

# Journal

FEB 2012  
VOL 63/01



**Resolutions with results**  
Plan now for business success

**Agency app strategies**  
Is your business ready?

**Good news about complaints**  
How to win a customer for life

## outside the square

**an innovative approach to helping the homeless**

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Leighton Walters talks about his organisation, Heart for the Homeless.



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## Looking forward to new challenges

It is a great honour to be elected as President of REINSW. I wish to congratulate and thank the newly elected Board and the Executive for their dedication to this great organisation.

I would also like to thank Immediate Past President Wayne Stewart for his inspiring leadership, and all the Past Presidents who have worked tirelessly for REINSW.

I first became involved with REINSW after being encouraged by my father Sid to go along and see what happens at the monthly meetings. I enjoyed it so much I decided to join the Divisional Committee and later became Chairman of the St George & Sutherland Shire Division.

### The year ahead

This year our industry will face a challenging market and an increased number of agents consolidating their business or leaving the profession. Agents will need to focus more than ever on the value they bring to the transaction. In that regard, REINSW is dedicated to providing those vital services to you and your business that will set you apart in the market.

Through our joint venture with REIV, we have secured a data source that is provided to us by realestateVIEW.com.au

and propertyDATA.com.au. This puts us on the front foot, allowing us to create industry news with our public relations and media campaigns. This will increase REINSW's relevance with Government and the media. With exclusive access to this data, members will be experts in their marketplace and property consumers will inevitably see the additional benefits of dealing with an REINSW member.

We will continue to lobby hard with our policies for changes in the areas of agency practice, property management, property taxation and planning.

We are also keen in these challenging times to continue to promote Real Business First, which will enable REINSW to assist our members in improving their bottom lines in the coming financial year. There are of course many other exciting projects in 2012.

I look forward to bringing you more updates.

**Christian Payne**  
REINSW President



## Our push to cut stamp duty

REINSW is kicking off the year with the launch of a new political and media campaign to get action on stamp duty in NSW.

For too long we have seen the Government's addiction to stamp duty revenue overcoming any real commitment towards reforming what is one of the most punitive taxation regimes in the country.

The only time we saw reform in this area was the introduction of the vendor tax and we all know how that ended up! Not only were vendors hit hard by a 'double tax dip', but Government revenues actually declined during the period the tax was introduced.

It raises an important question: if you raise taxes and revenues fall, does the opposite hold true? Do revenues increase if tax rates are cut?

REINSW has asked that very question and our research shows that when property transfer taxes were cut in Western Australia and the Northern Territory, government revenues actually increased.

Between 2003 and 2006, Western Australia cut property transfer duties by

0.9 per cent, yet related revenues rose by \$706 million.

Similarly, in the Northern Territory, property transfer rates were cut by 0.45 per cent and resulted in an increase of \$20 million in related revenue – a rise of 20 per cent.

REINSW has modelled what effect the Western Australian experience would have in NSW and has found revenues would rise substantially.

The evidence is clear that additional stimulation of the market is generated by an easing of property transfer rates, providing greater incentives for buyers and at the same time, protecting revenue streams for Government.

REINSW will take this research to the Government and the media with the aim of stimulating serious public debate about the real economic benefits of cutting tax.

**Tim McKibbin**  
REINSW CEO

## Approvals rebound

Building approvals rebounded in November after falling to their lowest level in 29 months during October 2011, figures released by the Housing Industry Association show.

HIA Senior Economist, Andrew Harvey said building approvals for both detached houses and other dwellings increased in November 2011, but noted total approvals remain significantly down on the previous year.

Seasonally adjusted approvals rose by two per cent in NSW. During November 2011 total seasonally adjusted building approvals in Australia rose by 8.4 per cent following a 10 per cent drop in October and a 14.8 per cent fall in September.

However, total November approvals were down by 18.9 per cent compared to the same time in 2010.

Seasonally adjusted approvals were up by 39.9 per cent in Victoria and 6.6 per cent in Queensland. Approvals fell by 1.9 per cent in South Australia, 16.9 per cent in Western Australia and 7.9 per cent in Tasmania.



## Hunter Valley town gets green light

The controversial \$1.5 billion project to build the first new town in the Hunter in 50 years is back on track after the developer won a major court victory in December.

The planned new town of Huntlee has been rejected twice in the Land and Environment Court after successful challenges led by local environmental activists.

