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REAL ESTATE

Journal

DEC 2013/JAN 2014
VOL 65/1

forward thinking

Malcolm Gunning
looks to the future as
REINSW President

View from the top

Leading agents reflect on the year that was and share plans for the year ahead

Novice Auctioneers Competition

Who came out on top in the battle for this year's crown?

Shaping the future

Industry leaders discuss what's ahead for the profession



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Malcolm Gunning discusses his plans for his term as REINSW President.

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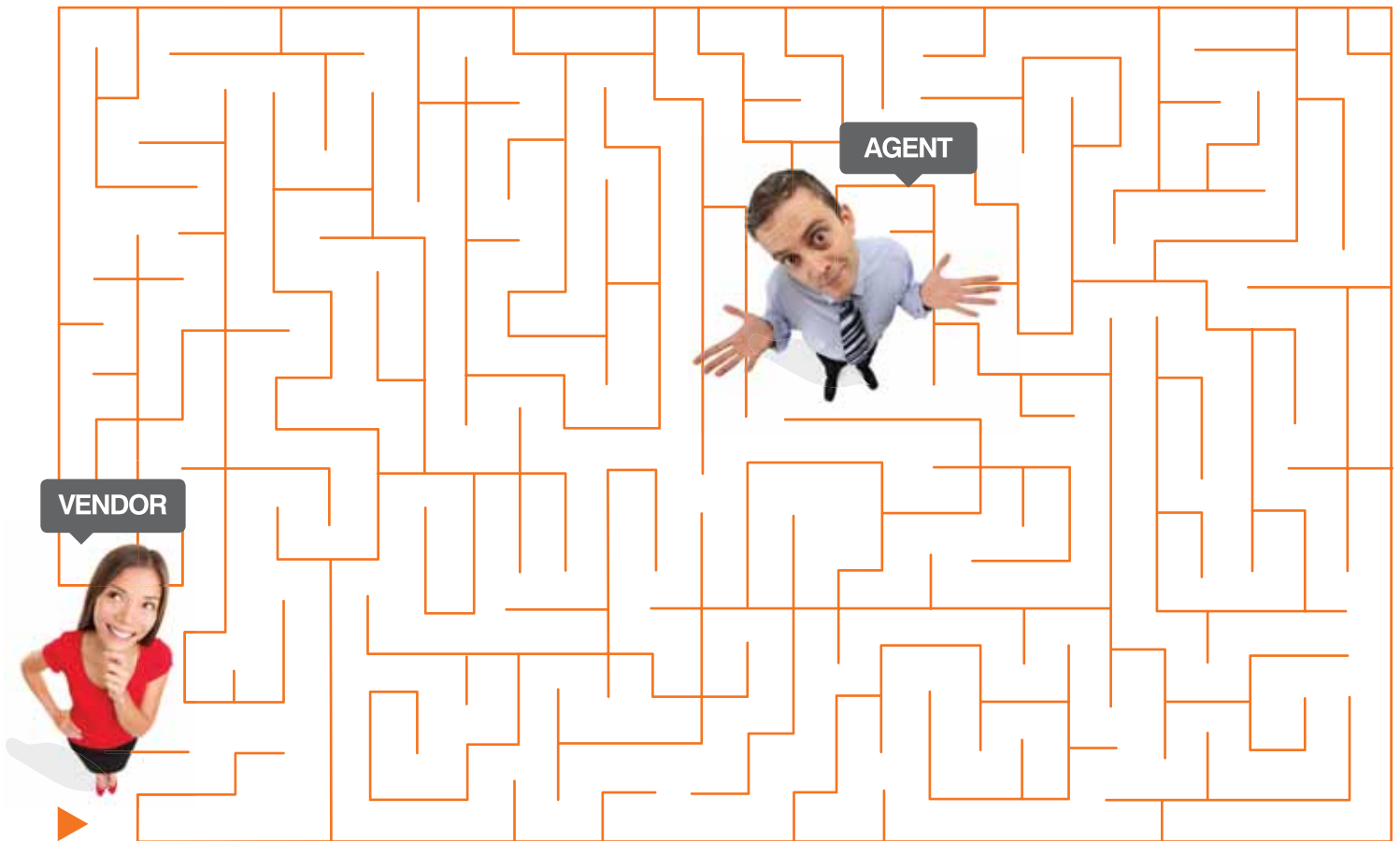
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Reviewing our successes

With 2013 drawing to a close, I'd like to reflect on what was a very busy and exciting year for REINSW.

Our lobbying efforts over the past 12 months with both the Federal and State Governments have been pleasing.

With the support of Minister for Fair Trading Anthony Roberts, and after a long-term campaign, mandatory professional indemnity insurance has been introduced as part of licensing for all agents in NSW. This is a major step forward for the profession.

Raising the bar

Throughout 2013 we have focused heavily on improving industry standards and increasing training requirements. We are working with the new Federal Government, particularly with respect to the National Occupational Licensing System, to ensure that the National Occupational Licensing Authority gets it right.

First homebuyers

In 2014, we will continue to focus on ways to stimulate activity in the property market, and we will again campaign for a reduction in stamp duty rates and the reintroduction of first homebuyer incentives for existing properties.

It is vital that the important role of first homebuyers in the market is understood, as increased activity in this segment will further stimulate the property market.

It is essential that the NSW Government and wider

community understands the significance of first homebuyers and that they are never underestimated or forgotten.

Research

Our research portfolio has grown further and now includes weekly auction results, monthly vacancy rates, monthly consumer sentiment and quarterly median prices.

Knowledge is power and our research publications are designed to equip you with up-to-date information about your own markets.

Roadshow

Our 2013 roadshow gave us great insight into the needs of members right across the state. We will be on the road in 2014 to ensure you again receive this one-on-one contact with the REINSW Board and obtain information from a wide variety of industry stakeholders.

There is always more work to be done for a dynamic profession like real estate. We will continue to listen to your needs, and we plan to introduce more products and services for you, our members, in the year to come.

I would like to thank all our members for your support throughout 2013 and wish you and your families a safe and happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

Tim McKibbin
REINSW CEO

The REINSW Board of Directors for the 2013–2015 term

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Christian Payne

TOP TIPS OF THE MONTH

Managing your client's expectations

Buyers' agent and co-host of *Location, Location, Location Australia* Veronica Morgan believes sales agents and buyers' agents need to be very aware of managing clients' expectations and know how to do so under different market conditions.

1.

A seller's market

The big fear for most buyers is paying too much. Basically we disregard what the agent is quoting and do our own price research. Then we can properly advise our client about what limit they should set and at what price to walk away.

2.

A buyer's market

Our buyers want to take advantage of a less competitive market, however often there is a lack of stock because vendors lack the confidence that they will get their price. We have to coach our clients not to buy anything that looks like a bargain, but to wait for a quality property to become available.

3.

Going to auction

We advise our clients to decide on their maximum bid before we go to auction. It is important to set a limit with a clear head and not be caught up in an emotionally charged bidding war. By researching price and setting a limit in advance, they feel less shattered if somebody else is prepared to pay more than them.

Window safety law implemented to prevent child fatalities

Property managers and sales agents should be aware that Parliament has passed legislation regarding the implementation of safety devices on windows in residential strata buildings.

Owners Corporations have been given until 13 March 2018 to install window safety devices under new legislation passed by Parliament.

They must install window safety devices on windows above the ground floor in residential strata buildings so they do not open more than 12.5cm when the lock is engaged.

"Individual strata schemes may only meet once a year, that means in the next four years members must agree on a course of action, fund its implementation, complete a risk assessment on all windows and then have devices installed," Minister for Fair Trading Anthony Roberts said.



"These devices are inexpensive and can be easily installed by anyone, but it is crucial window safety devices are fitted correctly," he said.

NSW Fair Trading is currently sending out more than 450,000 'Think Child Safe' brochures

to real estate agents, strata managers, community housing providers and all new tenants.

