are to be launched under the National Broadband Network (NBN) to bring high-speed internet to Australia.



# Online pool register opens

Pool owners in NSW will be able to register their swimming pools on the NSW Swimming Pool Register from 29 April 2013.

All pool owners in NSW must register their swimming pools with the NSW State Government by 29 October 2013 in order to comply with

recent amendments to the *Swimming Pools Act 1992*.

Pool owners who fail to register their pool may be subject to a penalty notice.

Amendments to the *Swimming Pools Act* were made to enhance the safety of children under the age of five years

around private ‘backyard’ swimming pools in NSW.

Under the Act, swimming pool owners will be required to self-assess, and state in the register that, to the best of their knowledge, their swimming pool complies with the applicable standard when registering their pool.

# Premier announces ‘no go’ zones for coal seam gas

A two-kilometre exclusion zone will be imposed around residential zones preventing new coal seam gas (CSG) exploration, under new NSW Government regulations.

NSW Premier Barry O’Farrell and Deputy Premier Andrew Stoner announced the tough new measures to strengthen regulation of the coal seam gas industry in the state.

“We have declared country towns and suburbs across NSW ‘no go zones’ for CSG activities in NSW, and established the Environment Protection Authority as the cop on the beat to enforce environmental and health regulations,” said O’Farrell in a statement.

Under the new measures, all CSG exploration will require an Environment Protection Licence and the Chief Scientist and Engineer will conduct an independent review of the exploration.

Exclusion zones will also apply to identified Critical Industry Clusters, such as viticulture and the equine industry.

An office of CSG Regulation enforcement will also be established within the Department of Trade and Investment.



BY YASMIN KING,  
NSW SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSIONER



The NSW Small Business Commissioner's Dispute Resolution Unit receives thousands of calls from landlords, tenants, agents, solicitors, barristers, small business owners and accountants. Some 89 per cent of disputes are resolved without going to court or tribunal.

# Mediating retail lease disputes

The Office of the NSW Small Business Commissioner can provide advice and mediation on retail lease disputes at no cost to you or your clients.

Commercial leasing agents have the challenging role of helping landlords to meet their legal responsibilities, and in the case of retail leases there are special requirements over and above those for commercial leases.

The *Retail Leases Act* requires landlords and tenants to attempt mediation before a retail lease dispute can progress to a court or tribunal. Fortunately, most matters are resolved at mediation. If the matter does not settle and the claim is for less than \$400,000, it should go to the Administrative Decisions Tribunal for judgment.

While a retail lease dispute is primarily between the landlord and tenant, the agent can also get caught up in the matter. This can cost a lot of unnecessary time, money and effort for both your client and your own real estate business.

## Dispute Resolution Unit

Formerly known as the Retail Tenancy Unit, the Office of the NSW Small Business Commissioner's Dispute Resolution Unit has skilled officers who can provide strategic and procedural advice about retail lease disputes at no cost to you or your clients. Since mid-2011, the Dispute Resolution Unit has expanded its services to include commercial disputes.

Talking through issues at an early stage with someone from the Dispute Resolution Unit can help prevent disputes from arising in the first place. For example, the Unit can help you better understand landlord disclosure requirements, so you can avoid conflicts about whether a tenant has to pay outgoings and avoid giving them the right to terminate a lease early. How retail bonds are to be managed is another area the Unit can help with.

Ensuring your clients are well informed and can meet their obligations towards tenants means that you can get on with selling and managing property.

The Dispute Resolution Unit takes thousands of telephone calls each month. Most callers have the tools to resolve their issues at the end of the call. However, where an issue cannot be resolved, the Unit can help with informal and/or formal mediation.

The Dispute Resolution Unit has a very high success rate. Currently 89 per cent of matters are resolved and do not proceed to a court or tribunal. ♦

*For assistance with an impending or current dispute, or to enhance your understanding of retail leasing, call 1300 795 534 at no cost, or email [we.assist@smallbusiness.nsw.gov.au](mailto:we.assist@smallbusiness.nsw.gov.au)*

## SMALL BIZ CONNECT

Find quality, personalised and highly subsidised business advice through Small Biz Connect.

- Get expert advice on managing your small business today.
- Access face-to-face support from our team.
- Develop key business skills.

There are mobile business advisers across NSW who can come to you!

Call 1300 134 359 or visit [smallbusiness.nsw.gov.au](http://smallbusiness.nsw.gov.au)

(Small Biz Connect is funded by the NSW Government.)



# Battle against NOLS continues

BY DEIRDRE SMITH

REINSW has taken the fight against the proposed national licensing regime to Canberra, meeting with Leader of the Opposition Tony Abbott.

Over the past two years, REINSW has been vocal in expressing our views about the shortcomings of the proposed National Occupational Licensing System (NOLS). On 18 February 2013, we took the opportunity to voice our concerns at the national level when REINSW Vice President John Cunningham met with Leader of the Opposition Tony Abbott.

During the course of the meeting, the current standing of property professionals was discussed, as well as where the industry is heading and the problems likely to arise should NOLS be allowed to go ahead without a significant overhaul.

“We felt it was important to let Mr Abbott know that industry stakeholders across the country are in favour of higher standards of real estate practice,” Mr Cunningham said.

“However, as it stands, NOLS is instead proposing to lower standards, which will only bring about poor consumer outcomes in the future.”

REINSW believes that the introduction of a national licensing system is a positive step for the profession, but any changes need to be implemented in a way that is beneficial to the industry.



REINSW Vice President Mr John Cunningham meets with Leader of the Opposition Tony Abbott to discuss NOLS.

“Mr Abbott agreed that NOLS may need to be reassessed,” Mr Cunningham continued. “As he said, sometimes what seems like a great idea at the time does not end up that way.”

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) has unfortunately elected not to pursue higher standards for the property profession.

Of particular concern is that consumers will be exposed to inexperienced and undertrained agents. Lower entry-level training requirements and the removal of compulsory Continuing Professional Development will impact all participants in the industry. Furthermore, NOLS

proposes to de-licence both Commercial and Stock and Station agency practice.

Unfortunately, NOLS also does not encompass any improvements or uniformity to the regulatory environment governing the industry nationally. This means that while educational requirements and standards of practice will be uniform across Australia to allow for interstate movement of agents, the regulations governing practice from state to state will still vary greatly.

“Although we support the idea of a nationally harmonised licensing system, it is alarming that COAG is proposing to turn unlicensed agents loose in a regulatory

environment that they have not been trained to deal with,” REINSW CEO Mr McKibbin said.

“Like Sydney drivers trying to navigate Melbourne’s hook turns without training, if this system is allowed to go ahead without change, it will bring about a very poor outcome for the Australian public.”

“REINSW will continue to resist the implementation of NOLS until changes have been made to put the harmonisation of industry practice back on track.”

Mr Abbott’s team is looking into the NOLS issue, and he asked REINSW to keep him across any progress made in the fight against its implementation. ♦

Agents need to be on high alert for identity fraud and are now required to verify the identity of vendors before proceeding with a sale.

BY CATHIE DICKINSON, REINSW MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

# Don't fall foul of identity fraud



We've all seen the headlines: "Authorities warn that identity fraud is on the rise"; "3 arrested in multi-state identity theft spree"; "Police investigate potential identity theft scam".

We think "that couldn't happen to me", but the reality is that identity fraud is on the rise. In fact, it is one of the fastest growing crimes in Australia and costs our economy in excess of \$1 billion every year.

And the property industry isn't immune. In just the past few years there have been two highly-publicised incidents where properties in Western Australia were sold without the knowledge or consent of the lawful owners.

The sales were undertaken by real estate agents who were contacted by fraudsters masquerading as the true owners. In both cases, the properties were tenanted and

being managed by an agent on behalf of the true registered owner. The fraudsters initially contacted the agent by telephone, notifying the agent of new contact details to be used for all future communications, and the sales then proceeded from there.

As recently as February this year, the Western Australian Department of Commerce issued a further alert that fraudsters are still trying to dupe property professionals.

## Proof of identity required

The key message is that real estate agents need to be on high alert. To combat the increase in identify fraud and scams, and in response to the Western Australian incidents, NSW Fair Trading released the *Real Estate Fraud Prevention Guidelines*.

The Guidelines help agents to verify the identification of vendors in order to prevent real

estate fraud. They are a set of practices and procedures for agents to confirm the identity of vendors or their representatives. They also include a list of possible warning signs and guidelines, including a proof of identity checklist.

## You must verify vendors

In accordance with the Guidelines, agents are required to confirm the identity of the owner. When doing so, the agent must:

- Verify the vendor's identity from an original primary photographic identification document (such as a current photo driver's licence) and an original or certified copy of a secondary non-photographic identification document (such as a current Medicare card, credit card, electricity bill or rates notice). The *Proof of Identity Checklist for Vendors* lists acceptable proof of identity documents.

## WARNING SIGNS!

It's important that agents are able to identify the possible warning signs of fraud when they arise. Just some of these warning signs include:

- A recent change in address or other contact details that have not been provided until instructions to sell a property are received.
- The transaction involves people located overseas or documents issued overseas.
- There is a request for funds to be sent to a different bank account from that normally used by the client, including but not limited to offshore accounts.
- Advice is received that the sale is urgent – for example, because of an overseas investment opportunity.
- New email addresses are generic such as Hotmail, Yahoo or Gmail.

If you suspect identity fraud in a real estate transaction, contact the NSW Police or NSW Fair Trading and don't act on the property sale.

(Source: *Real Estate Fraud Prevention Guidelines*.)





BY ROD STOWE, NSW FAIR TRADING COMMISSIONER

# Renewal reminder

## What do you need to consider when renewing your Licence or Certificate of Registration with NSW Fair Trading?

Real estate agents can find themselves in trouble if they allow their Licence or Certificate of Registration to lapse.

Once a licence or certificate expires, an agent must not carry out the activities of a licensee or certificate holder until they are restored.

Operating without a licence can attract a fine as high as \$11,000 for an individual and \$22,000 for a corporation. NSW Fair Trading has prosecuted two real estate agents in the past 24 months for these breaches.



“ Only one renewal application is sent out by Fair Trading and no reminder notices are sent. ”

It is important that all licensees and certificate holders under the *Property, Stock and Business Agents Act 2002* apply and pay for the renewal of their licence or certificate by the due date otherwise the licence or certificate will expire.

Fair Trading sends out applications for renewal about five weeks prior to the licence or certificate due date. Only one renewal application is sent out by Fair Trading and no reminder notices are sent.

If a licensee or certificate holder is sending their application for renewal by post, they should ensure that they allow sufficient time for the application to be received by Fair Trading by the due date.

Of course the quickest way to renew a licence or certificate of registration is to apply online. Licensees and certificate holders may go to the website [licence.nsw.gov.au](http://licence.nsw.gov.au), click on 'Renew Online' and enter their licence or certificate number

along with the renewal number that is printed on the renewal notice sent by Fair Trading. It is then simply a matter of following the prompts, paying and lodging.