But in December, the NSW Court of Appeal overturned a July decision of the court, paving the way for a town of 7500 homes and 200 hectares to go ahead on what is now agricultural land and bush near Branxton.

The Perth-based developer LWP Property Group said Huntlee would play an important role in helping to provide much-needed infrastructure and affordable housing in the

lower and upper Hunter Valley as well as ease the population pressures from Sydney.

Work is expected to start on the first 2000 homes in the second half of this year.

A spokesman for the group challenging Huntlee, indicated before the decision was handed down that, if they lost, the group would seek to challenge the project on sustainability grounds.

## Calls to change 'risk adverse' planning culture

Property development industry group Urban Taskforce has welcomed the Planning Institute of Australia's submission to the review of the NSW planning system.

Urban Taskforce CEO Chris Johnson said while most of the

key issues were now on the table, one critical omission had been the culture of planners who will operate under the new *Planning Act*.

"The Planning Institute's own submission to the review raised the issue of the risk

adverse culture in NSW that was slowing down approvals," Mr Johnson said.

The submission outlines the economic importance of eliminating unnecessary delay and costs in the state's planning system.

Mr Johnson said the Planning Institute's submission suggested a number of ways to improve the culture of planning, including having a positive view about change, a 'can do' attitude, recognition of the 'bigger picture' and a call for courageous leaders.



## Relocation scheme expands

The NSW Government has announced the Regional Relocation Scheme will be extended to apply to applicants who buy vacant land to build a new home.

The *Regional Relocation (Home Buyers Grant) Act 2011* will operate for four years, and commenced on 1 July 2011. The scheme provides applicants with a one-off payment of \$7,000 to assist them with the cost of relocating from their metropolitan home to a regional home.

Initially the payment was only available for people who

bought an established home worth no more than \$600,000.

The expansion of the scheme will now include applicants who buy vacant land valued up to \$450 000, provided they commence building within six months and occupy the home within 12 months of the land purchase.

This applies to purchases from 1 July 2011. Applicants must relocate to participating regions outside the local government areas of the Sydney metropolitan area, Blue Mountains, Hawkesbury, Gosford, Wyong, Wollondilly, Wollongong and Newcastle.

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## Have your say on strata law review

The NSW Government is commencing a comprehensive review of NSW strata and community title laws in the middle of 2012.

To support this project, online community consultation will be held and anyone interested can participate by voicing opinions, sharing experiences, raising specific issues or concerns and suggesting possible solutions.

The review will cover all five Acts and their associated Regulations relating to the development and management of strata and community schemes.

For more details, visit [www.openforum.com.au/strata](http://www.openforum.com.au/strata), before the online forum closes on 29 February 2012.

To register your details to be kept informed about the review, visit [www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au](http://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au)

## REINSW IN THE MEDIA

Demand for rental properties, predictions for the 2012 market, the carbon tax, stamp duty and the most popular suburbs for buyers in Sydney were hot topics in the media.

### Print

- REINSW CEO Tim McKibbin's predictions for the 2012 property market were featured in an article for the *Illawarra Mercury*.
- The *Manly Daily* featured an article about the high demand and low supply of rental properties in the northern beaches, which included comments from Tim.
- Tim explained REINSW's lobbying for the State Government to allow first homebuyers to pay stamp duty over a five years, in an article for *Nine MSN*.
- Tim called on the Federal Government to compensate homebuyers for any price increases flowing on from the introduction of the carbon tax in the *Illawarra Mercury*.

- REINSW President Christian Payne explained more people would now rather have a smaller home in an established suburb, close to infrastructure in an article for the *Daily Telegraph* about the most popular suburbs to buy property in Sydney.

## Inquiry to investigate strata insurance

The surging cost of strata insurance — particularly in northern Australia — has prompted the Federal Government to launch an investigation into the issue.

The investigation is part of the new terms of reference for the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs' broader inquiry into insurance claims processing.

The inquiry was launched to investigate the insurance industry's response to the 2010/11 extreme weather events.

"As I've looked more closely at insurance issues in Queensland, I've become aware the affordability of residential strata insurance has become an increasingly serious issue now that many people are renewing their strata title insurance policies," assistant Treasurer Bill Shorten said.

"In particular I've been concerned about the news coming out of cities and towns like Cairns, Townsville, Port Douglas and others in the region, where anecdotal evidence suggests residential strata insurance is becoming an increasing issue."

Chair of the Committee, Graham Perrett MP, said it made sense for the inquiry to add strata title to its wider terms of reference.