View videos demonstrating the implementation of safety devices at fairtrading.nsw.gov.au

REINSW labels CPD changes "disappointing"

REINSW CEO Tim McKibbin expressed his disappointment at the changes to CPD categories announced by NSW Fair Trading.

Under the new guidelines, Learning Categories 2 and 3 have been merged so training can now be delivered at three points per hour by an industry association.

The merging of Categories 2 and 3 removes the requirement to have a component

of learning provided by a Registered Training Organisation.

REINSW expressed concern that consequently the quality of learning would be diluted.

"CPD is an essential part of the ongoing education of property professionals, and unfortunately it is not given the true respect in the marketplace it deserves," Tim said. "This is a disappointing outcome for the profession."

NSW Fair Trading outlines the changes to CPD in the *Director General's Guidelines for Continuing Professional Development*. The changes took effect on 14 October 2013.

Any CPD completed in 2012-13 that has not been used to satisfy a declaration to renew a Licence or Certificate, may be used in 2013. If you have completed more than 12 points, the surplus may be carried over to the next renewal period.

REINSW celebrates win for industry with release of strata reform package

Minister for Fair Trading Anthony Roberts has revealed that strata managers will retain the right to receive insurance commission under new proposals.



The Minister released the long-awaited *Strata and Community Title Reform Position Paper* to a welcome response by REINSW, who had championed hard to avoid the implementation of a ban.

REINSW CEO Tim McKibbin said the organisation had invested a lot of time and energy in proving a ban would have serious consequences for consumers and the industry.

“The Minister has addressed concerns through the introduction of a new regime of disclosure and accountability, thereby increasing transparency but also maintaining the entitlement of strata managers to receive commissions,” Tim said.

“We’re pleased the Government has listened to us and recognised the detriment that

moving forward with such a ban would cause.”

The Position Paper outlines 70 proposed changes by the NSW Government, which aim to improve strata living for two million people across NSW.

Strata Management Chapter Chair Gary Adamson said many of the proposals are long overdue and will be warmly welcomed by the industry.

“What is most pleasing is the proposal that a quorum exists after half an hour, which will eliminate the necessity of reconvening the meeting at another date,” Gary said.

“The proposal to limit the current misuse of proxies by proxy farmers is a close second.”

According to Minister Roberts, there are more than 72,000 strata schemes in NSW and an average of five new schemes are registered each day.

REINSW is now in the process of reviewing the proposal package.

“Over the last 18 months, REINSW has been working closely with the NSW Government to identify key areas for reform and has made a number of formal submissions,” Tim said.

“Once we have comprehensively assessed the package, we will provide a written submission to Government with our feedback.”

Visit fairtrading.nsw.gov.au to download a copy of the *Position Paper*.

STRATA REFORM TIMELINE

DECEMBER 2011

The strata reform process commenced with an online consultation forum hosted by Global Access Partners.

SEPTEMBER 2012

NSW Fair Trading release a discussion paper outlining a range of issues and inviting industry feedback. REINSW submits a submission responding to proposals.

AUGUST 2013

During 2013, NSW Fair Trading held a number of roundtables involving industry stakeholders and strata experts to discuss the key issues. Representatives from REINSW and the Strata Management Chapter met with Minister for Fair Trading Anthony Roberts to discuss the Government’s proposal to remove insurance commission.

NOVEMBER 2013

Minister for Fair Trading Anthony Roberts and Commissioner for Fair Trading Rod Stowe deliver speeches about strata reform. NSW Fair Trading then released a Position Paper outlining the Government’s strata law reforms. REINSW is now reviewing the proposed package.

Q. Is property management the saviour of agencies?

The *Journal* asks REINSW members which side they fall on.

“YES”



ALLISON MIFSUD
Principal at
First National
Epping Central

Property management has proven to be the saviour of real estate agencies all over the country, every day of the week.

The chief advantage of a property management department is consistency of cash flow. This you can rely on, no matter what is happening in the sales side of the business. If your sales department has had a slow month, the market is tight, or your team consists of only one or two sales agents, you are almost totally reliant on their consistent performance to support the office's overheads.

The reality is, of course, that none of us are 100 per cent consistent in our performance. The very best of us face our challenges from time to time and if you have no rent roll, you have no plan B.

Of course, your property management department can also feed listings to the sales side of the business. This creates the opportunity to earn a selling fee, retain the investor as a new customer, and return the property to your management – keeping its full value within your business.

The other advantage of a rent roll is its capital worth. Apart from your customer database, it's the only other true measure of your business' value. Typically, your rent roll will be considered to represent 80 to 90 per cent of the value of your business.

It's also an asset that you can borrow against to pursue other interests. Try borrowing against goodwill and you'll soon find your bank has no time for you.

Some businesses work their way through cycles of building up their rent roll and then selling sections of it off. This has the advantage of periodically providing capital for investment in other areas of the business, but also helps keep your rent roll at a saleable size. After all, there's no point building a rent roll that is so enormous and so valuable, that hardly anybody can afford to buy it when you decide to sell.

“NO”



SUSANNAH ANDERSON
Managing
Director at
Di Jones Real
Estate

There is no denying that property management is a fundamental part of running a successful real estate agency.

But if we were to agree that property management was the 'saviour of agencies', we would be diminishing the important roles that our sales, marketing and administration teams play in ensuring the continued success of any real estate agency.

While each department plays a different role in the day-to-day operations of a real estate agency, they rely on one another to keep each of the wheels of the business turning. Our landlords will often become vendors, our tenants buyers, and our buyers landlords. Essentially the relationship between property management and sales is equally beneficial to both as a business generation tool.

Perhaps the 'saviour' of agencies actually lies within the administration and marketing teams, without whom business dealings within property management and sales departments wouldn't be possible.

We believe the 'yes' response to the question posed is likely to credit property management with providing a consistent income and cash flow for the business in comparison to sales, which can at times be far more cyclical. We agree that this is true and we certainly consider our property management department an indispensable constant in our business.

However, given that the word 'saviour' implies protection from danger or difficulty, we cannot agree with the opposing argument. If we were to take this view it would mean placing accountability on one department to maintain business performance, which is dangerous in itself.

The success of an agency must be a shared responsibility and in our experience, it's teamwork and a mix of elements all equally as important as one another, which provides the most desirable business outcomes.



**NEXT MONTH
WE ASK:
Q. IS THERE
LIFE LEFT
IN THE
LETTERBOX
DROP?**

FOCUS ON BUSINESS GROWTH

Do you know what's going on in your business? Do you set aside time to review your numbers and identify opportunities to grow and improve?

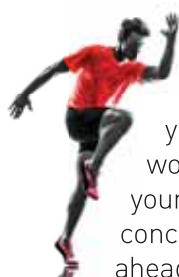
You've probably got a good idea of how many listings you have, how many sales your team is doing, how many properties you have under management and how many of those are vacant at any one time. But to truly get any value from these numbers and any other important key performance indicators, you need to formally measure and compare these results over time.



Track success through KPIs

In the fast-paced environment of a real estate office your business needs to grow and change to keep ahead of your competitors. This can take a large investment of your time and sometimes KPI measurement can be left by the wayside. However, KPI measurement is never more important than when you are implementing a change in your business. It is the key to determining if that change was the right move and if it was beneficial to the growth of your business.

Technology makes this possible and is the key to building a better business for the future. Investing in software like REST Professional allows you to take advantage of features like the automatic KPI Reports, which pull together portfolio information in an excel format. **REST Professional KPI Reports** are generated automatically for the whole portfolio, as well as by team or by individual property manager to make it easy for you to identify the areas that are performing and those that require attention.



Keep ahead of the field

Once you've got your KPI Reports working for you to track your success, you can concentrate on keeping ahead of your competition.

The service expectations of owners and tenants have changed dramatically with the technological advancements of the last several years. People are used to accessing their bank accounts, booking holidays and shopping at any time of day and they now expect the same service from their real estate agent.