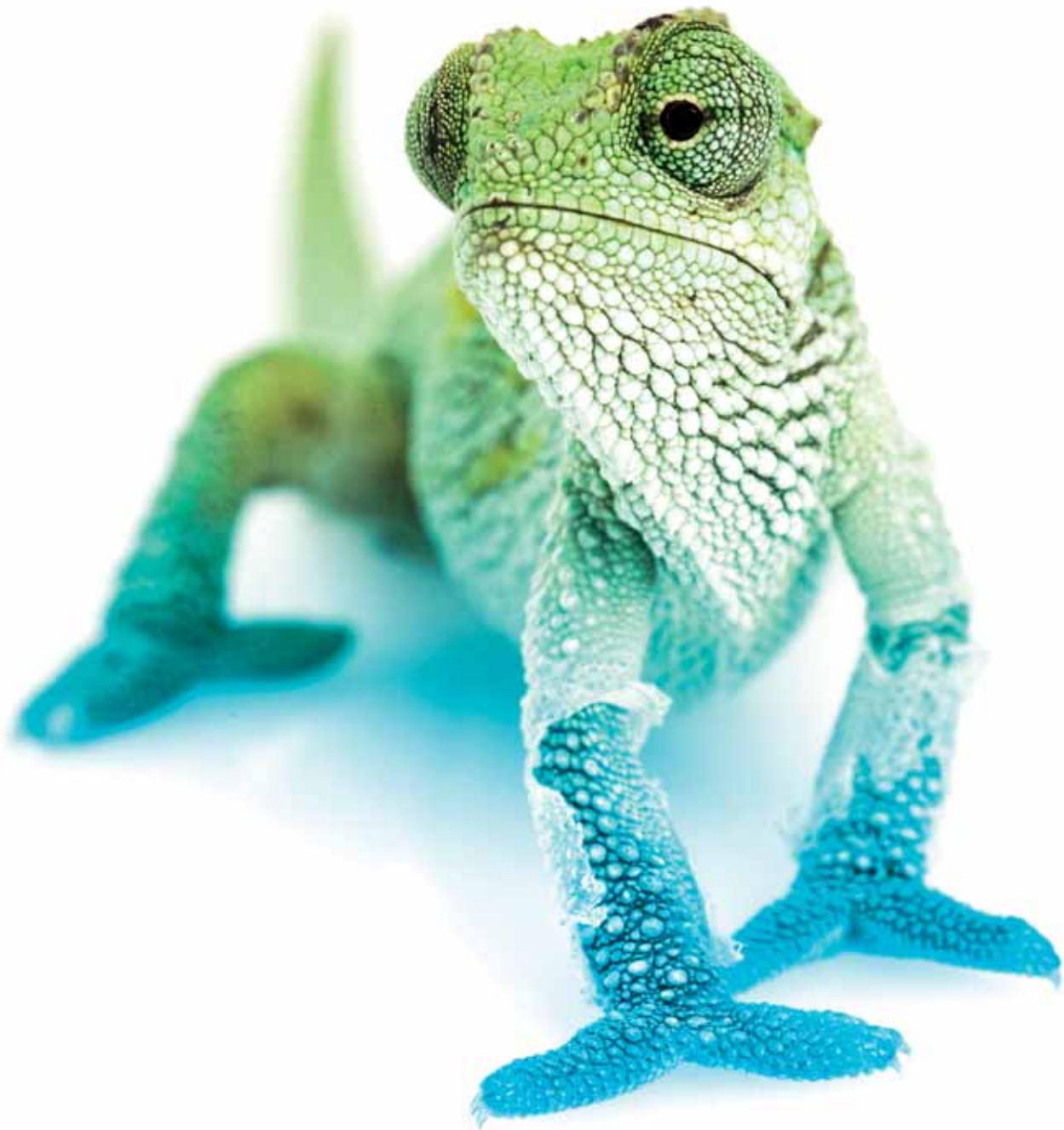
As long as Fair Trading receives the application for renewal by the due date, the licence or certificate will remain in force pending a decision on the application.

If, however, the application is not received by the due date, the licence or certificate of registration will expire. The application fee for renewal also doubles as it then becomes an application for restoration. The application will display both the cost of renewal and the cost of restoring the licence

or certificate. Applications for restoration cannot be lodged online and must be done by post or in person.

Make sure you are aware of when your licence or certificate is due for renewal. If you have not received your renewal application within about three weeks prior to the renewal due date, you should contact Fair Trading immediately on 13 32 20. ♦

NSW Fair Trading's regular *Journal* column gives REINSW members insight into areas of compliance, investigation and other hot topics facing the real estate industry.



# Time for a change?

In this colourful business of Real Estate, you must adapt or face the possibility of becoming irrelevant or extinct. Choose an adaptable brand like Starr Partners for your business. We're expanding into new areas and seek innovative and energetic franchisees to partner us.

**It's time to change your thinking, call Douglas Driscoll today on (02) 8824 3133.**

Each month, the *Journal* asks an industry leader to share a piece of advice or an experience that they believe was a defining moment in their career.

BY JOHN MCGRATH, CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND FOUNDER OF MCGRATH ESTATE AGENTS

# How to stand out in a crowd



My real estate career started somewhat by happenstance. My career goal was originally to be a professional footballer. Being somewhat talented in that direction and with zero talent academically, it was actually a no-brainer. But when a footballing injury brought my sporting career to an end, I had to think seriously about what to do with my life.

“  
**Attitude is the greatest differentiator between you and everyone else on the planet.**  
”

Two things appealed to me about real estate. First, it was important. Everyone needed a home and some were fortunate enough to graduate to an investment property. I also thought that I'd like to be the conduit between people's desire and need for a comfortable home and getting them safely moved.

The second thing about real estate was that it was often done badly. Seeing a vital activity that affects everyone being poorly handled spelled opportunity for me.

So I went to Randwick TAFE College three nights a week to study real estate and auctioneering while working by day as a junior letting clerk.

Property management is truly an amazing platform to learn from, which even today I encourage young people to become involved in.

When I turned 20, I started selling homes. The first few months were very slow, but after six months I began to build momentum quite quickly and I continue to love it even now.

So when I was asked to share a few of my insights into the best lessons I learned or advice I had been given, I thought it a good idea to list the things that really stick in my mind and changed my life or my real estate career:

- Reputation is everything. Build a great one and protect it with your life.
- Always go the extra mile. Create raving fans with each phone call and interaction by doing more than expected.
- Attitude is the greatest differentiator between you and everyone else on the planet. Develop a positive, optimistic attitude and use it every minute of the day.
- Excellent local knowledge and superior negotiation skills are vital. If you're in sales, then these two things are gold. Swat up on both, as they are also great differentiators.
- Stay humble. As you become more successful, there is a temptation to start deluding yourself that you're better than everyone else. This will hurt rather than help you. ♦

# Strata insurance you can have a coffee with.

Insure with WFI and you'll deal directly with a local area manager who will take the time to understand you and your needs as a strata manager. So, your insurance will always be handled with a personal touch. Plus, we have a range of policies to suit commercial or residential strata insurance requirements. WFI, good people to know for insurance since 1919.

**For strata, business and landlord insurance  
call 1300 934 934 or visit [wfi.com.au](http://wfi.com.au)**

To see if our product is right for you,  
always read the PDS from the product issuer,  
WFI (ABN 24 000 036 279 AFSL 241461).

Good people to know.





BY PROFESSOR ALLAN MANNING,  
MANAGING DIRECTOR OF LMI GROUP

# Is your business fully insured against loss of income?

We have insurance against flood or fire, but have you thought about what happens to your business if you can't access your premises?



Business interruption insurance provides protection for a business owner against loss of net profit and the cost of meeting ongoing business expenses such as wages, financing costs and the like, that continue after an interruption to the business.

## It will never happen to me

Many real estate operators do not believe they have much exposure, as they believe that they could quickly move premises and start trading again with little or no disruption. This theory has been tested and found wanting in several of the natural disasters that have hit

Australia and New Zealand over the past few years. Let us take one example. Just prior to the 2011 Queensland floods, a real estate agent bought out his employer to become the owner of the business. To do so, he borrowed funds from his bank using his family home as collateral.

While he insured the assets of the business against flood, he did not believe he needed business interruption insurance. When the floods came, not only was his business directly affected by the flood but so was the entire country town.

Sadly there was loss of life in the town and the sale values of properties plummeted. In fact, no new sales call was received for more than nine months.

The business' other source of income was commissions from rental properties, but this income stream was also disrupted as the stock of homes he was managing were damaged and tenants exercised the rent abatement clause in their leases.

To rub salt into the wound, the agent was requested by the landlords to open properties for loss adjusters, hydrologists and builders, meaning the agent worked harder than ever for a much reduced revenue.

Without the protection of business interruption insurance, it looked like the bank would call in the loan as the agent got well behind on his repayments.

Similar stories came out of the Victorian bushfires and Christchurch earthquakes.

## Survival strategies

Disruption to a real estate business can occur from many causes including fire, disruption to power or telecommunications,

storm damage, a crash by a motor vehicle and myriad other scenarios.

There are several ways that business interruption insurance can be arranged. These can include the following:

- Full business interruption cover
- Weekly cover
- Additional increased cost of working only.

It is important to get specialist advice from your insurance broker on what is one of the most important insurance protections for your business. ♦

*Professor Allan Manning, Managing Director of LMI Group, is one of Australia's leading experts in insurance. He is the author of nine books on insurance including Business Interruption Insurance and Claims and has more than 40 years' practical experience managing and quantifying insurance claims.*

## Disclaimer

This article has been prepared as a guide and is not intended to be exhaustive. While the utmost care has been taken in the preparation of the article, it should not be used or relied upon as a substitute for detailed advice or as a basis for making a business, financial or insurance decision.



**EXCLUSIVE**  
• TO MEMBERS •



## HELPLINE

Ask the experts.  
We're here for you.

Free up your valuable time by contacting the Helpline with your questions about all things real estate.

Our highly-skilled team of real estate professionals has decades of combined practical experience and are always on hand to answer your questions.

Free and exclusive to REINSW members, no question is too big or too small to ask. And there's no limit to the number of times you can contact us – call the Helpline every day!

**FREE to REINSW members**

Call (02) 9264 2343 (option 4)

Email [helpline@reinsw.com.au](mailto:helpline@reinsw.com.au)

Website [www.reinsw.com.au/helpline](http://www.reinsw.com.au/helpline)

## In tune. Banking that understands the real estate business.



In Westpac, you have a bank with the tools to keep your business in the best of health. As Australia's first bank, we've been backing Australian businesses for almost 200 years.

**We're industry experts.** Our Real Estate Specialists work closely within the industry, they're familiar with the challenges and opportunities facing the sector and know what works. And what doesn't.

**We're Focused.** On delivering business strategies and solutions tailored to the real estate sector including:

- A specific real estate rent roll policy to help you invest in your business.
- Trust accounts to help you meet your regulatory obligations.
- An easy way to collect rents and make payments to your landlords and other suppliers.
- Personal banking including self managed super fund lending and commercial and residential property financing.

**We're local.** Your Westpac Real Estate Specialist is a local, single point of contact who knows your industry and will connect you with the expert team and resources available at your local Business Banking Centre.

To find out how we can help:

Call Jason Roach, National Industry Leader, Real Estate on 0448 455 556

Email [jasonroach@westpac.com.au](mailto:jasonroach@westpac.com.au)

Visit Your local Westpac Branch and speak to the Bank Manager





BY TIM DIXON,  
NATIONAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER  
AT STRATA REAL ESTATE SERVICES

# Strata management – another layer for your agency

Increasing your sources of revenue by adding strata management to your business may help your agency to grow despite a tough economic climate.

---

Accountants usually say “cut your marketing and cut your staff when times get tough”, but what you need to do is to maintain and grow your revenues. For the best agencies, a tough climate means opportunities that lead to an increase in market share and revenue. So, could adding strata management to your portfolio help your agency reap such returns?

## **Strata management: a sound revenue source**

Many agencies offer property management and sales only. However strata management is now on the radar of the best and brightest in the industry, including some of the bigger franchises. They have already made tentative moves into the strata space, while other individual agencies and major groups are looking at how strata can grow their profitability. This is occurring for the following reasons:

- Property owners want a complete real estate service. They see strata management as part of real estate, not separate from it.
- Repairs and maintenance are a major function of strata management. Most agencies perform this same function for their landlords, so they



already have the expertise to draw on.

- Strata legislation requires the strata manager to have the owners' details and to communicate with them regularly, with obvious benefits.
- Real estate agencies that offer strata management services develop relationships with all owners in the scheme, not just the landlords they already manage.
- Property assets worth around \$1 trillion are under strata management across Australia.