"This is an issue that cuts across areas of Commonwealth, State and local Government responsibility, which means that action will be needed at all levels of Government," Mr Perrett said.

For more information about the inquiry, the public hearings and/or for making a submission, you can visit [www.aph.gov.au/strata](http://www.aph.gov.au/strata) or email [spla.reps@aph.gov.au](mailto:spla.reps@aph.gov.au)

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# Sydney a top investment market

Survey finds the city ranks high for commercial investment this year.

Sydney was named the third most favourable market in the Asia Pacific region for commercial real estate investment this year, thanks mostly to the resilience of the Australian economy, according to *Emerging Trends in Real Estate Asia Pacific 2012*.

Jointly published by the Urban Land Institute (ULI) and PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), *Emerging Trends* provides an outlook on Asia Pacific real estate investment and development.

Covering 21 markets in the Asia Pacific region, the results are based on the opinions of more than 360 internationally renowned real estate professionals, including investors, developers, property company representatives, lenders, brokers and consultants.

In addition to moving into third place from last year's sixth-place ranking for investment potential, Sydney's ranking for development prospects improved notably from the 2011 report, moving from 16th to ninth place.

Sydney was one of only two markets to receive an improved individual rating score for development prospects.

"Foreign purchasers are seeing Australian property assets as a good, stable income return, which is favourable because they are not paying the high cost of debt," the report states. As a result, property acquisitions in Sydney are projected to remain steady in 2012.

For Asia Pacific as a whole, *Emerging Trends* points out that economic woes in the United States and Europe

are weighing upon local economies across the Asia Pacific region as well as investor sentiment in Asia and Australian real estate markets.

"The Australian property market continues to perform well," PwC Real Estate Leader James Dunning said.

"Investors are drawn to the Australian economy's overall resilience, high transparency levels and its exposure to China. Sydney is now one of the lowest-risk markets of anywhere in the Asia Pacific region.

It's now considered the third most attractive investment destination and ninth most popular development location."

The Urban Land Institute is a global non-profit education and research institute supported by its members. ♦

## TOP FIVE INVESTMENT MARKETS FOR 2012

Markets listed as the top choices for investors in 2012:

1. **SINGAPORE**  
Claiming the top spot for a second consecutive year.
2. **SHANGHAI**  
Ranked second for the second consecutive year.
3. **SYDNEY**  
Ranked sixth last year.
4. **CHONGQING**  
Included for the first time this year.
5. **BEIJING**  
Ranked seventh last year.



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# New pool laws proposed for NSW

Mandatory inspections of pool fences before homes are sold or leased could become law in NSW.

Homeowners may soon be required to ensure their pool fences meet safety standards before they sell or lease their property, under proposed amendments to swimming pool legislation being considered by the State Government.

Local Government Minister Don Page released a discussion paper with recommendations to amend pool legislation, following a series of near-drownings in Sydney this summer.

Feedback from the public and other key stakeholders is now being sought on the discussion paper and proposed amendments to the law.

The amendments aim to enhance the safety of very young children (0 to four years)

near private swimming pools in NSW by further reducing drownings and serious immersion injuries.

The NSW Government is now seeking feedback from the public, councils and other stakeholders on possible amendments to legislation to further increase child safety around swimming pools including the introduction of private swimming pool registration, self-certification and an inspection program.

The discussion paper comes after NSW Deputy State Coroner Magistrate PA MacMahon handed down recommendations in April 2010, following inquests conducted into eight backyard swimming pool deaths that occurred between 2006 and 2009.

A cross-agency working group was established by the Division of Local Government in response to these recommendations and has now finalised its report for the Government's consideration.

“  
Feedback from the public is now being sought on the proposed amendments to the law.”