While it might be impossible to have a staff member working 24 hours a day, seven days a week to field enquiries at all times, it's quite simple to set up a secure portal for your clients to access their information directly from your property management software. **REST Professional's Owner & Tenant Portals** are designed exactly for this. You can offer a 24/7 service by choosing to give your clients access to their property information and reports on demand via the secure online portal.



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FORWARD THINKING

Malcolm Gunning reveals his plans as REINSW President.

From the very start of Malcolm Gunning's real estate career, REINSW has been a strong and constant presence in his professional life.

"I first started in real estate in 1975, and the agency I was working for at that stage was a strong supporter of REINSW," he remembers.

"I've been involved with REINSW throughout my career, and becoming actively involved in the various REINSW committees and Divisional activities was a natural progression."

Elected to the Board of Directors in 2007, Malcolm became Deputy President in 2011.

"It's with great pride that I now step into the position of President," he said.

Strength in experience

From residential to commercial, from franchise to independent, Malcolm believes his strength lies in his experience.

"I've worked for large companies and small companies, operated as a franchisor and a franchisee, been a valuer, sat as a director of a publicly listed company, and for the past 20 years I've been an owner-operator," he said.

"Over the course of my career I've worked in most areas of real estate, and now own both an independent commercial agency and a residential franchise agency.

"I understand the challenges that our members face in their day-to-day practice because I face them too – and I look forward to drawing on all that experience in my capacity as REINSW President."

Meeting member needs

Malcolm believes REINSW needs to grow and evolve in order to remain relevant to members, and meet their needs and expectations.

"What our members wanted from us 20, 10 or even five years ago, is vastly different to what they want from us now," he said.

"And the span of our membership is so diverse. We need to ensure that we are providing value to all our members, whether it be via our lobbying activities, communications, products, services or training.

"We need to be constantly looking at what we do and the products and services we provide in order to ensure that they meet the needs of our members and are beneficial to their day-to-day work practice."

With Baby Boomers starting to retire and moving away from agency ownership, Malcolm recognises that the generational change in membership is something that REINSW needs to be mindful of.

"What Gen X and Y are looking for from their membership is different to the Baby Boomers," he said.

"The next generation of agency owners is coming through and REINSW needs to be relevant to them."

Representing the industry

"REINSW is often viewed as being primarily focused on the residential sector," Malcolm said.

But this is a perception that he has vowed to change.

"We represent the entire industry and actively work to champion the interests of all agents," he said.

Malcolm went on to detail just a few of the issues REINSW has been addressing in recent months.

"We've been lobbying the NSW Government to prescribe a standard retail lease, which we know will reduce red tape and save time for agents working in the commercial sector," he explained.

"We've also been working with our Valuation Chapter to address concerns arising from the current enquiry into the land valuation system.

"And strata management has been a focus for us, as the NSW Government moves further along its path of strata reform.

"I want to ensure that all sectors of the industry are aware of the valuable work we do across the many facets of professional practice and get everyone more involved."

What's ahead?

So what does Malcolm think REINSW will look like in a few years' time?

"I'd like to think that we are *the* voice of real estate in NSW," Malcolm said.

"We're already very active in the media space, and we have a strong relationship with the NSW Government, but I'd like to see that improve even further."

Malcolm will also be embarking on a campaign to actively engage agents, members and non-members alike, with the activities of REINSW. The first step in this campaign was the Industry Summit held on 29 November 2013, which saw more than 50 key industry stakeholders come together (see page 12).

"We invited industry leaders to attend this groundbreaking Industry Summit and asked for their input into what they want from REINSW and what they see for the future of the industry," he said.

"We're now taking their feedback and using it as the basis for positioning REINSW into the future.

"REINSW is here for the long haul. Our number one focus is to better understand the needs of our members so we can partner with and support them in creating a more robust profession, industry and marketplace." ♦

“

I understand the challenges that our members face in their day-to-day practice because I face them too – and I look forward to drawing on all that experience in my capacity as REINSW President.

”





Shaping the future

Industry leaders look to the future at REINSW's landmark Industry Summit.

Industry leaders from across Australia came together at REINSW's Industry Summit on 29 November 2013 to discuss the future of real estate.

The first of its kind, the summit provided an open environment for industry figures to voice their opinions on the critical issues and trends affecting the industry and profession.

Collaboration

Moderated by Australia's foremost membership specialist, Belinda Moore, attendees were given three key focus areas to address in workgroup discussions.

As well as identifying current and future hurdles facing the industry, attendees worked collaboratively to find tangible pathways to overcome these challenges and gave feedback on REINSW's key member services.

When opening the summit, REINSW Deputy President John Cunningham encouraged

attendees to embrace the opportunity to raise fresh ideas and find a common voice to guide the future direction of the industry.

Despite there being upwards of 50 attendees, there was a strong consensus over the four greatest challenges threatening the industry.

1. Industry standards

First and foremost the group questioned the professionalism of the industry, highlighting the need for improved education and training standards, with particular emphasis placed on the requirements for entering the industry.

To deter non-committed industry participants attendees suggested a more rigorous process be adopted that includes ongoing training milestones and two year licensing.

2. Lobbying

In addition to wanting uniformity in professional

“

There was a strong consensus over the four greatest challenges threatening the industry.”

”

standards, the group called for national reform of stamp duty, state taxes and incentives. Attendees agreed that in order to successfully lobby these changes the profession would have to work together, harnessing the power of the collective to overcome an unfavourable operating environment.

In order to give their concerns weight and draw the ear of the government, attendees said agents must put aside their competitive interests and work together for the good of the profession.

3. Consumer expectations

By driving legislative change and raising professional standards the industry would also be better equipped to manage and meet consumer expectations.

4. Data ownership

While a united front was identified as the solution to the bulk of these challenges, there was no immediate solution found for the issue of data and internet portal control. However, having encouraged robust discussion amongst the workgroups, there's no doubt that it's an issue the industry will need to work together on as one to overcome.

To close the summit attendees were asked to choose a key REINSW member service to give feedback on. Spread across the areas of stakeholder engagement, training, communications, awards, industry help and advice and lobbying, REINSW will integrate these comments into future strategic planning. ♦



CHARLES TARBEY
Chairman and Owner of Century 21 Australasia



EDDY PIDDINGTON
REINSW Young Agents Chapter Chair



ROB FORDE
CEO of Hartcourts NSW



LEANNE PILKINGTON
General Manager of Laing+Simmons

Getting a group of people together who are influencers in the industry is absolutely critical and it's not done enough. The Industry Summit was the perfect example of how it can be done.

The key issues that came out of today were the need to adopt a national approach to the industry. In addition to this we need to find a way that we can get together as organisations and collectively rescue our data.

Moving forward, the biggest challenge will be making sure that the issues discussed today are followed through; this is the most critical part.

We all know what we want; it's making sure we implement it.

Today's summit was a really beneficial exercise. While we have a lot of catch up meetings with other members of REINSW, the Industry Summit offered a great opportunity to get some outside influence from the top agents and top business owners in the country.

I think we need to get back to the basics and focus on building up the REINSW membership base.

As technology makes it easier for people to sell their own homes it will be interesting to see the way this affects the marketplace.

In the coming year I would like to see REINSW get more things happening that give benefits to members.

There were a lot of great minds in the room today with a huge amount of experience over a lot of different segments.

Being able to get all those people in the one room to share their knowledge and insights about the industry's future is a great thing.

If we work as a collective we will achieve so much. There are a lot of individuals trying to chart their own course, but if you can focus that energy you can achieve a lot more as a group.

The struggle to remain relevant to today's consumer was touched on in a number of ways in terms of technology, data and the way we communicate with buyers here and overseas.

What was interesting to me was that the issues raised at the summit were consistent across the group.

It's clear that we all know what the issues are, so hopefully that's the first step to working collaboratively to make some progress.

Fragmentation of the industry makes everything we are facing more difficult to deal with. We have issues with licensing, with differing legislation across the country and with data collection. There are a number of things we will need to work together to overcome.