Yet despite these benefits, there are many agencies not playing in the strata management space, at least for the time being. This could be for a number of reasons, such as the ratio of set-up costs to revenue; the belief that strata management is complaints-driven with many manual processes and significant paperwork compared to sales or property management; the complexity of strata industry legislative requirements; and, in the past, the fact that agencies could be profitable through sales and meet operating costs through a rent roll.

So what's changed that now makes strata management worthwhile?

- Technology is enabling agents to offer a new service paradigm to clients.
- Web-based IT systems offer clients and agents a fast, efficient, customer-focused service alternative.

- Specialist strata finance and admin hubs allow agencies to concentrate on building client relations.

### Benefits of adding strata management services

Adding a complementary revenue source without increasing overhead costs is something that banks love – the long-term income stream and value of strata roll income are big pluses for agencies.

“Property owners want a complete real estate service. They see strata management as part of real estate, not separate from it.”

The cashflow from strata management is regular and paid from trust funds, unlike rentals. A rent roll of 400 properties could translate into a \$1 million asset when adding strata management to the mix.

Access to the owner database means improved relationships in the community, increased leads for property management, increased sales and listing opportunities, and provides increased visibility and brand awareness in the community.

### Issues to consider

There are key issues to consider when evaluating strata for your real estate agency. Your

management needs the ability to convert your rent roll into a valuable strata asset and vice versa.

Another important point is the cost of installing the additional strata technology system and the training of staff to ensure your service standard reflects your agency's market presence.

There will also be the capital cost of buying a strata roll. Doing so could immediately boost revenues, but cause possible operational shock within the agency if you are not prepared for the additional work.

### How to make strata management simple

There are easier ways to add strata management to your suite of services and increase your sources of revenue than doing the hard yards yourself:

- Find a provider of a strata admin hub to eliminate the paperwork and allow your agency to focus on growth while doing the strata management functions of repairs and maintenance and relationship building you already offer.
- Find a provider that has a web-based IT platform that delivers customer-focused, results-driven outcomes for your clients and staff.
- Find a trainer and a strata management adviser that have developed all the procedures and systems to ensure the best service standards are maintained and delivered by your agency.
- Find a marketer that provides access to all the strata clients

you need to generate listing and sales leads.

With major real estate groups already making a play into strata management – and even more individuals and groups reviewing it – and given the recent developments in technology married with the growth in numbers of strata schemes, now is the time to consider strata management for your agency. ♦

## KEY FACTORS FOR SUCCESSFUL STRATA MANAGEMENT

- Have the best staff.
- Support your staff and their focus on performance.
- Spend time on strategies for driving leads to listings.
- Never take 'no' as closure. Keep the relationship open and be ready to pick up where you left off if the other agencies fail to get any results.
- Maintain and build community presence and brand awareness.
- Actively seek local property intelligence and build property investment strategies for your clients.
- Run 'wealth through property' education seminars.
- Measure your market share.

# Material or not? That is the question

The question every sales agent asks when told they must disclose all material facts to potential buyers is: so what exactly is a material fact?

It is fair to say that a lot of people would not want to live in a home where something unpleasant has occurred. For example, if there had been a murder or violent crime committed in a house, there are many people who would object to living there. In the same way, ongoing occurrences such as excessively noisy neighbours can also be off-putting to potential buyers.

Perhaps it would make no difference to you, but for countless prospective buyers with cultural, religious or superstitious beliefs, it can. This is what makes the issue of 'material fact' so difficult for agents; what is an important consideration for one person may be completely irrelevant to someone else.

In this article, we look at material fact as it applies to sales agents. The issue of material fact is also one that affects residential tenancies, and this will be covered in the May edition of the *Journal*.

## What is a material fact?

Under section 52 of the *Property, Stock and Business Agents Act 2002*, the obligation to disclose a material fact lies with the agent. However, defining just what constitutes a material fact is not at all straightforward.

The decision in *Hinton v Commissioner of Fair Trading [2007]* NSWADTAP 17 provides some guidance:



“[An] act may become ‘material’ within the meaning of s.52 in two ways – it can become ‘material’ because in the particular circumstances it is known by the agent to be ‘material’ to the particular consumer, even though

the agents and consumers may not typically regard the matter as ‘material’. The other way in which it may become ‘material’ is by the application of an objective standard which has regard to what a reasonably informed

consumer with a fair-minded understanding of the real estate market, including the role of the real estate agent, would regard as ‘material’.”

The decision in *Hinton* involved the sale of a property that

had been the scene of a triple murder, a fact that the Administrative Decision Tribunal held that the buyer should have been made aware of, but was not.

The decision to some extent clarifies the agent's obligation to disclose a material fact to potential buyers by effectively removing the subjective element and establishing an objective test. However, the issue of what is and what is not a material fact remains problematic for agents.

### Matters to consider

The *Hinton* case provides some direction to agents to assist in determining whether something is a material fact. Matters to consider include:

- The agent's treatment of the fact
- Whether the fact is able to be independently ascertained
- Whether the fact is likely to impact on price
- The reaction of other buyers to the fact
- Whether the fact results in the property being in a rare or unusual category or position.

Agents may need to consider these matters when undertaking an inspection and preparing a report prior to listing a property for sale. Agents should ensure the seller understands the restrictions imposed by the legislation in relation to representations about a property for marketing purposes and the need for agent compliance with the legislation. Sellers should also be aware of those matters which the agent may need to disclose if material to a buyer's decision to buy the property.

### NSW Fair Trading guidelines

The Fair Trading guidelines do not provide an exhaustive list or a definition of material facts; however, they do provide some clarity about what issues to consider when trying to decide if something is a material fact or not.

According to the guidelines, "Apart from individual circumstances where an agent understands that a particular issue is 'material' to an individual ... agents should concern themselves with considering issues which are sensitive for a significant proportion of the population."



**The *Hinton* case provides some direction to agents to assist in determining whether something is a material fact.**



Examples given of what could be a material fact include whether the property has a current DA approval, whether it had water damage in the past, or if it was the scene of a serious crime during the current occupation.

A common question by agents is: "How long does it take before a material fact is no longer material?" While not providing a definitive answer, the guidelines suggest that agents focus on material facts that relate to the period when the vendor was the owner of the property.

Inevitably there will still be grey areas. The answer will probably depend on the circumstances and how recently the issue occurred.

### Clarity, consistency and certainty

The law as it stands puts agents in a difficult position: they must act in the best interests of their client, the seller, while at the same time disclose information to prospective buyers that may not be in the best interests of their client. Importantly, the seller does not have to disclose material facts.

REINSW believes the obligation to disclose material facts to buyers should be uniform; that is, it should apply to both the seller and the agent.

REINSW has called upon the NSW Government to provide clarity, consistency and certainty in relation to material fact.

- **Clarity.** We need a clear definition as to what constitutes a material fact. It is problematic for agents to disclose a material fact without a definition of what it is.
- **Consistency.** If the desire is to protect consumers, then the requirement to disclose material facts should be uniform; that is, by both the seller and the agent. Why? Because it is the seller who has the best knowledge of material facts. Further, capturing the seller removes the conflict that currently exists when the agent attempts to satisfy their obligations to both the seller and prospective buyers.
- **Certainty.** At what time should the disclosure of

material facts be made? REINSW believes that there is a possible argument that material facts should be disclosed in a prescribed manner, the most obvious being in the standard Contract for Sale (as is the case with a variety of other warnings and disclosures).

The issue of material fact is complex. Unfortunately, the problem has been handed to the real estate profession without sufficient assistance and guidance. This places agents in an untenable position and exposes consumers to risk.

REINSW continues to lobby for reform in this area and we will keep you informed of our progress. ♦

*If you have questions, or would like further information, please contact the Helpline by calling (02) 9264 2342 or emailing [helpline@reinsw.com.au](mailto:helpline@reinsw.com.au)*

## MATERIAL FACT CLAUSE IN AGENCY AGREEMENTS

REINSW has, in part, addressed this issue with an additional clause in REINSW Agency Agreements. The clause obligates the seller to disclose material facts and to acknowledge that the agent must disclose any material facts to potential buyers.

*Members who wish to download sample PDFs for Agency Agreements, including the material fact clause, should go to: [reinsw.com.au/sampleforms](http://reinsw.com.au/sampleforms)*





For Cary the value in entering awards lies in how they force you to evaluate your business.

“You get to revise, especially as you’re asked questions and you think, ‘Yeah, I’ve got that covered — I’m doing that really well at the moment,’” he said.

Cary values how the awards application process can change your business.

“It makes you get on top of your game and stay there. In particular it makes you write policy and procedures, which I’m a big fan of doing in the office. In a small business, you have to do all of this yourself.”

Lessons can also be learnt from industries outside of real estate. Veronica Williams, whose mother owns Lucy’s Florist in Summer Hill, Sydney, knows the value of entering awards after the business won Florist of the Year for 2012 in the Australian Small Business Champion Awards.

Entering the awards wasn’t something Veronica had thought much about until customers started asking how they could nominate the business. The application process in particular highlighted the value of entering to Veronica.

“It has given us a lot of credibility and awareness with customers we otherwise wouldn’t have had.”

### Critically evaluate your business

A great deal of work and development goes into awards submissions. From choosing which awards are right for you to writing the

submissions, entering awards can reveal a great deal about your business. Throughout the process you may discover areas that need work. The evaluation process that you immerse yourself in through entering awards allows you to look at your business from a new angle and highlight any areas that need consideration.

For Dean, the application process led to some big changes to his business. He hired a general manager who took on all administrative tasks such as hiring and implementing systems, which allowed him to get back out into the business with his clients.

“Hiring a general manager and getting back to seeing the clients was the best thing I did for my business,” said Dean.

Being able to maintain a personal relationship with his clients not only boosted business, but also his credibility, which aided him in receiving nominations for future awards. The awards process definitely helped him achieve this.

Each company is different so the award application process can highlight different areas that need attention. For Cary, the awards process placed an emphasis on the company’s need to address social media. “Social media is something we have to push hard on now.”

### Kudos for your agency

Everyone likes to win. Winning can bring a great positive energy to the business, along with boosting staff morale.

The positive effect on you or your business does not

have to be short lived. Dean is still reaping the benefits of winning the Australian Small Business Champion Award for Business of the Year.

“I was asked to speak at a conference recently. It was partly because we’d won some awards, so I think it adds to your credibility.”

This momentum of winning an award has the potential to carry on over the years.

“You can see when you win the award how the office goes crazy. It just says that all the hard work and the little things you do every day to make yourself better than the day before have paid off,” Cary said.



It makes you get on top of your game and stay there.



### Potential to change your business

Being open to change is crucial to running a business. Certain processes, such as entering awards, can provide the motivation needed for change. Awards dinners or related events, meanwhile, are great opportunities for networking.

Cary is committed to the awards process and thinks logically about what is required when preparing awards submissions. His advice to others entering awards is all about time

management. “Allocate a time — if it’s half an hour or an hour — every week to deal with it. Sit down every week and work a little bit on the submission, so you can pump it out. If you try to do it in one hit, it’s too much.”

For Veronica, the awards process highlighted practical issues that the company needed to address. Community involvement and sustainability were both key points that they questioned.

“We do many things without consciously thinking about it. So having to think about our process to reduce waste and water usage was great, because it helped us to put further plans in place to improve that in the future.”

Her advice to anyone considering entering an award, regardless of the industry you may be in, is do not focus on winning. “Just communicate clearly your love for your business and the hard work you’ve put into the business itself and why you’re proud of what you’re doing,” she said. “Don’t focus on answering questions so you’ll win. If you’re open and honest about your passion that will come through.”

Most importantly, as Dean points out: “Don’t give up, keep trying.”