This working group also considered swimming safety initiatives being undertaken

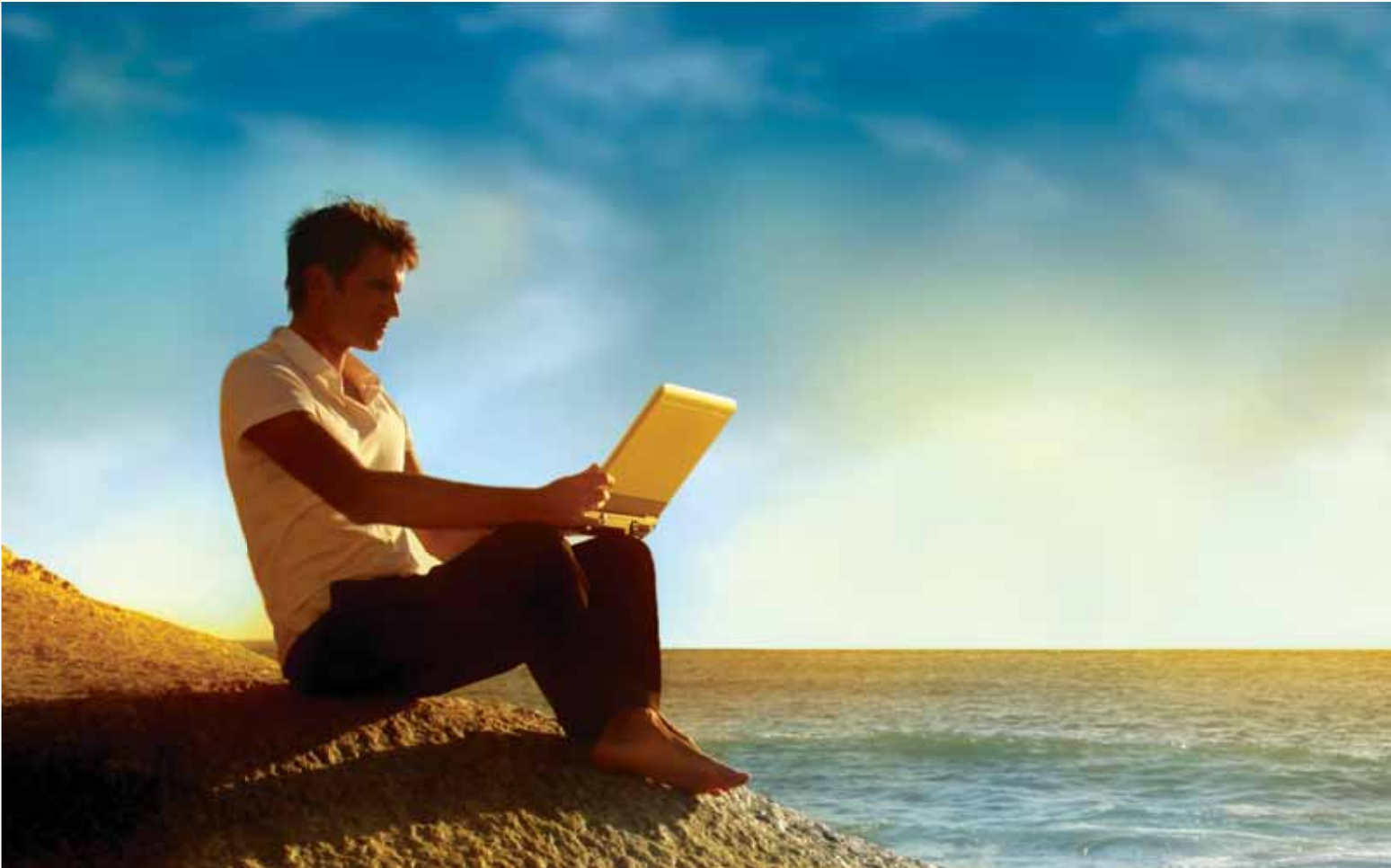
in other states including strengthened legislation in Queensland.

Among the range of recommendations to be considered are new requirements for private swimming pool owners to register their pool with their local council and to self-certify the pool barrier's compliance with the *Swimming Pools Act*.

It is also recommended councils undertake private swimming pool inspections within their local government areas.

*Submissions must be lodged by 5pm, 24 February 2012.*

*To read the discussion paper, or for more information visit the Division of Local Government website at [www.dlg.nsw.gov.au](http://www.dlg.nsw.gov.au) ♦*



# Resolutions with results

Already forgotten your New Year's resolutions? Now is the time to put plans in place to ensure business success throughout the year.

While the Christmas and New Year period is an ideal time to take stock and plan for the year ahead, the first few weeks of retuning to the office can provide the clarity of mind and resolve to make plans that you will be able to stick with as the year begins to pick up speed.

## Renew your passion

With 15 years' experience in real estate and sales, author and speaker Kirsty Spraggon is known for her expertise in building relationships to increase life and business success.

According to Kirsty, being on the right path to make the most of the year is as easy as taking the time to ask yourself three simple questions:

- What do I really want?
- Where do I want to go in 2012?
- Who do I want with me on the journey?