There were some really worthwhile suggestions made today that I would like to see REINSW implement.

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VIEW FROM THE TOP



Read the *Journal's* exclusive interviews with industry leaders to find out what they thought of the year that was and what they will be focusing on in the year ahead.



Supported by





TIM MCKIBBIN

CEO
REINSW

The biggest challenge for the property market in recent years has been a lack of confidence. This year political uncertainty leading into the Federal Election, rising unemployment rates and the easing of the Australian dollar have all contributed to some nervousness.

However there has been a renewed energy in the property market in recent months. Our members are reporting that they are seeing more and more people attending inspections, many buyers registering at auctions and properties are selling faster.

The market has surged ahead, with median house and unit prices across much of NSW now at record levels – and it's little surprise that the market has improved. Consumers are responding strongly to low interest rates, an ever-increasing undersupply of housing and a renewed confidence in the housing market.

The big question in relation to 2014 is whether this market recovery will continue?

Late last year I predicted that 2013 would not be a great year for the property market, but it would certainly be better than 2012. That has certainly been the case. However if the recovery is to be sustainable, first homebuyers must be encouraged back into the market.

At the moment, first homebuyers are all but absent from the market; it is investors and those upgrading who have driven prices up. It's time to help first homebuyers in order to create more movement in the marketplace. We know that first homebuyers play a critical role in fuelling the property market, and in order to make the recovery sustainable in 2014, we need them to return to the market.



Tim McKibbin
REINSW CEO

VIEW FROM THE TOP



ALASTAIR LIAS

General Manager
Professionals

INSPIRATION Virgin Australia

The year 2013 saw changing market conditions in many areas, with confidence slowly coming back. Although this in itself was a positive, the challenge as a group was enabling our members to adjust their businesses to adapt to these changes and ensure they are not only capitalising by profiting today, but setting themselves up for consistent growth tomorrow.

LOOKING FORWARD

While we predict a steady 2014 market, our challenge will be to assist our offices in understanding change management and building a group with common goals.

OUTLINE GOALS

Agents should invest their time in training and ensure they have a solid growth plan. I'm surprised at the number of agencies that don't have a written business plan and fail to set goals. Capturing and intelligently using data has never been more important, and through some strategic alliances we are equipping our agents to open up further lines of communication with future clients.

There is a buzz at Professionals that 2014 is shaping up to be a great year for us.

INSPIRATION KEY

-  STRENGTHEN NETWORK
-  CUSTOMER SERVICE
-  LISTINGS
-  GROWTH
-  RECRUITMENT
-  OPERATING SYSTEMS
-  EXPANDING SERVICES



ANDREW COCKS

Executive Director
Richardson & Wrench

INSPIRATION Foxtons (UK) and CoreNYC (US) in property and the travel industry

This year has progressed without too many surprises. Whilst the overall trading profile for the industry hasn't been as strong as we would ideally like, it was in line with our expectations.

STRATEGIC GOAL

I think we are largely going to see a similar business environment to that of the past few years, with continued gradual business improvement. Our strategic focus has been on providing business solutions and developing opportunities to allow our network to strengthen their businesses and better insulate themselves against the impact that these 'challenging' years have had on the traditional franchise and real estate offices.

TRUSTED EXPERTS

Agents need to be challenging the status quo of the traditional models. They must embrace change and a fast moving technology environment. However they will need to be highly conversant with, and have access to, trusted experts in many additional fields, including finance, investment and insurance.



ANGUS RAINE

Executive Chairman and CEO
Raine & Horne

INSPIRATION Virgin, Apple and Google

While there were some very encouraging signs for the NSW real estate market in 2013, in reality sales volumes were down by as much as 35 per cent in some areas. The announcement of the September federal election in January, and the lengthy political campaign that followed, seemed to spook homeowners looking for an excuse not to list their home, with many preferring to wait until after the election was decided before making a move.

LISTINGS CHALLENGE

Even with more homes coming to market as homeowners respond to surging buyer interest, the big challenge for NSW real estate in 2014 will still be the shortage of homes for sale.

A new wave of buyers has been mobilised thanks to record low interest rates and a burst of post-election confidence, but sadly the long-term supply of new property is an ongoing issue that is yet to be addressed. The home building industry is critical to the long-term health of the economy, and governments at all levels must do their bit to cut red tape, incentivise developers by reducing regulations and costs, and get the housing construction sector moving.



CHARLES TARBEY

Chairman and Owner
Century 21 Australasia

INSPIRATION Technology companies

Even though we have seen growth in 2013 with many buyers returning to the market, listing levels across the industry have been relatively low. One of our biggest challenges this year is to increase stock levels in order to meet the heightened level of buyer interest.

TECHNOLOGY LEADER

One of our key challenges next year will be to continue to ensure that Century 21 remains the market leader for real estate technologies. One of our key aims is to continue to introduce new technologies to our offices, and to consumers, in order to create new efficiencies and opportunities.

I enjoy following technology companies due to the advancements in customer matching to services being made in this sector and the way that push technologies are also being developed.

REPEAT BUSINESS

Agents should look to develop and implement consistent follow-up programs to help ensure they secure both new business and repeat business.



DOUG DRISCOLL

CEO
Starr Partners

INSPIRATION Recruitment

Without question, the biggest challenge for most marketplaces in 2013 has been the shortage of listings. Although this has been an issue for a while now, if you look back just 12 months ago, market commentators were blaming this on a lack of consumer confidence; but what a difference a year makes.

FUEL TO THE FIRE

Buyer demand (especially from investors) shows no sign of abating, so stock levels could continue to be an issue across NSW. Another major problem is that there simply aren't enough new properties being built, so we need to figure out a way to make it easier to get 'bricks in the ground'.

Sensationalism and exaggeration in some quarters of the media is only adding fuel to the flames of an already buoyant market, so I envisage that some agents will also start to encounter difficulties managing clients' unrealistic expectations.

Our primary focus is always to help develop profitable and sustainable businesses across our group. My view is that if you put good people in bad systems, you still get bad results.



GEORG CHMIEL

CEO and Managing Director
LJ Hooker

INSPIRATION Audi and Apple

Continuing to achieve engagement within our network is one of the biggest, and our most constant, challenge. We've certainly made big inroads here with the launch of several significant initiatives. These range from the release of our custom technology platform, LJX Sales, at the beginning of the year, through to our realigned corporate regional team structure to support our offices.

TV ADVERTISING

More recently this included two national marketing campaigns: our new television commercial, which saw a 22 per cent increase in traffic to ljhooker.com; and our Spring Appraisals Campaign, which lifted appraisals nearly 50 per cent in August and September, compared to the same period in 2012.

CHINESE CHALLENGE

Last month we set an Australian first by securing a China Property Concierge based in mainland China to act as a true conduit between buyers and our agents. It has been satisfying to see every office now participating in group initiatives and fully aligned to our overarching business strategies.



MICHAEL FENTON

Managing Director, NSW and National
Head of Industrial, Jones Lang LaSalle

INSPIRATION Sydney Swans

Unquestionably the biggest challenge for us as a business was the soft occupier market in 2013. Tenant commitments in all sectors were down on previous years, but particularly hard hit was the office segment. That said, we have still delivered some exceptional results for our clients with major office exposures.

SUPER OPPORTUNITIES

The A-REITS [Australian Real Estate Investment Trusts] were the ones to watch in 2013. From 2014, the Superannuation Funds will be particularly active. In coming years, demand for domestic real estate investment from the major super funds will outstrip supply, forcing them to look offshore – most likely in joint venture and partnership arrangements. We are already seeing groups like Australian Super go down this path.

GOOD AND BAD

The year 2014 will be both better and harder. Each year gets harder with our constant focus on innovation and market leadership, and as a result it will be a better year for Jones Lang LaSalle. Like every year, our singular focus is on our clients and understanding their structures, strategies and pressures.