Although winning is fantastic, the benefits of awards are not limited to the title alone. When you are working on your next awards submission, be open to what you can learn. Critically evaluating your business will result in business efficiencies and the recognition you deserve. ♦





## 2013 REINSW AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE

Entries for the 2013 REINSW Awards for Excellence open soon. Don't miss your chance to be part of the premier industry awards in NSW.

### KEY DATES

**Entries open**  
Wednesday, 1 May 2013

**Entries close**  
Thursday, 13 June 2013

**Finalists announced**  
August 2013

**Winners announced**  
Thursday, 10 October 2013  
at the REINSW Awards for Excellence Gala Dinner

Keep an eye on  
[reinsw.com.au/2013Awards](http://reinsw.com.au/2013Awards)  
for more details.



BY JAMES RUBULIS,  
CEO OF ARO SOFTWARE

# Untangle the World Wide Web

Don't miss out on golden opportunities to attract more clients by having a powerful website.

---

In 2013, there is no doubt that your website is your virtual shopfront. The World Wide Web does its work effectively and, as scary as it may be, this is where your clients are going as their first port of call when buying or selling their home.

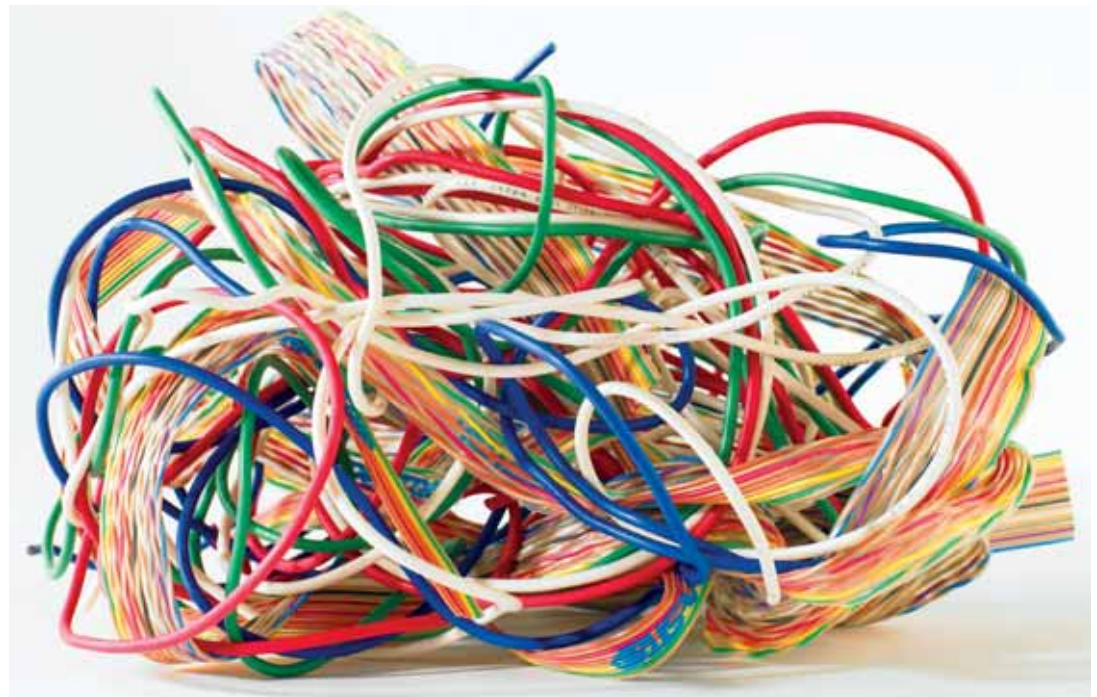
Before picking up the phone to make that initial telephone enquiry, you can bet that the client has done extensive online research. They probably will have visited not only your website, but those of your competitors to see what they are offering.

Here's what you need to know to untangle the World Wide Web, and make it work for you:

## Your website

A website is a website, right? Wrong! Take a look at your current site and ask yourself what it says about you and your business. Are you proud of how it looks? Is the information current? Or do you have old information on your pages? Is there a wrong contact number because you have moved office and forgotten to update this on your website?

A real estate business has specific needs and paramount of those is the need for property information to be loaded and edited with ease. Your website needs to be a reflection of your business in every way. It is vital to have the



technology and back-end set-up to meet those needs.

## SEO

So you've got your flash new website, but how will people find you? It doesn't matter if you have the greatest website in the world, if you are not ranking highly on Google.

Most traffic through your website will come from a Google search, and in the instance of a real estate agent, users will commonly type in: "Real estate agent in [insert suburb/town here]". If you're in an area that has very little competition, then sometimes

your current set-up may be enough. The best test is to Google yourself and see where you rank; if you're not on that first page then you're in desperate need of some SEO (Search Engine Optimisation).

There are several things that a real estate agent can do to improve their own Search Engine Ranking without the expensive price tag of hiring an SEO specialist.

Start by writing some unique content on your website that relates to the keywords and phrases that you would like to target. It is important to keep

this content looking natural, making sure that you do not fall into the bad habit of 'keyword stuffing'. This involves listing your target keywords and phrases so many times in copy that search engines penalise you for practising 'Black Hat' SEO techniques.

A great way to improve the content on your website is to set up a suburb profile section that provides a brief description and facts on your target suburbs.

Next, you can start to build some inbound links from some quality websites. One of the biggest mistakes people make

when attempting to do their own SEO is purchasing thousands of random links; this is also a 'Black Hat' technique and it will be penalised.

A great approach to building the inbound links to your website is to set up a reciprocal linking system or a 'link for a link'. You do this by setting up a business directory on your website for local businesses. Simply add a link to their website on your business directory page, and request that they do the same for you.



**Start by writing some unique content on your website that relates to the keywords and phrases that you would like to target.**



Lastly, it is a great idea to set up a blog. You can set up a free blog in a few minutes. Once you are set up, you simply need to start writing posts that relate to your area, such as market updates. Within these posts include some links back to your website, and you've got free inbound links.

#### Mobile site

Our mobile phones are far from being just telephones these days. A recent Google survey found that 72 per cent of smartphone users say that it's

important to them that websites are mobile friendly. Your mobile website needs to provide a fast and simple user experience.

Good mobile sites have the features we all want, such as large buttons, readability and easy-to-find information. Websites that aren't mobile friendly are annoying to users and bad for business.

Bear these considerations in mind and visitors to your website will evolve to become your clients. ♦

## **Experience the REINSW member benefits with M2!**

Join or renew with M2 Telecom and receive **up to \$2,000\*** towards your holidays!

\* Dollar value in M2 Holiday Rewards

**m2** Holiday Rewards



Find out more:

**Call 1300 552 085**

**W [www.M2HolidayRewards.com.au](http://www.M2HolidayRewards.com.au)**

**E [member.enquiry@m2.com.au](mailto:member.enquiry@m2.com.au)**

**m2**telecom

# Technical tactics

BY JILL PARK

What should you consider when investing in new IT equipment and gadgets for your agency?

---



**TABLETS:** Tablet devices have been embraced by the real estate industry. Agents use them to show videos and images to clients as well as to perform more administrative tasks while on the go. They can also help enhance the brand of the agency that uses them.

**MOBILES:** Regardless of where you are and what you are doing, it is essential your clients can reach you. Missing a potential sale is not an option in today's market. Smartphones synched to a CRM system can make the difference between securing that client or not.

Navigating your way through the minefield of electronic gadgets can be a challenge, whether you are setting up a new office or upgrading your existing equipment.

Brand is a major consideration when choosing IT equipment,

as what you select will have to last you a number of years. However, there are a number of additional factors to take into account when making an investment.

"All organisations need to deal with an ever changing

technology landscape," said Colliers International General Manager Corporate, Marketing and Communications Belinda Deguara. "An important part of our IT strategy is to regularly refresh our infrastructure and the tools we give to our agents," she added.

Victorian agency Buckmaster Hawkey conducted a survey in May 2012, which revealed that agents place a strong importance on the working environment. The report discovered that systems and IT played an important role in the contentment of staff, as



**LAPTOPS:** Agents are becoming ever more mobile. In some instances the office set-up itself is evolving to become a flexible working environment. Therefore, agents must be prepared to set up shop in different locations.

**LANDLINE TELEPHONE SYSTEMS:** Landline telephones remain an integral part of the real estate agent's arsenal. These systems can be synched with mobiles to ensure agents are contactable wherever they are. Some systems allow agents to maintain one single telephone number and callers will simultaneously dial an agent's landline and mobile. Agents can also maintain a single message inbox under these systems.

out-dated IT and phone equipment can convince agents that their employer does not value them.

New technology also facilitates the mobility of staff. Commercial agency Jones Lang LaSalle recently moved

from a traditional office space to an Activity Based Working (ABW) style, where agents operate in an almost paperless office and do not have their own allocated desk.

The company issued laptops to all employees upon making the

move to the new Wi-Fi-enabled, flexible working environment.

Jones Lang LaSalle Managing Director Michael Fenton said the new Sydney office included a wireless guest network, enhanced audio visual and digital collaboration tools.

The company has also rolled out a new database designed with staff mobility in mind.

"Mobile phones are still number one for the job, but tablets are a close second and can also be used in our Wi-Fi environment," said Michael.

Real estate agents have to be contactable whether in the office, on the road or working from home. This means that it is essential that their equipment facilitates ease of communication wherever they may be and no matter what device they are using.

Robert Tinning, National Sales Manager for hardware and software at IT support company Brennan IT talks the *Journal* through the key issues to consider when building a new IT system for your agency.

## Connectivity

Robert believes connectivity should be front of mind for real estate agencies when purchasing new office equipment. He gives the example of a connected phone system, which encompasses mobiles and landlines.

“Even if you are on a day off and you have a call come in, you can push it to someone in the office. It allows you to pick and choose who you speak to,” said Robert.

## Systems

People are either a Mac or a PC person, which can pose a problem for some staff when new equipment brands are introduced to the office. Robert recommends sticking with the same operating system where possible.

“If they are using an Apple Mac they should use an iPad, but if they are using a Windows 8 system, they should consider sticking with it,” he said. “Connectivity between devices is always better when they share the same operating system.”

Synching devices of different brands across different operating systems can cause minor delays in device transfers

that may appear insignificant at first, but can mount up across the working week.

## Brands

Tier one brands, such as HP, IBM, Lenovo and Apple have an inherent level of quality built in. These are big companies that are unlikely to go out of business anytime soon and so the future support of your system is not placed in jeopardy from the beginning.

Brands tend to offer three-year guarantees for products, on average, and Robert recommends updating within this time period. “It can be stretched a little longer, but you really want to keep up the front end,” he said.



**Tier one brands, such as HP, IBM, Lenovo and Apple have an inherent level of quality built in.**



## Electronic signatures

Signing paperwork is a large part of a real estate agent’s life. Chasing a client to sign a contract can often become something of a wild goose chase. However, there is technology that can speed up this process.

We’ve all signed for a parcel from a courier company. This technology is already in the market and allows you to digitally sign signatures using a tablet.

“From a sales point of view it means you do not have to

carry printouts around with you on site,” said Robert.

“Real estate agents should be working towards fully-integrated systems with everything being electronic.”

## Club software

It is not uncommon to have to scan your licence when entering a nightclub. This technology allows the club to instantly update its CRM system with the licence information. The same technology could be applied to a real estate scenario to allow agents to monitor who has viewed what property and when.

Collecting data about prospective clients gives agents extra leverage when interacting with them at a later date. For instance, agents can draw on this collated information when a client calls, adding a personalised touch to the conversation.

“Once your CRM system is installed and synched across your agents’ devices, they can identify an unknown number easily,” said Robert.

## Equipment

Equipment options on the market are extensive. The most recent addition to an agent’s arsenal of equipment has been tablet devices. They are lightweight and can easily be carried to meetings by agents and used to show videos and images to clients. In addition they can be used to complete administrative tasks while on the go.