"Allow yourself the time to be re-inspired and have a renewed passion about your goals and reflect on where you are heading," Kirsty said.

"Use this time as the year starts up again to ask yourself these questions and allow the space to create your dreams for 2012."

## Have a game plan

For Managing Director of Professionals Armidale Luke Fahy, planning for the new year is as important, and fun, as a sporting team preparing for a new season of competition.

"I encourage a thought process similar to a sporting team in preparing for a new year," he said.

"I really see the new year as a new season and I start preparing for it around October. I look at what worked in the past year, what didn't and what I can improve on." What is important to Luke, is having a 'game plan' to ensure you have the discipline to achieve your goals.

"As an example, some agents might set the goal to do more auctions, but after the first month if auctions don't work out they give up. But if that is something you have on your



“I secure at least one appointment to go to the market with in February.”

John Macree, Head of Sales and Investments, Metropolitan Markets, NSW, for Jones Lang LaSalle



“Whatever your goal is, you need to want it badly enough to stick with it through the tough days when you will be in serious danger of giving up.”

Kirsty Spraggon, author and speaker.



“I really see the new year as a new season . . . I look at what worked in the past year, what didn't and what I can improve on.”

Luke Fahy, Managing Director of Professionals Armidale.

game plan then you must, no matter what, stick to it for the entire 12 months.

“I also like to get the other salespeople in the office involved in the game plan meeting to discuss different ideas.

“To me, real estate is an easy game and the only time it gets hard is when we make it hard and try too many different things instead of sticking with simplicity.

“In the real estate world, stick to your ideal week, be disciplined and the listings and sales will come.”

#### Be ready for action

For John Macree, Head of Sales and Investments, Metropolitan Markets, NSW

for Jones Lang LaSalle, being ready to hit the ground running in the new year is a priority.

“I generally start planning for my business New Year's resolutions in December, so I can hit the ground running in February when the commercial property market kicks into gear for the year,” he said.

“In December, I secure at least one appointment to go to the market with in February. This gives you an immediate profile and some product to talk to clients about.”

John said he always considers business cycles and external economic influences when planning for the year ahead.

“With the globalisation of business, more companies

are working on calendar year business plans,” he explained.

“For commercial investment sales, this means new purchase and selling mandates often come out at the beginning of the year. In commercial leasing, occupiers often adopt a new business plan at the start of the year, with a new budget and therefore it is a great time to close a lease deal or source a new lead.”

### If you fail to plan, you plan to fail

Most people never achieve their New Year’s resolutions because most are made whimsically and not out of a deep desire and passion to work hard to achieve them.

“Whatever your goal is, you have got to want it badly enough to stick with it through the tough days when you will be in serious danger of giving up,” Kirsty said.

“Without the drive and determination to work hard and push through the tough times you simply won’t succeed. It’s about doing whatever it takes to achieve your dream, and doing it gladly.”

Kirsty said the most effective and achievable goals are those that are most in line with your own values and honest desires.

“Take some time to sit down and write a list of all the things you value, for example it might be family, community, health, learning, money, marriage or freedom, and all the things you would like to achieve,” she said.

“It’s crucial to have balance here and not just focus solely on one area like career.”



To ensure you have a well-rounded approach, set goals in other important areas too including:

- Health
- Relationships
- Finance
- Spirituality

“My advice would be to go crazy,” Kirsty said.

“Write hundreds of goals down, like a giant wish list, don’t hold back. Sometimes we think too much about how we are going to do it, but I’m a great believer that if you can think of the ‘what’ then the ‘how’ will take care of itself.”

“Don’t overwhelm yourself with too many goals because you don’t want to end up doing them all half-heartedly.”

Once you have your wish list, ask yourself if you are really dedicated or just curious about each item. Then edit the list, leaving only items you will focus time and energy to achieving.

## MAKE YOUR NEW YEAR’S BUSINESS RESOLUTIONS LAST

1. Decide what you are committed to achieving.
2. Break your goals down to measurable tasks.
3. Review your progress weekly.
4. Surround yourself with your goals.



Aim to have a list with two major goals and several minor ones for each quarter.

“Don’t overwhelm yourself with too many goals because you don’t want to end up doing them all half-heartedly,” Kirsty said.

“You want to truly commit to the goals that you want to achieve with all your passion and drive.”