LEANNE PILKINGTON

General Manager
Laing+Simmons

INSPIRATION All kinds of business

For my corporate team, our biggest challenge was rolling out a new look brand and everything that goes with it. It was a huge task and we are thrilled with the result.

For our people in the field, the past year was about listing enough property to satisfy the buyer demand, and to maintain appropriate fee levels in the face of agents that use price as their point of difference.

EVOLVE TO COMPETE

The competition is always evolving and improving, and as the franchisor it is our responsibility to ensure that our agents have access to the tools, technology and information that will keep them at the top of their game.

NEW LOOK

The year 2013 has been an exciting year for Laing+Simmons. We have a fantastic new look, we have added a Strata Division to our offering and will be rolling out a Projects Division before Christmas. We have plans for another three new divisions early in 2014 and will be focusing on growth in the residential area as well.



RICHARD HORNE

Managing Director NSW
Knight Frank

INSPIRATION The Swans and Manchester United

The drawn out Federal Election campaign and political uncertainty/instability was the biggest challenge in 2013, as it had a significant dampening effect on tenant decision-making.

BUSINESS CONFIDENCE

Tenant demand has been weak and vacancy rates are rising. If tenant demand conditions are to materially improve, we need to see a sustained pick up in full-time jobs, which will be driven by persistent strength in business confidence and an upswing in business credit. Post the Federal Election, and with the stimulus of historically low interest rates washing through the economy, there are tentative signs that this is beginning to occur.

NON-MINING ALTERNATIVES

Confidence is beginning to return to the market and there is likely to be some churn in our office market over the next year as companies begin to move forward with renewed confidence.

However, there is real need for businesses and consumers to increase their spending and create a new, non-mining investment phase.



ROB FORDE

CEO
Harcourts NSW

INSPIRATION Jets Fitness

Finding good talent has been the biggest challenge for 2013. There is no doubt we have seen some good improvement in the market and sentiment is good. We have been lucky that we have attracted some of the best people in the industry to join us this year and that has contributed to our best year ever in NSW.

Finding the right fit for our organisation is vitally important for our culture and takes time, so it is something we are continually focusing on. People are the single most important factor in our success moving forward.

HARNESSING TECHNOLOGY

I think we are dealing with a more informed consumer than ever before. Making sure we remain relevant to them is critical for us. One of the reasons we have developed and maintain our own CRM system is so that it can be tailored to our ever-changing needs.

Making sure we have the ability to communicate with consumers quickly with relevant information is also vitally important. Being able to utilise the technology to help manage expectations of both buyers and sellers will be very important in the year ahead.



TOM SOUTHERN

President and CEO
CBRE Australia and New Zealand

INSPIRATION Online retailers

The biggest challenge we faced this year was to grow the overall business in a relatively patchy market. We introduced several new business lines and worked hard to establish them. Agribusiness has been a major success for us, having grown from a standing start in May last year to have more than 35 valuations and sales professionals, and we are still working to grow Capital Advisors and Capital Allowances, both of which will come into their element next year.

CONTINUAL RECRUITMENT

One of our key challenges next year will be the continual recruitment of top-class professionals, and the application of our learning and development programs. We have recently recruited a new Head of Talent Acquisition to drive this program.

CHALLENGES AHEAD

Occupier markets and the overall economy may be difficult for the first two or three quarters, with limited growth. However, in capital markets, with the firming interest rate environment and easing of the Australian dollar, we are expecting to see continued significant demand for Australian property.



STEPHEN NELL

CEO
Ray White NSW

INSPIRATION McDonald's and car industry

The challenge in 2013 was trying to maintain people's energy levels given the current affairs and events throughout 2013, from elections to world issues to interest rates.

UPSKILLING NETWORK

In 2014, I expect the usual industry talk: commission rates, marketing costs, legislation and compliance. Our focus is always on growth and skills; growing our company and people, and upskilling in everything they need to be successful in their own careers.

Real estate is a very competitive industry, no matter whether it is franchising or independent. We always focus on our own business.

AGENT ADVICE

The fundamentals never change. Agents should have a plan for every aspect of what they intend to do and stick to it. If you don't go into the year assuming you will be better than the year before, then there is a problem! You have to be optimistic. It's always hard.



TONY BRASIER

Chairman and Managing Director
PRDnationwide

INSPIRATION Professional services

There were a number of challenges in 2013, including political uncertainty leading up to the September election, the medium-term outlook for interest rates and unemployment rising due to a softening in the mining and manufacturing sectors.

SUSTAINING GROWTH

This had the effect of creating uncertainty and a general lack of confidence in the first half of the year. This sentiment began to change in the middle of the year with the New South Wales property market leading the way with renewed optimism during the second half.

The challenge in 2014 is to sustain the improvement we have seen in the back half of 2013. Relatively stable interest rates and an improving jobs market will help to maintain the current renewed confidence. Positive economic news from China and the US would also help the current momentum.

For the previous 18 months, we had been planning for a significant improvement in the market. We believe we are well placed to take advantage of the improving market.

Novice Auctioneers Competition

Could one of these finalists be the future face of auctioneering? The *Journal* meets the winner and runners up at this year's State Final.

The competition was tight at this year's Novice Auctioneers Competition State Final with only a couple of points between the winner and runner-up.

Seven finalists took to the stage at the Mercure Hotel Sydney to showcase their auctioneering abilities. A total of \$9,690 was raised on the night, bringing the total amount raised over the course of the whole competition to \$46,000.

The Novice Auctioneers Competition gives entrants a chance to try their hand at auctioneering, without the pressure of having to sell a real property.

The winner, 17-year-old Alex Pattaro from LJ Hooker Concord, captivated the audience with his confident sale of Santa's Sack, which came complete with a Christmas ham and the chance to win a truckload of cash.

“ I love to help people and get a kick out of seeing the smiles on people's faces when they sell or buy a home. ”



WINNER: Alex Pattaro
AGENCY: LJ Hooker Concord
DIVISION: Inner West Division
AUCTION ITEM: Santa's Sack
MONEY RAISED: \$1,005

Q. Congratulations on your win. How did you prepare for the event?

A. I prepared over a couple of weeks, with the help of my team at LJ Hooker Concord. I absolutely love Damian Cooley; I think he is a great auctioneer. That is who I model myself on; it's my goal to be like him.

Q. What did you find the most challenging?

A. Physically controlling your nerves before you start. Once you are up on stage and looking at everyone, you take a few deep breaths in and the nerves just disappear.

Q. How did you pick what item to sell?

A. With Christmas so close I thought why not do something related to the festive season? In my Inner West Division I auctioned a Christmas tree with scratchies attached, which was a success.

Q. Why did you pick your charity?

A. Heart for the Homeless already has a strong connection with the real estate industry. It's an initiative that connects charities with individuals in the local area who are moving and have furniture and other unwanted household items to donate.

Q. Is auctioneering something you would like to do more of in the future?

A. When we sold our house a couple of years ago, watching the agent and the auction process made me click that this was what I wanted to do. I love to help people and get a kick out of seeing the smiles on people's faces when they sell or buy a home. My next goal is to hurry up and turn 18 so I can become a licensed auctioneer.

JUDGES' COMMENTS

"The standard of the auctioneers tonight was exceptional. What set Alex apart was his presence and control of the bidding. From go to woe he did a tremendous job and showed a maturity well beyond his 17 years."



1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



6.



7.