Twist and revolve tablets are the latest variation on the tablet theme. These devices can operate as a normal laptop, but with the twist of the screen become a tablet (see box). ♦

## TWIST AND REVOLVE

Keeping up with the latest equipment can be as much a marketing exercise as a business requirement for agencies. Kitting out your agents with the latest equipment not only gives them the tools to conduct their job efficiently, but presents a modern image of your agency to your clients. A recent addition to the market is the twist and revolve tablet:



**SAMSUNG ATIV SMART PC**  
Battery Life: 14.5 hours  
System: Windows 8  
Display: 11.6”  
Weight: 1.4kg



**LENOVO THINKPAD TWIST**  
Battery Life: 7 hours  
System: Windows 8  
Display: 12.5”  
Weight: 1.5kg



**HP ELITEBOOK REVOLVE**  
Battery Life: 8 hours 15 mins  
System: Windows 8  
Display: 11.6”  
Weight: 1.37kg

# Fresh ideas, new opportunities and bespoke packages now available

**What** are your 2013/2014 business objectives?

**Can** we support your 2013 marketing objectives and complement your advertising strategy?

**Do** you want access to key industry decision makers?

There  
really  
is  
only

# one

place to go in New South Wales:

## Real Estate Institute of New South Wales

Tailor made cross media packages available in Real Estate Journal, *The Hub* e-news and [www.reinsw.com.au](http://www.reinsw.com.au)



**Real Estate Journal**  
Circulation: 4243\*



1 April 2012 – 30 SEPT 2012

Readership 15,271<sup>1</sup>  
<sup>1</sup>Publishers Australia Survey  
Oct 2012



**The Hub**  
Fortnightly  
member e-news.  
Circulation: 6100



**Website**  
• 24,220\*  
Monthly UB's  
• 74,529\*  
Monthly PI's



\*February 2013

• **Increase your brand** awareness across the property industry

• **Boost sales** of your products and service

### For more information contact:

**Advertising** Sara Lewis Tel: 02 9556 9105 E: [sara@mahlabmedia.com.au](mailto:sara@mahlabmedia.com.au)  
**Editorial** Jill Park Tel: 02 9556 9115 E: [jill@mahlabmedia.com.au](mailto:jill@mahlabmedia.com.au)



**REINSW**

for members  
since 1910



BY JOHN CUNNINGHAM,  
PRINCIPAL AT CUNNINGHAMS PROPERTY

# Residential sales 101

Get your real estate career off to a flying start with these key fundamentals to ensure success.

---

There are eight key fundamentals that you need to make the property industry your career for life. But first start by asking yourself: “Who do I have to *be* and what do I have to *do* to get what I want to *have*?”

Unless you have clarity, you will come across as lacking in confidence. And that is not what your clients want. Remember, every single person you meet is a potential client, and every person you meet has a purpose in your business – you just need to discover what that purpose is.

So let’s get into the nitty-gritty.

## 1. Mindset

The power of the mind is infinite, but we are our own worst enemies when it comes to what we allow it not to do. Change your mindset to can do and find reasons to do things, rather than accept reasons for not doing. If you have the right mindset, your career will rocket.

## 2. Goals

We all know goals are critical to success, but they shouldn’t be just about your business. Think about other goals

concerning your personal life. Write them down, carry them with you and read them regularly to keep focus.

## 3. Plan of action

A goal without a plan is like a bus without a route. Map out what you are going to do to get where you want to go and this means *work*. There is no easy route, so make the calls, contacts and relationships. This must be structured into an ideal week with time blocking prospecting hours – and no excuses.

## 4. Commitments

The way your plan will happen is by accepting accountability to your commitments. Manage your time wisely. There must be non-negotiables in your plan, such as prospecting, nurturing and networking activities. Find yourself an accountability buddy from your team or another office to keep each other on track.

## 5. Communication

In order to succeed, the value and frequency of your communications should result

in a series of meaningful, connected moments. That is where your real power lives – doing things others couldn’t be bothered doing.

## 6. Learning

Never stop learning. It is so easy to drop off on even the basics, let alone the upgrades we must constantly implement to keep on top of our game.

## 7. Strategies

If you don’t have any strategies then watch out, because your competitors will. For example, what are the strategies behind your prospecting plan and your client nurture plan?

## 8. Balance

You will never be at your best if your world is unbalanced. Learn to switch work off when you are home. Pay attention to your personal life, such as your family or your fitness. ♦

*Sydney-based John Cunningham is a 35-year veteran of the property industry and runs Cunninghams Property.*







BY MILES FELSTEAD,  
DIRECTOR OF MILES FELSTEAD REALTY AND  
PROPERTY MANAGEMENT CHAPTER CHAIR

# Property management 101

Here are the rules of engagement to help you make your mark in property management.

Property management requires a complex skill-set and the following eight guidelines will get you off to an excellent start.

## 1. Communication

Being a great communicator will simplify situations, alleviate possible tension, provide clarity and remove ambiguity. Remember to never meet aggression with aggression, as this only escalates issues. It is important to respond to your landlords and tenants in a timely manner, and always give clear instructions to your tradespeople.

## 2. Empathy

Property management is a service industry, and the ability to be empathetic to your clients (owners and tenants) is crucial. A property manager who listens and relates to a person's plight will achieve better and quicker results, with less anger and frustration along the way.

## 3. Decision making

You must be capable of making decisions on behalf of the owner

and/or tenant, depending on the situation. Pushing problems to the bottom of the pile to deal with later will only create a ticking time bomb. Procrastination and poor work organisation can have adverse effects on your business and will also cause you stress.

## 4. Time management

You always have to be prepared for the unexpected as a property manager. It is crucial that you plan your week constructively and make sure you have time set aside for routine tasks, such as annual inspections and checkouts.

## 5. Attention to detail

Inaccurate ingoing condition reports can cause major problems at the end of the tenancy when checkout is being completed. When a condition report is returned and there are considerable variances, the tenant should be contacted, an inspection arranged and the issues inspected. Any variances should then be rectified and confirmed in writing and attached to the report. If there are any cleaning or maintenance issues, these should be noted and photos taken.

## 6. Training

Continuing training and education enables you to keep current with industry practices, developing trends and technology. You also need to be up to speed with legislation and legislative amendments as your clients depend on you to have a clear understanding of the legislation.

## 7. Perseverance

Building a sound relationship with an owner – as well as the tenant – requires perseverance and resilience in building a fair amount of trust.

## 8. Admin skills

A lack of speed and skill in administrative tasks and lack of computer literacy will see you constantly running out of time and not achieving the myriad daily tasks necessary in the real estate business. ♦

*Miles Felstead was aided in the writing of this article by the Property Management Chapter committee members.*

# Working to grow the community

BY DEIRDRE SMITH

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the Orana Division and plans are in place to ensure 2013 is a year to remember.

REINSW Divisions represent 25 geographical areas in NSW. Divisions exist to encourage member agents in the relevant area to come together for communication, networking, professional development, raising the standing of real estate agents in the local community and to contribute to policy development.

This month's article focuses on the Orana Division.



Former Chair Rod Crowfoot (right) with Division member Brian McAnaney (left) and REINSW President Christian Payne (centre).

Local real estate identity Rod Crowfoot was Orana Division Chair for seven years. He recently stepped down from the top job, handing the reins to Mark Searle.

Mark and Rod, together with the rest of the Division Committee, are dedicated to helping their local community, whether this be running a charity fundraiser, organising an information seminar or working with the local council.

## Setting the standard

The Orana Division's signature event is their annual Novice Auctioneers Competition. Not only has the competition helped up-and-coming auctioneers throughout the years, it has also raised much-needed funds for many local charities.

And the 2013 event looks set to be bigger and better than ever before. The competition will be held in conjunction with

the 30th anniversary dinner and six competitors are already lined up to vie for the coveted title of Division winner. Many of the original members of the Division will also be honoured.

## Building prosperity

Together with the Division Committee, Rod began working on the review of the Dubbo Local Environment Plan (LEP) back in 2005. After seven years it was gazetted in 2011, and they have just finished putting together a submission for the first review of the LEP, suggesting amendments to ensure Dubbo's prosperity.

"I was on the mayoral-appointed working party preparing economic development strategies for the coming term for Dubbo City Council," Rod said. "It is important to be at the table where important discussions about the city's growth occur, particularly when it involves the housing industry."

Let's Get Growing was another initiative the Committee was involved in alongside the Chamber of Commerce and Dubbo City Council. The seminar encouraged residents to invest in local property to improve the availability of rental accommodation in the area.

A weekly radio spot on 2DU and being regularly quoted in the local newspaper allow Rod to keep property-related issues on the agenda.

## Future plans

Newly appointed Chair Mark Searle is committed to keeping up the good work.

"Orana is a strong Division," Mark said. "There are plenty of members who have been around since the beginning."

Mark hopes to get members from areas outside Dubbo more involved in the Division's activities.

"It's about getting agents to work together to create a positive impact in the community," said Mark.

Committee meetings, lobbying and direct communication with the local council are just some of the ways that Mark intends to continue making a difference in the Orana Division, to ensure the area continues to grow. ♦

## INTERESTED IN MAKING A CONTRIBUTION?

The Orana Division is looking for committed and passionate real estate agents to join the Committee.

If you are interested in joining or would like more information, email REINSW at [divisions@reinsw.com.au](mailto:divisions@reinsw.com.au)



# Heavenly homes

Churches offer unique architectural features that add both interest and value.

There are currently some 30 churches on sale in NSW, according to recent newspaper reports.

It can be difficult to value a church property, especially if there is not a similar property in the area to which it can be compared.

Adam Drummond of Fitzpatricks Real Estate in Wagga Wagga faced this dilemma when he recently added a 1918 church to his books.

“Pricing has to be based on nothing else but market feedback and, as such, we marketed the property as ‘preview now’, which is really no different to an auction campaign, but without the public bidding,” he said.

So what makes former churches such interesting properties for buyers and how do you go about selling them? Churches come in many shapes and forms, but there are certain architectural features that are typical of this type of property. It is important to identify these for the buyer as they add important value.

Adam suggests you look out for the following features:

## 1. Leadlight windows

People love the country charm leadlight windows add to a period house, but when it comes to churches that have been transformed into a residence, leadlight windows become even more desirable. Leadlight windows in these types of properties have a certain majesty about them and historical significance that draws a buyer into the story of the home.

## 2. Cathedral ceilings

What type of church residence is complete without cathedral ceilings? Cathedral ceilings soar into the open internal space of a home, creating a sense of splendour in the living areas. They provide a place to retreat and unwind in a temple-like abode or a place to add a loft or mezzanine level to a space that cries out for more thought.

## 3. Original doors

Original doors add an element of character and history to church-style properties. Their heavy timber bodies are solid and magnificent with huge, handcrafted carvings and original key lock handles. They are part of the first impression of the overall experience in entering such a magnificent property.

## 4. Pews and bells

Original elements of the traditional church experience, such as timber pews and brass bells, add character to these properties. Buyers love to discover little secrets from the past and usually plan on

incorporating them into their unique style for the house when they eventually make it their home. There could be a restored pew against a wall that fits in beautifully with the surrounding furniture, or a brass bell serving as the doorbell for visitors.

## 5. Flooring

A carefully restored original timber floor is more desirable than brand new flooring laid unceremoniously over the top. Original timber flooring tells a story through the scratches from hundreds of parishioners' shoes scuffing across the aisles or worn marks where a bride and groom once stood exchanging vows. Few buyers will want to cover up these signs of history and tradition. ♦

## DECONSECRATION

When a Parish Council sells a church, it may be necessary to deconsecrate the property. The act of deconsecration removes a religious blessing from the property that had previously been consecrated by a minister or a priest. The procedure differs from denomination to denomination, so contact the relevant religious organisation for more information.