### Dream big and stretch yourself

Most people are familiar with the idea of setting goals that are achievable, but Kirsty says being brave

enough to push yourself to dream big is the key to real success.

“**Surround yourself with your goal.**”

“I have noticed that some people don’t know how to create really big dreams for themselves, but really all you need to learn is how to make sure that you stretch yourself,” she said.

“This should feel uncomfortable. If not, your dreams may be too safe.

“Choose goals that – if you were to accomplish them – would really change your life for the better. Even if you miss out on your timeframe slightly, you will still be getting ahead by working towards something desirable that you can measure.”

### Action

Once you have set your goals, the next important step is figuring out how you can achieve them.

“Break your goals down into daily and weekly tasks.

By doing this, you are coming up with the steps you need to take to be able to achieve your goal.

“You need to prioritise these actions and diarise them into your calendar as appointments. Then you need to review them. Keep them top of mind and make time every week to check in with how you’re going and if you’re on track.

“A great idea is to keep the list on your computer as a screen saver.

“Lastly, you need to surround yourself with your goal. Live it, breathe it, be it!” ♦

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# Margaritas and mishaps

Would a simple slip leave you with no income to pay your bills?

While many of us are returning to work following a well-deserved holiday and rest over the New Year period, not everyone will be so lucky. Some agents will discover the hard way that sick leave doesn't always cover the whole recovery period from illness or injury — leaving them without an income for an extended amount of time.

## Twisting by the pool

During New Year's Eve celebrations, Anne, a young residential sales agent, slipped over by the pool while dancing in the conga line in her own backyard. Anne broke her hip and badly fractured her wrist. Apart from having to end her party early, Anne had to face

surgery to remove a splintered bone and insert pins in her hip. She will require further surgery and rehabilitation to remove those pins once her bones have healed.

“Sick leave doesn't always cover the whole recovery period from illness or injury.”

Anne will be unable to drive for more than six months and is on strong medication to

assist with pain management. Further complications with her recovery will mean Anne is likely to be out of action for just over a year.

After her annual leave and sick leave allowances were utilised, Anne's boss, though very sympathetic to her situation, is unable to continue to pay her salary while she is off work. Anne still has mortgage payments, car lease payments, a personal loan and living expenses to pay for while she is not working.

## Reassurance from insurance

Fortunately for Anne, she decided to take out salary

continuation insurance a couple of years ago. This provides Anne with regular payments while she is off work and means she doesn't have the stress of facing financial difficulties during her recovery.

What would happen to you in the same situation? For a young, single person with no dependents, salary continuation insurance (also known as income protection insurance) could be the most relevant type of insurance to have.

There are several ways you can obtain this type of cover; through an insurance agent, financial planner or bank. There are some things that you will

need to consider before taking out this type of insurance. There are levels and periods of cover, waiting periods, commissions and premiums charges between each policy.

“  
One of the easiest and most cost effective ways of applying for salary continuance insurance is through your super fund.”

One of the easiest and most cost effective ways of applying for salary continuance insurance

is through your super fund. And if you apply through your Industry SuperFund you will not need to pay commissions or fees to financial planners or insurance brokers/agents.

REI Super can tailor insurance to suit you REI Super, as the Industry SuperFund for real estate professionals, provides members with salary continuance insurance tailored to suit your needs. This includes cover for commission income as well as retainer salaries. Premiums are deducted from your REI Super account so that you don't need to find the money to pay for your premiums.

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so the premiums are very cost effective. For example, to insure a salary of \$60,000 per annum would cost approximately \$130 per year\*.

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\*According to the REI Super insurance calculator, located at [www.reisuper.com.au](http://www.reisuper.com.au). Please note that waiting periods apply and an insurer will take into consideration your current health and other factors when considering your application for insurance. Examples are for illustration purposes only. Acceptance of application of insurance is at the discretion of the insurer. Information provided is of a general nature and does not take into account your financial situation or specific needs, therefore it doesn't constitute personal advice on investment or financial matters and is provided by REI Superannuation Fund Pty Ltd ABN 68 056 044 770, AFSL 240569, RSEL L0000314 REI Super ABN 76 641 658 449 RSE R1000412.