DIVISION FINALISTS

Finalist 1

NAME: Tom Barnier
DIVISION: East
AUCTION ITEM: Gorge Discovery Flight
MONEY RAISED: \$475

Finalist 2

NAME: Oliver Lavers
DIVISION: Nepean, Hawkesbury, Blue Mountains
AUCTION ITEM: Sydney Harbour Cruise
MONEY RAISED: \$1,000

Finalist 3

NAME: Nathan Dobbs
DIVISION: Coffs Harbour
AUCTION ITEM: Coffs Harbour weekend away
MONEY RAISED: \$1,350

Finalist 4

NAME: Jerome Smith
DIVISION: North West
AUCTION ITEM: Cricket memorabilia
MONEY RAISED: \$600

Finalist 5

NAME: Matthew McKee
DIVISION: Newcastle & Hunter
AUCTION ITEM: Kangaroo Valley Gold & Country Resort package
MONEY RAISED: \$450

Finalist 6

NAME: Lachlan Sewell
DIVISION: New England
AUCTION ITEM: Pure Bred Red Brahman cow
MONEY RAISED: \$680

Finalist 7

NAME: Alex Pattaro
DIVISION: Inner West
AUCTION ITEM: Santa's Sack
MONEY RAISED: \$1,005



THE JUDGES

REINSW invited the following to judge this year's Novice Auctioneers Competition State Final:

Chief Judge: **Bob Jury**, REINSW Trainer and Auctioneer

James Pratt, Auctioneer, McGrath Estate Agents

Oliver King, Principal, Richardson & Wrench Miranda

Andy Madigan, CEO, Australian Livestock & Property Agents Association

MONEY RAISED

REINSW raised \$46,000 in total through the 2013 Novice Auctioneers Competition. The money will be divided between the St Vincent de Paul Society and Heart for the Homeless, the chosen charity of this year's winner.

REINSW has held a long-standing relationship with Vinnies since 2008 when it formed a community partnership with the charity. Members have taken part in the annual CEO sleepout and Board members have also volunteered on the Vinnies night patrol and Matthew Talbot Hostel.

The Novice Auctioneers Competition has raised more than \$250,000 over the past three years.

For more information on how to get involved with Vinnies visit vinnies.org.au.

Be your own cheer squad

More than 200 women travelled to Luna Park to attend the annual Women in Real Estate conference.

“Don’t wait to be noticed as you might miss out on an opportunity.” This was one of the many nuggets of wisdom from media mogul Ita Buttrose AO, OBE as she gave the keynote address at this year’s Women in Real Estate Conference.

More than 200 real estate professionals from across the state attended the event, held in the Crystal Palace Ballroom of Sydney’s Luna Park on Tuesday, 22 October 2013. Shayna Blaze of *Selling Houses* and *The Block* held MC responsibilities.

Paper Giants

Australian of the Year Ita has become a regular on our screens since Asher Keddie depicted her in the ABC’s TV show *Paper Giants: The birth of Cleo*. Her impressive career encompasses editing *Cleo*, *Women’s Weekly*, *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Sunday Telegraph* – making her the first female editor of a metropolitan newspaper in Australia.

“When I landed my first job as a copy girl at *Women’s Weekly*, I used to make tea and coffee for 40 people in the morning and afternoon. I later found out that I’d been marked as a copy girl to watch as I had brought in a tea towel from home,” she laughed.

More recently Ita was named Australian of the Year largely for her extensive charity

work, including her roles as National President of Alzheimer’s Australia and Vice President Emeritus of Arthritis Australia. She has also lent her considerable support to raising awareness of breast cancer, HIV/AIDS and prostate cancer.

“You have to put your hand up,” Ita told the crowd. “Nobody will know what your ambitions are if you do not tell them.”

Take a risk

Heather Swan, the only woman in the world to combine high altitude mountaineering and BASE jumping, kicked off the event with a rousing account of her experience achieving the world record for the world’s highest BASE jump in a wing suit from 6604m off Mt Meru in the Indian Himalaya.

Once delegates had recovered from the sweaty-palm inducing session, speaker Jen Harwood presented her seven keys to confidence, followed by a revealing Q&A with Laing+Simmons General Manager Leanne Pilkington.

Guests then had a breather, of sorts, when they were taught meditation techniques by Peter Bliss, during his mindfulness and multi-tasking masterclass.

The packed day finished with networking drinks overlooking the Harbour. Guests mingled with speakers, including Ita who happily posed for pictures, and inspected the contents of the day’s goodie bags. ♦



HEATHER SWAN
BASE jumper and world record holder
“Just by changing the way I thought about something, I could change the outcome.”



PETER BLISS
Business is Bliss
“There’s no need to say anything at all unless you improve on the silence.”



LEANNE PILKINGTON
General Manager at Laing+Simmons
“I think there’s probably a lot of people out there like me who have no idea how capable they are.”



ITA BUTTROSE AO, OBE
Australian of the Year
“There’s only one way to prove yourself and that’s sales.”



JEN HARWOOD
The confident woman
“We do not have to be down and broken to change our lives.”



WESTMEAD MEDICAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION

The Women in Real Estate Conference proudly supported the Westmead Medical Research Foundation and specifically retreats for women with gynaecological cancer. Find out more at wmrf.org.au

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Chapter roundup

The *Journal* asks REINSW's Chapters about their hard work and successes over the past year.

Auctioneers Chapter

CHAIR: David Gray

FOCUS: Building the Novice Auctioneers Competition

Each year, the Novice Auctioneers Competition continues to grow and 2013 has been no different. Competitions were held in Divisions across NSW, identifying up-and-coming talent, with the winner crowned at the recent State Final (see page 20).

"The Competition has a long and successful history and in 2013 we've been focused on nurturing new talent," Chapter Chair David Gray said.

"First held back in 1992, the Competition has become a key event in the industry calendar."

The Committee is rightfully proud of the money the Competition raises for charity, with more than \$250,000 raised over the last three years alone.

Buyers' Agents Chapter

CHAIR: Richard Harvey

FOCUS: Recognition of buyers' agents in Contract for Sale

Throughout the past year, the Buyers' Agents Chapter Committee have been tireless in their efforts to raise awareness of buyers' agents.

"We've worked closely with NSW Fair Trading on content for a factsheet that is now available on their website," Chapter Chair Richard Harvey said.

Another focus for the Committee is lobbying for recognition of

their buyers' agents on the front page of the standard Contract for Sale, because of the specific role they play in the real estate transaction.

Commercial Chapter

CHAIR: Barry Johnston

FOCUS: Standard retail lease and online portal costs

"We've been working closely with the REINSW team to bring about a standard lease," Chapter Chair Barry Johnston said.

According to Barry, the *Retail Leases Act 1994* already heavily prescribes many provisions and the Committee believes that a standard retail lease would better address the market's requirements.

The Committee has also been focused on the ever-escalating costs of online advertising, bringing together the wider community of commercial agents to place pressure on the major online marketing and data providers by supporting a genuine industry-owned competitor – commercialVIEW.com.au

Holiday & Short-Term Rentals Chapter

CHAIR: Rick Wraight

FOCUS: Protecting holiday rentals

The Chapter Committee has been busy this year lobbying the NSW Government to make holiday rentals a legal activity right across the State.

Members of the Committee, along with REINSW CEO Tim McKibbin, have met with the Office of the NSW Minister for Planning and have urged the Government to step in and support holiday rentals.

"A holiday rental portfolio is a considerable asset for an agency and is very important to the value of their overall business," Chapter Chair Rick Wraight said.

"Also, the majority of holiday rentals are in small, regional towns and the contribution they make to the community should not be underestimated."

International Chapter

CHAIR: Ray Chan

FOCUS: Chapter and seeking alliances

REINSW launched the International Chapter in 2013 in recognition of the global economy that we now live in and members' desire to undertake business on an international level.

Although the Chapter is still very new, it has already participated in some fruitful meetings with government and other industry service providers who are similarly keen to gain exposure to foreign markets.

"The International Chapter will seek business alliances with a number of major real estate and business broking web portals in other countries, in order to reach international investors more efficiently and effectively," Chapter Chair Ray Chan said.

Property Management Chapter

CHAIR: Miles Felstead

FOCUS: Updating the Residential Tenancy Agreement

The Property Management Chapter Committee have been particularly active this year on the lobbying front, providing input into a number of REINSW's key submissions.

Updating the Residential Tenancy Agreement has also been a priority, with the Committee working closely with REINSW to ensure that the standard form meets the needs of property managers.

The Committee have also tested the new NCAT online tribunal application system and Rental Board online service, providing feedback to enhance the systems.