# Commercial confessions

BY BLAIR PETERKEN, DIRECTOR AT CBRE AND HEAD OF SOUTH SYDNEY INDUSTRIAL TEAM

## What you need to know when selling commercial warehousing.

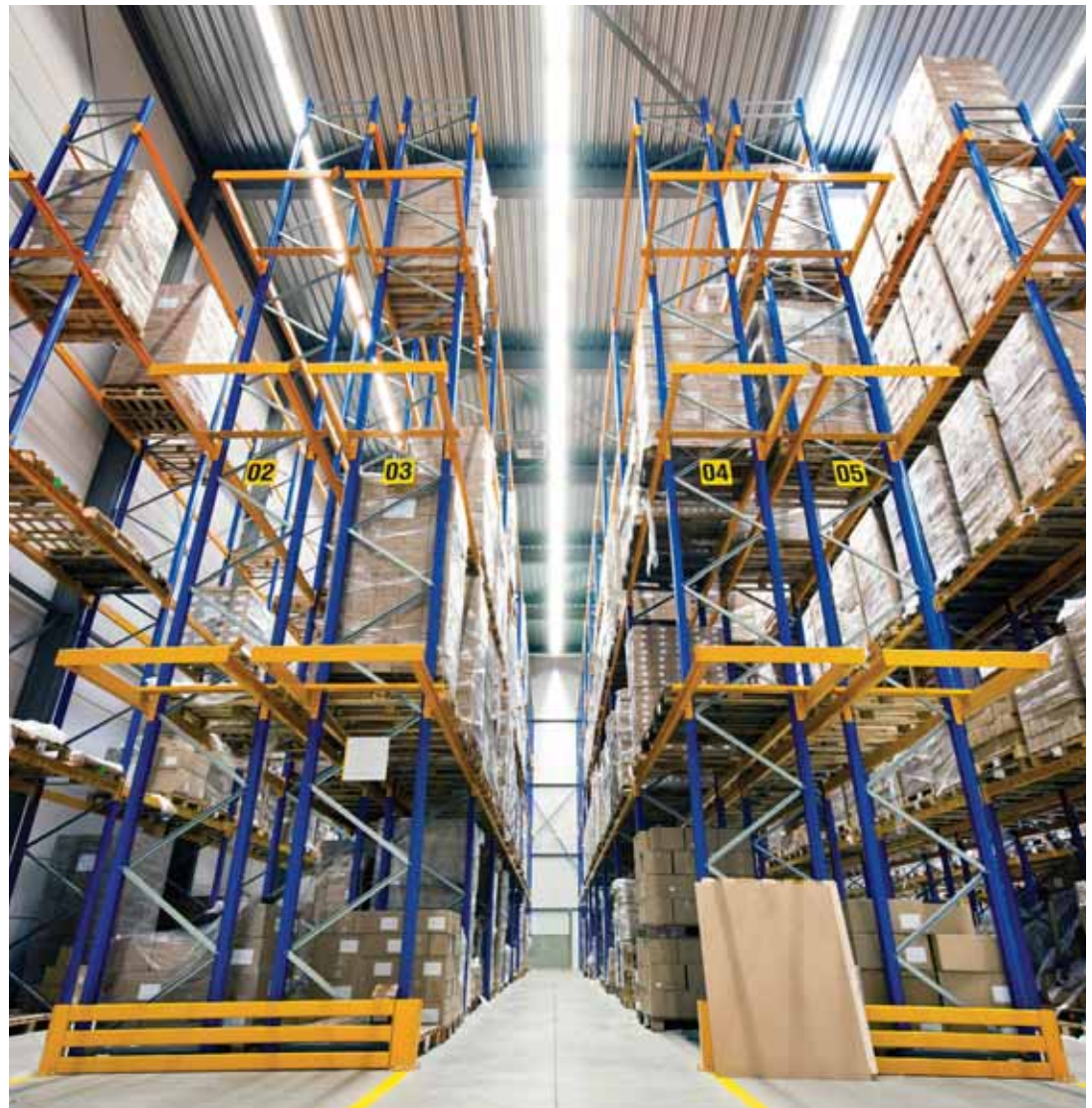
Industrial agency work is not that different to other agency practice: the end goal is to achieve the best possible outcome for the client. We have vendors and lessors to service and buyers or tenants to sell products to.

The general definition of an industrial property is 'anything with a roller door'. However the definition is dependent on the zoning of the site within the local government area and can include, but is not limited to, warehouse-offices, factory-warehouses, industrial units, industrial parks or light and heavy manufacturing buildings, and mixed-use commercial sites.

Just as my clients concentrate on particular markets and sectors specific to their business, industrial agents also need to specialise in their own designated markets. This is especially important as most leading agencies within Australia combine the sales and leasing function within their industrial divisions. Therefore it is vital to have a strong understanding of the value of the property and the market within which it is located.

For example, the South Sydney industrial market, where I work, has changed dramatically over the past five years as it has gone through a gentrification process.

As zonings change in certain areas and the demand for residential dwellings increases, the older industrial shed is being sold to residential developers for more than what an owner-occupier or investor would pay.



This trend will continue as long as there is demand for residential units in NSW.

### Adapt to your market

These are changes in our industrial market that we have had to adapt to over time and this is what makes the South Sydney market so dynamic.

We could be selling a mixed-use site to a developer one day, then leasing a warehouse to a transport operator the next.

Access to Port Botany and Sydney Airport and the close proximity to the city and Eastern Suburbs will always attract strong enquiry from industrial

users in South Sydney. It is important to identify your own area's calling cards.

Key considerations that a buyer may look at in an industrial property are the size of the site and what improvements it has. The location and the FSR (Floor Space Ratio) could also affect

their decision when deciding on an industrial property.

Often a purchaser will ask if the site has any contamination. The answer will be in a contamination report. The price, functionality of the property and whether it suits their business requirements will ultimately determine the purchase.

“  
The general definition of an industrial property is ‘anything with a roller door’.”

The zoning of an industrial property is also critical to an occupier – if the zoning doesn’t allow for a particular business use then it can be a deal breaker. There are a variety

of occupiers within the industrial sector operating a broad range of businesses with unique property requirements (see below).

Negotiating a lease deal can take a lot longer than a sale, as tenants can start looking for space up to 12 months before their existing lease expires. There are a number of points to be negotiated and agreed upon by the lessor and the lessee before a deal is done. These points include:

- Rental price – how much per sqm/per annum?
- Incentive – how many months’ rent free? This is to assist the tenant in moving and fitting out the new building.
- Term of the lease and lease commencement date.
- Rent increases – are there any annual rent increases?

- What bank guarantee is required?
- What work does the lessor have to do?

Once the above terms are all agreed and a Heads of Agreement is signed, then it is inevitable that solicitors will want to make changes to the draft lease – a game of back and forward occurs until both parties are in agreement and the lease is signed.

Industrial specialists need to provide tailored advice and resources that take into account the individual requirements of each client in order to effectively operate in a fast-moving and complex property market. A comprehensive understanding of the client’s needs allows the client to concentrate on their core business and leave the property requirement to a dedicated specialist. ♦

## INDUSTRIAL PROPERTY REQUIREMENTS

Here are a few general examples of property requirements for a selection of industrial business types:

Business type	Likely property requirements
Importer and distributor	High clearance warehouse for racking and good container access. Office areas usually provided; 10-20 per cent office area common.
Freight and logistics	High clearance warehouse for racking, large hardstand/yard area for containers and truck parking/turning. If it is for a larger corporate, then a large office may be included. The higher the office content, the higher the rent.
Printer	Low clearance warehouse with high power supply, usually over 600 amps per phase.
Manufacturer	Generally low clearance warehouse, but if a gantry crane is required then high clearance is necessary. Higher power supply and cannot be located close to residential due to noise.
Hi-tech	Usually requires a higher office ratio. Prefer a clean professional image with a clean warehouse and a modern office fit-out. Not usually located in the older traditional industrial areas.
Food users	High clearance warehousing for the installation of cool rooms or freezers. Racking for dry goods is also installed. Small office area is usually required. They tend to sign long-term leases because the capital they invest in setting up is large.

## KNOW YOUR TENANT’S NEEDS

When leasing, there are a number of other questions that an industrial agent must ask a tenant in order to effectively match that tenant with the right property.

- What size warehouse do they require?
- Is there a height requirement?
- How much office space is required? (15sqm per person is the general rule).
- What is the intended use for the property? (see Industrial Property Requirements left).
- What lease term do they want? (A longer lease usually means that the tenant has better negotiating power).
- When does the tenant’s current lease expire? (What’s their timing?)
- Where is the tenant’s current location?
- What are the truck movements/access requirements? (Number of trucks per day and if access for a B-Double truck is required then there are certain roads that only those trucks are allowed to use).
- What is their budget range for the property?
- What work will the lessor need to do the property?



BY AVA SHIRLEY

# Home improvements

A real estate agent with a creative outlook can increase sales success by offering inspirational ideas to help buyers see a property's true potential.



Getting potential buyers to imagine possible opportunities in a property can be difficult. Most real estate agents are well versed in how to make small changes to increase the chance of a speedy sale: painting walls a neutral tone, replacing carpets and modernising kitchens, for example.

These are great, simple fixes that appeal to a range of buyers, but it's beyond these surface changes where home improvement becomes more of a challenge.

## Form and function

Functionality is an architect's first and most fundamental

design principle, not aesthetics. If you consider this, look at the property you are selling and ask yourself: Does this house really 'work' as somewhere to live, relax and entertain? Often it's a poor layout that alerts buyers to a sense that something is not feeling right.

Could the floor plan be easily adjusted to better reflect how people now wish to live?

Consider these points:

- Would opening up walls between an adjoining kitchen and dining room and/or lounge room be better for

entertaining and watching over the kids?

- Would a formal living room at the front of the house be better swapped with the bedroom beside the backyard? Could French, sliding or concertina doors then be put in to provide even better connectivity?
- Would an overly large bedroom be better if made slightly smaller and an ensuite added?

The functionality of a home, however, is that it has to be suited to the needs of the occupants. If the property is about to become someone's 'forever' home, they need to make changes that are designed specifically to suit them.

### Let there be light

Natural light is another key factor in designing a space that feels right. An obvious start is more or larger windows – but the location of these is just as important. Ideally, large windows should face north and

east, where the sun is at its coolest. Eaves will also make a huge difference to windows in terms of controlling the temperature of a space.

In summer, eaves block out direct sunlight, while in winter they allow sun in to help warm up the house.



**Ask yourself:  
Does this house  
really 'work' as  
somewhere to  
live, relax and  
entertain?**

Other simple ways to let light into a building include installing skylights, or even replacing solid doors with ones made of frosted glass. Reflective and glossy surfaces will also bounce light around. For example, choose polished floors instead of carpet and gloss kitchen cupboards over matte ones.

Look out for deep floor plates – light is at its best within eight metres of its source (a window), so a 24-metre deep floor plate that is lit from both sides will be left with eight metres of dark space in the middle of the building. This is often a problem in older apartments. A more extensive change for a house of this type could involve putting a courtyard or winter garden part way through the side of a house and therefore reducing the floor plate depth while also creating a larger perimeter for light to penetrate.

### Other fixes

Do noise or uncomfortable temperatures plague the house? If a house is cold in winter, it's often also hot in summer. Treating an insulation problem will fix both of these issues and assist in reducing external noise entering the house. It could just need better insulation underfloor or in the ceiling. Large windows are best dressed with thick curtains in winter to keep heat in at night.

These ideas will give buyers some positive food for thought.

You can also tell your clients that they are best advised to live in a place for at least a year before attempting any major renovations. It allows them to really understand the quality of the space, the noise, winds and sun patterns – and their own needs and behaviours.

Given time, residents will usually figure out what they are truly looking for in that specific house, as well as identify the opportunities to maximise its potential.