## 2012 – Expand your thinking, change the hole to fit the peg!

*"In 2003 I began my career as a real estate business strategist. Back then, we planned our team structure then chose the lucky new recruit from a large pool. Fast forward 10 years and after coaching, training and consulting 1000's of agents here and abroad, and a degree in Human Resource Development, I've learned that to thrive we need flexibility and constant development of our recruitment and retention processes. It's no longer about finding a "recruiter", you need a "people" partner, a team of people who understand the industry, the candidates and business strategy. At RECD we call these "People Consultants".*

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BY MAT STEINWEDE  
PRINCIPAL, MCGRATH  
CENTRAL COAST

# Take control of your own success

Why is it that some people lead the field and do extraordinarily well in real estate while others struggle?

Real estate is a fairly simple business, so why is it that when everyone is working hard to achieve results, one person might write \$200,000 a year and another writes \$2,000,000 a year?

When I first started in real estate I wasn't exactly the ideal representative of the industry. I didn't have a car, I was a homeless drug addict and didn't own any business wear. But I was smart. And I learnt quickly that being successful in real estate was about more than just looking the part.

## Find your own reason to achieve

I've now been working in real estate for 15 years, and have watched agents closely and observed one thing that separates people who are successful and those who just survive — sustained hunger.

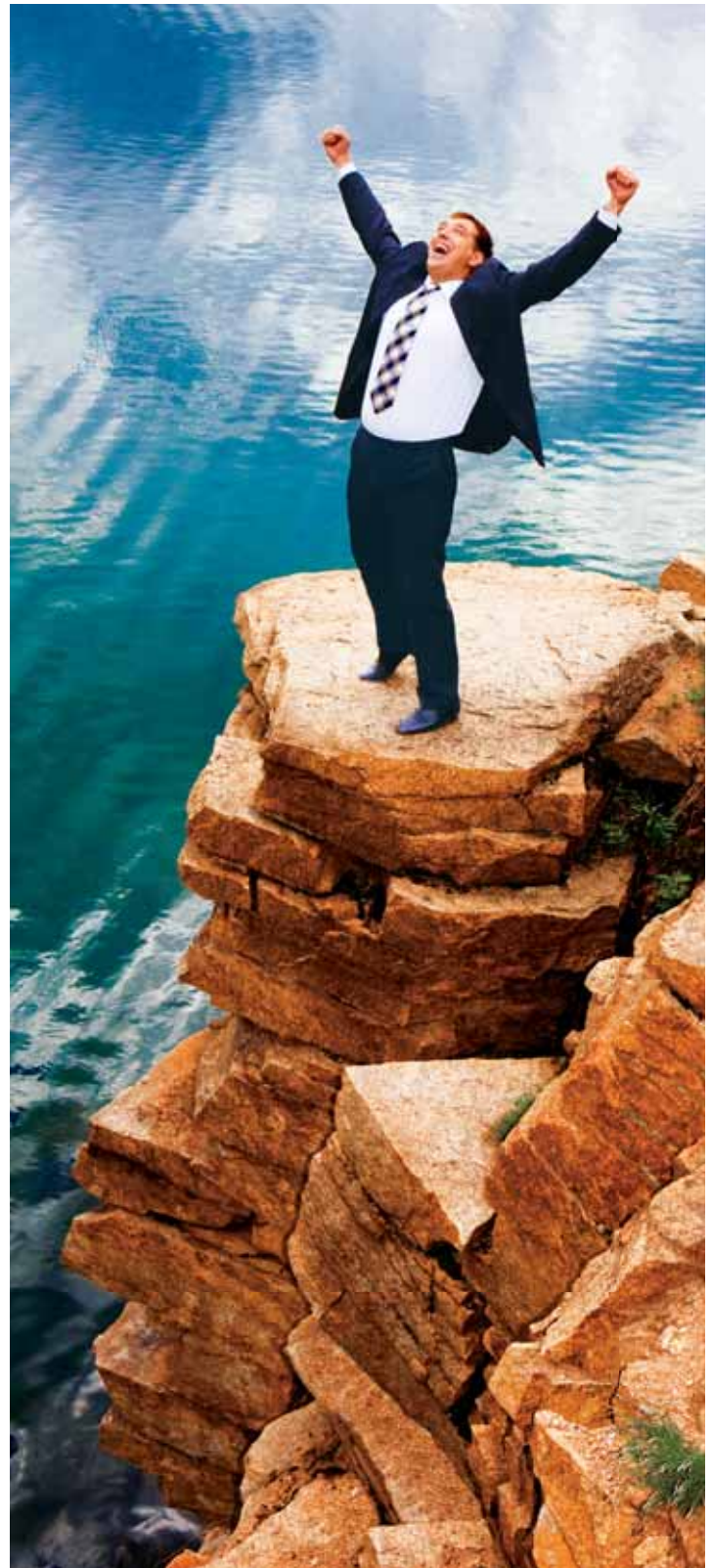
I'm not just talking about initial enthusiasm; I'm talking about

sustained hunger and a passion to succeed, which you can maintain throughout the years. This desire is the fuel you need to drive you to do extraordinary things, but to achieve results you must have a plan of action.