Residential Sales Chapter

CHAIR: Kathryn Hall

FOCUS: Promoting real estate as a career

During 2013, the Committee has been looking at ways to attract high quality new entrants to the industry.

"Many of the younger generation have left the industry or have not even considered it," Chapter Chair Kathryn Hall said.

"It's important that we get the message out that real estate is a great long-term career and is extremely rewarding."

Standards of training are never far from discussion and the

Committee has a keen interest in looking at new ways to deliver training opportunities.

Strata Management Chapter

CHAIR: Gary Adamson
FOCUS: Strata reform

Lobbying for strata reform has been the focus for the Strata Management Chapter Committee in 2013. The Committee welcomed the NSW Government's strata reform package and were vocal throughout the consultation process, working with REINSW to make a number of formal submissions.

The proposal to ban the receipt of insurance commissions by strata managers was a particular cause for concern.

"We explained to the Minister why the proposal was against the public interest and would be a potential disaster for the industry," Chapter Chair Gary Adamson said.

After months of intensive lobbying the proposal was

dropped, which is testament to the focused lobbying efforts of REINSW and the Committee," Gary said.

Valuers Chapter

CHAIR: Phillip Johnson and Richard Wood
FOCUS: Online valuations and the enquiry into the land valuation system

The Valuers Chapter Committee has been working with REINSW to highlight the problems online valuations are creating in the market, calling for them to be investigated by the regulator to protect consumers who may not understand their complexities and shortcomings.

The Committee has also been focused on the current inquiry in the land valuation system.

"One concern is the proposal to allow the comparison of statutory values to be recognised evidence, as against the long established legal precedent of analysed, comparable, actual sales evidence," Chapter Committee member Colin Rooke said.

Young Agents Chapter

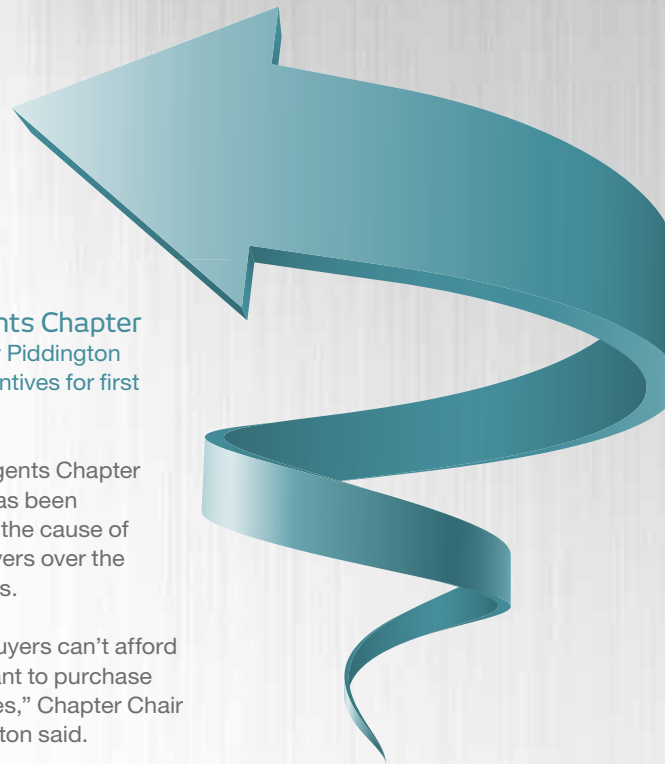
CHAIR: Eddy Piddington
FOCUS: Incentives for first homebuyers

The Young Agents Chapter Committee has been championing the cause of first homebuyers over the last 12 months.

"First homebuyers can't afford to or don't want to purchase new properties," Chapter Chair Eddy Piddington said.

Ahead of the NSW Budget in May 2013, the Chapter Committee called for the reinstatement of incentives for first homebuyers purchasing existing properties. With the release of the Budget surplus numbers in October 2013, indicating that higher than expected stamp duty collections had contributed heavily to higher than estimated revenues, they stepped up their efforts.

"It's time for the NSW Government to invest in the future and we will continue to keep the pressure on," Eddy said. ♦



GET INVOLVED

Contact REINSW at chapters@reinsw.com.au to find out how you can participate in your Chapter.



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Training calendar



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JANUARY 2014

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Creating Impact and Influence ●
(9.30am–1.30pm)

13 – 17 Jan • SYDNEY
Certificate of Registration Course ●
(9.00am–5.00pm)

16 Jan • SYDNEY CPD
The A-B-C of Compliance ●
(9.30am–1.30pm)

20 – 22 Jan • SYDNEY
People Management Essentials ●
(9.30am–4.30pm)

20 – 24 Jan • SYDNEY
Certificate of Registration Course ●
(9.00am–5.00pm)

23 Jan • SYDNEY CPD
WHS for Property Managers – In Practice ●
(9.30am–1.30pm)

24 Jan • SYDNEY CPD
The D-E-F of Compliance ●
(9.30am–1.30pm)

29 – 31 Jan • SYDNEY
List and Market Property Essentials ●
(9.30am–4.30pm)

FEBRUARY 2014

1 Feb – 1 Mar • SYDNEY
Certificate of Registration Course ●
(9.00am–5.00pm) (part time)

3 – 5 Feb • SYDNEY
Trust Accounting Essentials ●
(9.30am–4.30pm)

3 – 7 Feb • SYDNEY
Certificate of Registration Course ●
(9.00am–5.00pm)

6 Feb • SYDNEY
Prepare for Selling Like Never Before ●
(9.30am–1.30pm)

10 – 14 Feb • SYDNEY
Certificate of Registration Course ●
(9.00am–5.00pm)

10 – 14 Feb • SYDNEY
Property Management Essentials ●
(9.30am–4.30pm)

17 – 19 Feb • SYDNEY
You and the Law Essentials ●
(9.30am–4.30pm)

17 – 21 Feb • SYDNEY
Certificate of Registration Course ●
(9.00am–5.00pm)

20 Feb • SYDNEY
The Nuts and Bolts of the Residential Tenancies Act ●
(9.30am–1.30pm)

21 Feb • SYDNEY
Getting it Right: Forms and New Legislation ●
(9.30am–1.30pm)

24 – 27 Feb • SYDNEY
Property Sales Essentials ●
(9.30am–4.30pm)

24 – 28 Feb • SYDNEY
Certificate of Registration Course ●
(9.00am–5.00pm)

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

You can find out more about all of our courses and register online by visiting www.reinsw.com.au

Click on Course Schedule in the Training menu.