What's best about this is they don't have to add the cost of an exhaustive renovation to the sale price of the property. Instead, it could be deferred and staged to meet their budget requirements. ♦

*Ava Shirley has completed a Bachelor of Design in Architecture. She has worked for the past three years at HASSELL, one of Sydney's largest and most well-respected architectural studios. Ava is currently completing her Masters of Architecture degree.*

## KNOW YOUR STYLES

Having a working knowledge of different styles of architecture can cement your position as an agent who goes that extra mile and gives an increased sense of authority to potential buyers. Here is an overview of some key styles:

### Federation

Built at the turn of the century, these homes are often filled with character – from

fireplaces, cornices and ceiling roses to decorative fretwork applied to front porches.

### Art Deco

A style prolific in the 1920s and 1930s, these buildings are ornately detailed using mostly geometric patterns. Usually built of brick and then sometimes rendered, this style features curved walls in addition to flat rooftops.

### Inter-war period

The Californian bungalow was popular during this period. A solid structure, single-storey layout and gable roof define this style, along with original stained glass windows and high ceilings.

### Modern

Early work in the style began in the 1920s, but its popularity grew during the

1950s and 1960s. Clean lines and simplicity in design are features of this style.

### Eco-friendly and sustainable design

This is the direction new homes are headed. Intelligent design allows for homes that are comfortable to occupy without consuming large amounts of energy both in construction and ongoing running costs.

MAY 2013

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
<p><b>WANT TO KNOW MORE?</b></p> <p>You can find out more about all of our courses by visiting <a href="http://www.reinsw.com.au">www.reinsw.com.au</a> Click on Course Schedule in the Training menu.</p>		1	2	3	4	5
		<p><b>SYDNEY</b> Real Estate Licensing Course concludes – 2 days a week for 13 weeks (9.30am-4.30pm)</p>		<p><b>SYDNEY CPD</b> Creating Impact and Influence (9.30am-1.30pm)</p>	<p><b>SYDNEY</b> Certificate of Registration Course (part-time) commences (9.00am-5.00pm)</p>	
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	<p><b>SYDNEY CPD</b> The A-B-C of Compliance (9.30am-1.30pm)</p>	<p><b>SYDNEY</b> Auctioneers Accreditation – 3 days (9.30am-4.30pm)</p>			<p><b>SYDNEY</b> Certificate of Registration Course (part-time) continues (9.00am-5.00pm)</p>	
		<p><b>SYDNEY</b> Certificate of Registration Course (part-time) concludes (9.00am-5.00pm)</p>				
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
<p><b>SYDNEY</b> Certificate of Registration Course (full-time) – 4 days (9.00am-5.00pm)</p>					<p><b>SYDNEY</b> Certificate of Registration Course (part-time) continues (9.00am-5.00pm)</p>	
		<p><b>SYDNEY CPD</b> WHS for Property Managers – Legislation Overview (9.30am-1.30pm)</p>				
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
<p><b>SYDNEY CPD</b> Managing Your Property Management Workplace (9.30am-1.30pm)</p>		<p><b>SYDNEY CPD</b> An Agent's Guide to Tax and Property Investment (9.30am-1.30pm)</p>			<p><b>SYDNEY</b> Certificate of Registration Course (part-time) concludes (9.00am-5.00pm)</p>	
27	28	29	30	31		
<p><b>SYDNEY</b> Certificate of Registration Course (full-time) – 4 days (9.00am-5.00pm)</p>						
<p><b>CANBERRA</b> REIACT Certificate of Registration Course (full-time) – 5 days (9.00am-5.00pm)</p>						
	<p><b>SYDNEY CPD</b> The D-E-F of Compliance (9.30am-1.30pm)</p>					



# JUNE 2013

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="color: red;">■</span> CPD workshops – go to <a href="http://www.reinsw.com.au">www.reinsw.com.au</a> for course descriptions and prices</li> <li><span style="color: blue;">■</span> Certificate of Registration Course (Real Estate) (full and part time as indicated)</li> <li><span style="color: green;">■</span> Licensing Course</li> <li><span style="color: purple;">■</span> Novice Auctioneers Competitions</li> <li><span style="color: darkblue;">■</span> Roadshow 2013 – go to <a href="http://www.reinsw.com.au">www.reinsw.com.au</a> for details about what's happening in your area</li> </ul>					1	2
					3	4
<b>SYDNEY CPD</b> Prepare for Selling Like Never Before (9.30am-1.30pm)	<b>CANBERRA CPD</b> Effective Tribunal Preparation (9.00am-1.00pm)	<b>PARRAMATTA</b> Roadshow 2013 (9.00am-5.00pm)	<b>PENRITH</b> Roadshow 2013 (9.00am-5.00pm)			
<b>SYDNEY</b> Roadshow 2013 (9.00am-12.30pm)	<b>GYMEA</b> Roadshow 2013 (9.00am-5.00pm)					
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
<b>QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY</b>	<b>SYDNEY</b> Certificate of Registration Course (full-time) – 4 days (9.00am-5.00pm)					
	<b>CHATSWOOD</b> Roadshow 2013 (9.00am-5.00pm)	<b>SEAFORTH</b> Roadshow 2013 (9.00am-5.00pm)	<b>SYDNEY CPD</b> Maximise Your New Management Success Rate (9.30am-1.30pm)	<b>CANBERRA CPD</b> Property Management Fundamentals (9.00am-4.00pm)		
			<b>WOLLONGONG</b> Roadshow 2013 (9.00am-5.00pm)	<b>BATEMANS BAY</b> Roadshow 2013 (9.00am-5.00pm)		
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
	<b>SYDNEY CPD</b> An Agent's Guide to Tax and Property Investment (9.30am-1.30pm)	<b>GOSFORD</b> Roadshow 2013 (9.00am-5.00pm)	<b>SYDNEY CPD</b> WHS for Strata Managers – Legislation Overview (9.30am-1.30pm)			
	<b>NEWCASTLE</b> Roadshow 2013 (9.00am-5.00pm)	<b>CENTRAL COAST</b> Novice Auctioneers Competition				
	<b>NEWCASTLE</b> Novice Auctioneers Competition					
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>SYDNEY</b> Certificate of Registration Course (full-time) – 4 days (9.00am-5.00pm)						
		<b>SYDNEY CPD</b> WHS for Property Managers – In Practice (9.30am-1.30pm)				


# Make the most of membership

**As an REINSW member, you can benefit every day.**

Here are just some of the products, services and benefits you have access to.

For more information about your membership, call **(02) 9264 2343 (option 5)**

or visit **[www.reinsw.com.au](http://www.reinsw.com.au)**



## FORMS LIVE

Easy to use –  
anywhere, anytime.

Access and complete your agreements and forms online – in a fraction of the time taken for paper forms – using Forms Live.

Our new web app optimises the site for iPads and Android tablets, so it's perfect for agents who are on the go.

**[www.reiformslive.com.au](http://www.reiformslive.com.au)**  
**[servicecentre@reinsw.com.au](mailto:servicecentre@reinsw.com.au)**  
**(02) 9264 2343 (option 3)**

**EXCLUSIVE  
TO MEMBERS**



## Training

**Learn with REINSW  
and save.**

REINSW has your learning needs covered – and as a member, you receive substantial discounts on all our forums, courses, workshops and events.

**(02) 9264 2343 (option 1)**

**[www.reinsw.com.au/training](http://www.reinsw.com.au/training)**

**[training@reinsw.com.au](mailto:training@reinsw.com.au)**

# Real Careers

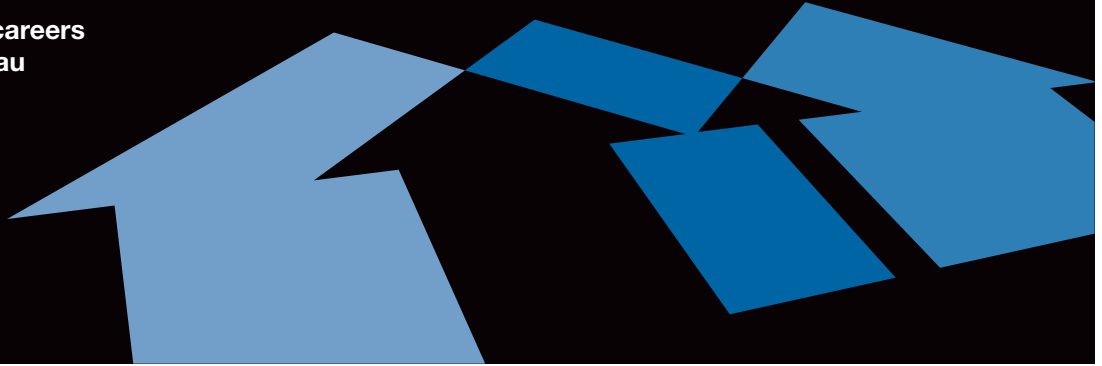
Find the right fit, fast.

Real Careers is your FREE real estate recruitment solution. List your job advertisements on the industry-specific Job Board and find qualified new industry entrants on the Candidate Board.

[www.reinsw.com.au/realcareers](http://www.reinsw.com.au/realcareers)  
[realcareers@reinsw.com.au](mailto:realcareers@reinsw.com.au)



EXCLUSIVE  
TO MEMBERS



## Awards for Excellence

**Entries for 2013 open soon!**

Entries for the 2013 REINSW Awards for Excellence open on **1 May 2013**. Whether you're part of a large franchise group or work in a small independent agency, you're in with a chance. Keep an eye on the website for more details.

[www.reinsw.com.au/2013Awards](http://www.reinsw.com.au/2013Awards)  
[excellence@reinsw.com.au](mailto:excellence@reinsw.com.au)  
(02) 9264 2343



## propertyprofile

**Latest data now available**

Have you downloaded the December 2012 edition of Property Profile yet? All the latest facts and figures are available now, exclusively to REINSW members, so make sure your information is up to date. Download now!

[www.reinsw.com.au/PPDec2012](http://www.reinsw.com.au/PPDec2012)  
[research@reinsw.com.au](mailto:research@reinsw.com.au)  
(02) 9264 2343

EXCLUSIVE  
TO MEMBERS



EXCLUSIVE  
TO MEMBERS

## Webinars

**Flexible learning at your fingertips.**

Free and exclusive to members, experience the benefit of easily accessible training on topics from compliance and legislation to sales and marketing tips.

**Now available on demand!** View any webinar at any time at your convenience on the REINSW website.

(02) 9264 2343 (option 1)  
[www.reinsw.com.au/webinars](http://www.reinsw.com.au/webinars)  
[training@reinsw.com.au](mailto:training@reinsw.com.au)

## MEMBER PROFILE: VICKI HALL



“It will add to my credibility with potential clients.”

It was the guidance, training and credibility provided by REINSW that enticed C21 Hallway Licensee-in-charge Vicki Hall to sign her agency up for membership this month.

Waitara agency C21 Hallway licensee Vicki Hall established her agency in October 2012. She oversees six staff at the young agency, which covers the expansive farming area of Pennant Hills from Cowan through to Wahroonga.

The agency joined REINSW this month with the intention of drawing on REINSW’s resources and guidance. Vicki believes it is important to be across the latest industry developments and plans to utilise the REINSW’s extensive knowledge base to help establish her new agency.

“I’ve decided to join REINSW for the network of professionals it provides

for me, for the guidance and expertise from this network, particularly with keeping up with what’s happening and changes in real estate and ‘best practice’,” Vicki said.

She hopes to benefit from her membership through accessing guidance, training and help from REINSW as and when she requires.

“I believe it will add to my credibility with potential clients,” she said.

To find out more about REINSW membership, call (02) 9264 2343 or visit reinsw.com.au

## NEW MEMBERS

### FULL FIRM

**C21 Hallway**  
WAITARA

**Future Habitat Pty Ltd**  
WILLOUGHBY

**Mahon Property Partners**  
CHATSWOOD

**Shore Commercial Property Pty Ltd**  
BROOKVALE

**DotCommercial**  
CAMDEN

**LJ Hooker Guildford**  
GUILDFORD

**O’Gorman & Partners Real Estate Co**  
MOSMAN



FOR CONTACT DURING BUSINESS HOURS P 02 9363 9244 | F 02 9328 2861  
E INFO@TRADINGREFERENCE.COM WWW.TRADINGREFERENCE.COM



TRADING REFERENCE AUSTRALIA (TRA) IS A NATIONAL DATABASE RELATING TO RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL RENTAL INFORMATION USED BY REAL ESTATE AGENTS AROUND AUSTRALIA.

### WHY JOIN TRA

The proven integrity of our organisation abiding by the regulations required in order to provide a more legally safe environment for our clients.



“OUR MISSION IS ONE OF INTEGRITY, ACCURACY AND EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE IN MOVING TOWARDS BECOMING THE PREMIER DATABASE IN AUSTRALIA”  
Gal Wilkins, Managing Director

- TRA creates a more professional image.
- TRA provides facilities to view drivers licences, passports, picture id of tenants and pictures of damaged property and has an alert system for tracking absconded tenants.
- TRA assure you that we can help build your property management portfolio financially almost instantly.
- TRA supplies documents to give prospective owners to assist in the acquisition of new managements.
- TRA assists in the legal protection of the property managers and principals against litigation from Owners and tenants.
- TRA supplies Certificates of proof in the event of insurance or legal claims.
- TRA has a debt collection service for all areas within real estate.
- TRA provides a legally safe environment for clients.
- TRA is used by all industries (e.g. Banks, Utility, Insurance, Finance Companies, Institutions and large accounting firms etc).
- TRA can audit trail all searches in the event of misuse and trace back to the computer used, therefore protecting both principals and property managers.
- TRA has a 60 page document on every aspect of our business showing compliance to the new privacy principles, completed by our barrister and solicitors.
- TRA abides by “Property, Stock and Business Agents Amendments (Tenant Databases) Regulation 2004”.

Check out the latest rate for your area. You can use it in your newsletters, information packs and discussions with potential investors.

#### Residential vacancy rate — compiled by Inshtrix on behalf of REINSW

SYDNEY	Feb-13	Jan-13	Dec-12	Nov-12	Oct-12	Sep-12	Aug-12	Jul-12	Jun-12	May-12	Apr-12	Mar-12	Feb-12
Inner	2.0	2.0	1.8	1.7	1.6	1.9	1.8	2.0	1.8	1.6	1.7	1.5	1.5
Middle	2.0	2.4	2.3	2.1	2.1	2.8	3.0	2.3	1.8	1.7	1.6	1.9	2.0
Outer	1.8	2.2	1.8	1.6	2.2	3.0	3.1	2.2	1.8	1.9	1.7	1.5	1.9
Total	1.9	2.2	1.9	1.8	1.9	2.5	2.7	2.2	1.8	1.7	1.7	1.6	1.8
HUNTER													
Newcastle	2.5	2.0	1.6	1.2	1.6	1.4	1.4	1.8	1.7	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.3
Other	2.2	2.8	2.4	2.0	1.8	1.5	1.6	1.9	2.0	1.7	1.7	1.6	1.5
Total	2.3	2.6	2.1	1.7	1.7	1.5	1.5	1.8	1.9	1.7	1.6	1.6	1.4
ILLAWARRA													
Wollongong	2.7	2.8	2.5	2.5	2.6	2.1	3.4	2.5	3.2	2.8	2.9	3.0	2.4
Other	2.0	1.8	1.9	2.0	2.2	1.3	2.3	2.2	2.0	1.5	2.0	1.7	2.5
Total	2.3	2.4	2.1	2.2	2.4	1.7	2.7	2.3	2.4	2.1	2.3	2.0	2.5
REGIONAL													
Albury	1.6	2.0	1.9	1.4	1.6	1.7	1.8	1.4	1.5	1.8	1.2	1.6	2.0
Central Coast	1.9	2.0	2.0	1.7	1.9	2.0	2.3	2.8	2.6	2.3	2.2	1.6	1.4
Central West	2.6	2.9	2.9	2.8	2.6	3.5	3.0	2.3	2.1	1.7	2.3	1.5	1.8
Coffs Harbour	3.9	4.3	3.7	3.4	3.6	3.7	4.7	5.1	4.7	4.0	4.9	4.1	4.0
Mid-North Coast	1.9	2.1	1.8	2.0	1.8	2.1	2.0	2.3	2.3	2.1	2.2	2.2	2.2
Murrumbidgee	2.2	2.3	1.9	1.5	1.4	0.8	1.0	2.2	1.4	1.0	1.8	1.3	3.2
New England	3.3	2.7	2.7	2.8	2.6	2.3	2.8	2.6	2.4	2.9	3.4	2.8	2.9
Northern Rivers	2.3	2.8	2.3	2.4	2.2	2.3	2.4	3.0	2.7	3.0	2.4	3.9	3.2
Orana	1.1	1.7	2.0	2.1	2.3	1.1	1.5	1.2	1.4	1.3	1.6	1.6	1.2
Riverina	3.5	2.7	2.4	2.1	2.3	1.9	2.2	2.4	3.3	3.1	4.4	3.9	3.9
South Coast	2.5	2.3	2.3	2.8	3.1	3.2	3.6	4.4	3.7	2.2	3.1	2.6	2.7
South Eastern	3.6	3.8	3.2	3.3	3.0	2.6	2.8	3.1	3.4	3.4	2.2	2.1	2.5

#### NSW weekly auction clearance rates — provided by propertyDATA.com.au

Week ending	Total auctions	Total value \$M	Clearance rate	Sold prior to auction	Sold at auction	Sold after auction	Passed in total
24/02	154	\$156.16	69%	69	69	1	76
17/02	219	\$94.07	67%	57	90	0	67
10/02	142	\$49.10	63%	26	64	0	48
03/02	133	\$28.33	54%	17	54	1	54
27/01	8	\$4.09	100%	2	6	0	0
16/12	468	\$170.76	60%	97	182	2	153
09/12	346	\$146.42	62%	97	115	3	106
02/12	296	\$131.70	62%	68	115	0	74
25/11	442	\$179.34	57%	81	162	10	152
18/11	535	\$226.41	61%	89	232	6	174
11/11	560	\$246.05	61%	95	236	8	188
04/11	553	\$221.06	59%	87	229	10	197

# Don't ask, don't get

Smyth Estate Agents' James Smyth lives by the philosophy that there's always someone who needs help, so all agents need to do is ask.

School fetes, life saving clubs, junior rugby teams, street and garage sales are just some of the community projects Smyth Estate Agents in Freshwater has sponsored since it was established in January 2007.

Managing Director James Smyth started his own agency with the intention of giving back to the community he represented and knew so well.

"I've done well and want to give back," said James, who regularly gives up his Sundays to coach the nippers at South Curl Curl and Freshwater Surf Life Saving clubs. "The community has supported and looked after me so there was no reason why I should not contribute and look after them in return."

“  
I've done well  
and I want to  
give back.”

For the past five years, James has dressed up as Santa on his own home-made sleigh and toured his local suburbs collecting money for charity. His five employees, who all come from the local area and have families themselves, often help out. All donations go to Autism Spectrum Australia as James' nephew suffers from the condition.



(left to right) Stephen Bennett, President Freshwater Surf Life Saving Club; Graham Ford, President Surf Life Saving Australia and James Smyth, Smyth Estate Agents.

James often recognises the children from his time working with the nippers at the local surf clubs, and addresses them by name, much to their confusion.

"They freak out because they do not know I'm Santa. You can't pay for that."

At the age of 30, James moved into the real estate business from a successful career in finance.

"I come from a very big and driven family," he explained.

"I guess I was always jealous of them. They love what they do."

However, James took to real estate "like a duck to water" and over the years has coupled his agency work with giving back to the community

that has supported him. His advice to agencies interested in getting involved in their local communities is simple, "go and ask".

"We give away 10 per cent of our earnings. It's quite a lot of money, but it's something that I've wanted to be able to do," he said. He advises agencies run the numbers first and commit to what they can.

"There's always someone who needs help." ♦

## YOUR STORY We want to hear your stories!

If you, or a member you know, supports a charity, you can share the story in the 'Last Word'. Email the editor at [jill@mahlabmedia.com.au](mailto:jill@mahlabmedia.com.au)

## Contact us

Reception: (02) 9264 2343  
Email: [info@reinsw.com.au](mailto:info@reinsw.com.au)  
Website: [reinsw.com.au](http://reinsw.com.au)

### Board

President: Christian Payne  
Deputy President: Malcolm Gunning  
Vice President: John Cunningham  
Vice President: Brett Hunter

**Directors:** Gary Adamson, Christine Clarke, Luke Fahy, Miles Felstead, Sarah Lorden, Leanne Pilkington, Tony Santolin, Wayne Stewart.

### Administration

CEO: Tim McKibbin  
General Manager: Peter Griffin  
Marketing & Communications Manager: Cathie Dickinson  
Education & Training Manager: Michelle Morcombe  
Legal & Policy Manager: Eva Sklavos

### Journal

Managing Editor: Martin Wanless  
Editor: Jill Park  
(02) 9556 9115  
Email: [jill@mahlabmedia.com.au](mailto:jill@mahlabmedia.com.au)  
Head of Client Services: Roslyn Atkinson  
Designer: Nina Christian  
Sales Manager: Nicole Dixon  
Advertising: Sara Lewis  
(02) 9556 9105  
Email: [sara@mahlabmedia.com.au](mailto:sara@mahlabmedia.com.au)  
Rates: [reinsw.com.au](http://reinsw.com.au)

Publisher: Mahlab Media  
(02) 9556 9100  
[mahlabmedia.com.au](http://mahlabmedia.com.au)

Feature and cover photography by Studio Commercial  
Printed by Webstar Printing  
Mailed by Future Sources

REINSW Managing Editor:  
Cathie Dickinson (02) 9264 2343  
Email: [cdickinson@reinsw.com.au](mailto:cdickinson@reinsw.com.au)

### Disclaimer

Whilst the Real Estate Institute of New South Wales uses its best endeavours in preparing and ensuring the accuracy of the content of this publication, it makes no representation or warranty with respect to the accuracy, applicability, fitness, legal correctness or completeness of any of the contents of this publication. The information contained in this publication is strictly for educational purposes only and should not be considered to be legal advice. Readers must obtain their own independent legal advice in relation to the application of any of the material published in this journal to their individual circumstances. The Institute disclaims any liability to any party for loss or any damages howsoever arising from the use of, or reliance upon, any of the material contained in this publication. The views and/or opinions expressed in this publication are those of the respective author and do not necessarily reflect those of the Real Estate Institute of New South Wales.

# Looking?



[www.rentresumé.com.au](http://www.rentresumé.com.au)

1300 478 470

# We don't create websites for hairdressers.



## We create awesome websites for real estate agents.

With over 25 years experience as agents ourselves, we only create websites for real estate agents. We also understand that each agency is unique and everyone's needs are different, which is why we only create purpose built websites that are tailored to your agency. Call today to discuss how we can create an easy to use website that works for you 24/7, so you can get on with what you do best - selling real estate.

Modern, professional looking website



From only  
**\$1350**

12 month interest free  
only \$112 per month

Smart, easy sales & marketing software



From just  
**\$40.00**  
a week

ADFX - 13047



REAL ESTATE TECHNOLOGY



REAL ESTATE  
WEBSITE DESIGN



WEB-BASED REAL ESTATE  
SOFTWARE



REAL ESTATE  
SEO

1300 134 858

// [arosoftware.com](http://arosoftware.com) // [support@arosoftware.com](mailto:support@arosoftware.com)