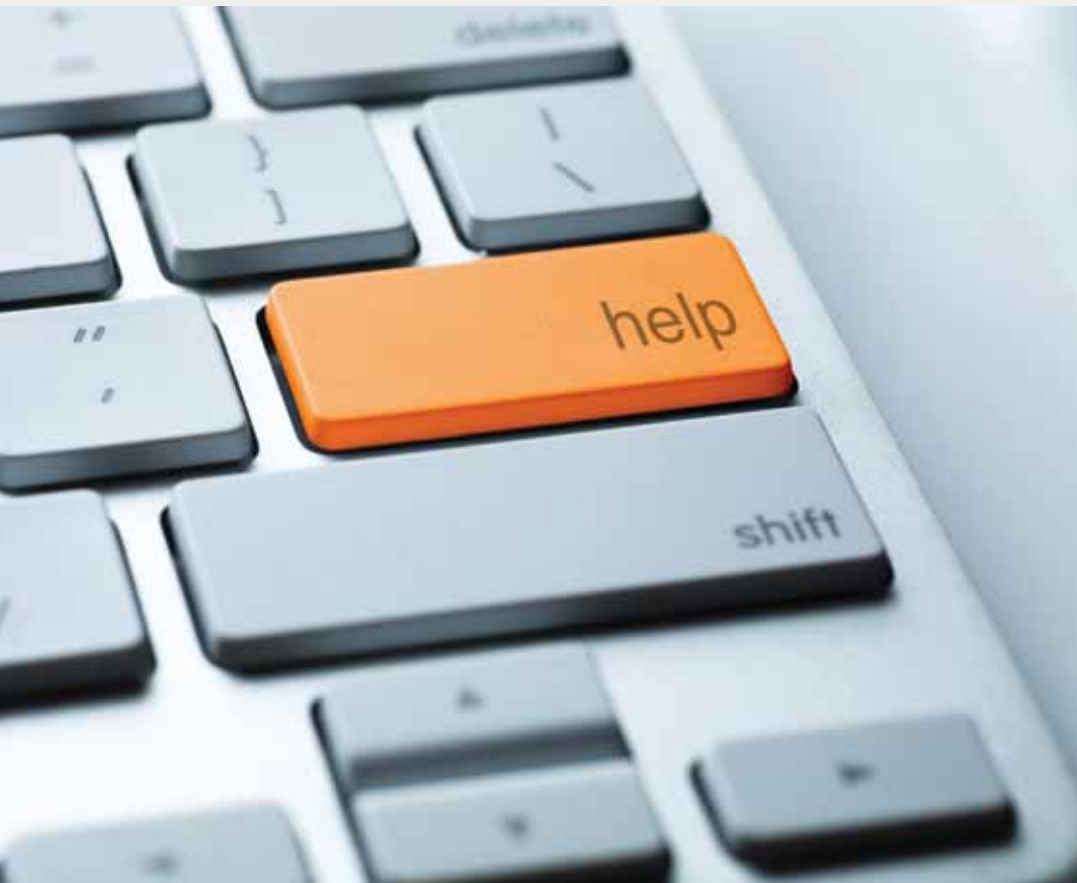
COURSE KEY

- Certificate of Registration Course
- Toolbox Series – Continuing Professional Development
- Essentials Series – Licensing



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Up north

As the weather heats up, so too is the market in the Northern Beaches.

The Manly ferry transported 5.8m people in the past financial year.

Stretching from Palm Beach down to Manly, the beauty of the Northern Beaches is recognised internationally – in part due to Palm Beach being the location for *Home & Away*.

A mere 35 per cent of residents of the Northern Beaches work in the area. Instead, a large majority of residents make the daily trip south towards Sydney for work. Patronage of the Manly ferry reached 5.8m for the 2012/13 financial year.

Properties in the area range from Victorian terraces in Manly, fibro post-war bungalows in Narrabeena and classic red brick veneers from the sixties in Belrose, 'McMansions' from the nineties in Red Hill, stacks and stacks of three-storey walk up unit buildings from the sixties and seventies in Dee Why, and the luxury waterfront homes in Seaforth, Bayview and Palm Beach.

"There is a wide variety of housing from über luxurious \$20m homes to \$300,000 studio flats closer to Manly. As they say 'seven miles from Sydney and a thousand miles from care'," John Cunningham, Principal of Cunninghams Property said.

"It's hot in all sectors [of the property market] with growth in the past quarter at about 7 per cent," John said. "Investors are back, as are first homebuyers. But it's the 'mum and dad' buyers climbing the ladder that are the most common, as we live in a very aspirational area with many upper management level, white collar workers."

According to John, sales are running at 50 per cent higher than stock coming onto the market. He expects competition to increase further in the coming months. ♦

MANLY KEY STATS

People	39,747
All private dwellings	18,290
Median weekly household income	\$2,221
Median monthly mortgage repayments	\$3,033
Median weekly rent	\$520
Median house price*	\$1,667,500
Median unit price*	\$775,000
Vacancy rate [^]	1.6%

Source:

Unless otherwise specified, statistics are sourced from 2011 Census.
* REINSW Property Profile – September 2013; ^ REINSW Vacancy Rate Survey – October 2013 (Sydney – middle suburbs)



Q&A

ANDREW LUTZE
Northern Beaches Division Chair

Andrew holds the position of Chief Auctioneer at Cunninghams Property in the Northern Beaches. He was mentored by founder John Cunningham and has progressed to become a partner in the agency.

Q. What are the key attractions in the Northern Beaches area for property buyers?

A. The Northern Beaches is without doubt the most beautiful place to live in Australia. Not only does it have 13 stunning ocean beaches to choose from, but there are also more than 14 harbourside beaches as well.

Q. What are the key issues in your area at the moment?

A. The key issue is always transportation. We have a total of only three roads that access the whole Northern Beaches and two of those are over bridges. The only public transport is buses over those three roads and the ferry service from Manly.

Q. How are you addressing these issues in your Division?

A. It's virtually impossible to change the transportation issue and as the area is so popular anyway, it does not have a negative impact on an already high demand. It is a high-priced marketplace. We are always seeking more buses and have had an increase in ferry services in recent years, but there are still morning bottlenecks on the three roads.

Q. What plans do you have for the Division over the next year?

A. It has been a struggle to get engagement over the past year, and we are really having to rethink our communication and events strategy. As part of a total upgrade in methods of communication, we are looking forward to working with REINSW to find a better value proposition for members to re-engage with their industry and profession in more proactive ways.

Interested in getting involved in your Division?

For more information, email REINSW at divisions@reinsw.com.au

Dynamic duo

Edwin Almeida set himself the challenge of raising \$100,000 in 100 days and built a strong fundraising team along the way.



Clockwise from top: Edwin Almeida (pictured centre) worked with Westmead Medical Research Foundation to organise 100k100d; football jerseys and a \$10,000 necklace were some of the items raffled to raise money.

It was being diagnosed with throat cancer that led Just Think Property Principal Edwin Almeida to create 100k100d. The aim of the project was to raise \$100,000 in 100 days for the Westmead Medical Research Foundation (WMRF). Specifically, the money would be used to fund the appointment of 10 new medical researchers.

Over the course of the 100 days, Edwin and his team – including Shivani Jayasinghe from the WMRF – organised a series of events.

Fundraising events

One of the fundraising projects entailed Edwin and his colleague Sue Elliott writing a book about the funny experiences agents have during open houses titled *Untold Stories by Real Estate Agents*. Tickets were also sold

to an intimate lunch with the Head Coach of the Greater Western Sydney Giants Kevin Sheedy. The event was organised in conjunction with the Parramatta Chamber of Commerce, a strong supporter of the campaign.

Movie nights, candle parties and sponsored 100km runs were among some of the many other fundraising events organised as part of the project.

Auctioneer competition

The Premier Auctioneers Competition brought the campaign to an end. Auctioneers from a range of industries, from car to stock and station auctioneers, were invited to take part – but it was 2001 REINSW Novice Auctioneers Competition winner Edward Riley who took the top prize.

So far, approximately \$70,000 has been raised. The team has decided to run a 100k100d event on a yearly basis going forward. Plans are already afoot to expand the project beyond Western Sydney.

Edwin has since been named WMRF's Business Ambassador.

"It has been a full-time job on top of running an office, but the experience has been made so pleasant through the support of WMRF and Shivani," he said. ♦

YOUR STORY

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

AWARD WINNERS

At the State Conference on 29 November 2013, REINSW said a special thank-you to those members who have made outstanding contributions to our success.

"The calibre of our members never ceases to impress me," REINSW CEO Tim McKibbin said.

"Our award winners today are all great examples of the dedication and hard work our members are always willing to put in for our organisation.

"I thank them all for their contribution and congratulate them on their awards."

Life Fellow

Charles Verheyden
In recognition of outstanding contribution to REINSW and to the real estate industry.

Max Sewell Award

Murrumbidgee Division
Accepted by John Dalton
For best performance overall by a non-metropolitan Division

Russell Jackson Award

Nepean, Hawkesbury, Blue Mountains Division
Accepted by Peter Prouzos
For best performance overall by a Metropolitan Division

Brian Bowles Award

Justin Ferguson
(from the North Division)
For outstanding Divisional Chair

John Hill Award

Barry Johnston (from the Commercial Chapter)
For outstanding Chapter Chair.

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