Everyone can get excited when they start something, but it's the fire in your belly when you have been going at it for five years that will set you apart. Find your own personal reason for achieving that is big enough and important enough to drive you everyday — even on the days when it feels like things aren't going your way.

## Be committed to your own success

When I first started in real estate, I didn't know a thing about the industry. But I quickly learned that I had the power to make things happen for myself. To get my first job, I rang local real estate offices asking if they were looking for a trainee. After many calls, I was hired and promptly sent off to start



“Everyone can get excited when they start something, but it's the fire in your belly when you have been going at it for five years that will set you apart.”

door knocking. Day after day, I walked from suburb to suburb, rain, hail or shine. It wasn't the most glamorous start to a career, but I could see that just by making the effort to meet more people, business started to roll in.

The basic principles I learnt in those early days — meeting more people and actively looking for new opportunities — still form the basis of how I work today. When you search diligently for opportunities, you will find them in abundance. It's the commitment to keep going when things don't feel like they are going well that will help you etch out your path to success.

### Back yourself to take risks

After about three years of working in the industry, I put everything on the line with a work mate and we opened our own business.

We only had enough money to stay open for eight weeks. It was a risk, but we believed it would pay off — not because we were lucky, but because we had a plan for success. The same principles I learned at the beginning of my career, I used to start our business and the listings rolled in. Our business today spans three offices and has almost 80 staff.

### Widen your network every day

In my experience, one of the best ways to generate business is to speak to new people every day. I speak to 40 new people every day. Whether they are buyers, cold calls or database calls, it doesn't matter, as long as I make a connection with 40 new people.

Real estate is a fairly simple business, but it takes proactivity to build consistency and

steady results. If you stick to the number 40, you will meet almost 10,000 new people each year and significantly improve your opportunities for business generation.

### Never stand still

Great results don't happen by accident, they are a reflection of your input. Regardless of the market, opportunities are everywhere but only the 'hungry' agents find them.

This is the number one reason why there are just a few agents that do extraordinary things. Their insatiable appetite to achieve means they are more likely to get results. When you are happy with just enough, you will underperform. By this, I don't mean you shouldn't be happy with what you achieve — always take time to reflect on and enjoy your achievements — but always be open to the next opportunity.

## PLAN FOR SUCCESS

1. Get out of the office regularly and actively look for new business.
2. Set yourself achievable goals and evaluate your performance every 30 days.
3. Talk to 40 new people every day to widen your network.
4. Back your own ability and be prepared to take risks.

Regularly evaluate your progress and be honest about the effort you are putting into improving how you work and how much you are committed to finding new and better ways to do business. ♦

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BY CATHERINE DEVRYE

# Good news about complaints

If you handle a complaint the right way, you can win a customer for life.



Most businesses dread customer complaints. Yet, these seemingly negative comments provide the best opportunity to build a strong relationship with a customer and improve service levels in your business.

## Complainers care about your business

Market research shows that the most loyal customers are also those most likely to take the time to complain. The others simply take their business elsewhere.

Figures published by the Technical Assistance Research Program (TARP), outline that

96 per cent of unhappy customers never bother to complain. In this case, no news is really not good news at all. So, the four per cent minority who do express an opinion should be highly valued for their insight into your business.

Survey results, also published by TARP, indicate each dissatisfied customer will, on average, tell 15 other people. But each satisfied customer will tell no more than six others. So, while happy customers are often more pleasant to deal with, it's the unhappy customers who really can have an effect on your business.

## Boost your bottom line

Smart real estate agents no longer regard customer service as the 'soft fuzzy stuff', but the chance to gain a competitive edge that can yield tangible bottom line results.

The Profit Impact of Marketing Strategy (PIMS) surveyed users of more than 3000 providers of goods and services. Customers were asked whether they perceived the organisation as a 'good service provider' or 'poor service provider'.

Those results were then matched with the actual

financial performance of the organisation in the market place.

The findings showed:

- Good service providers could charge an average of nine to 10 per cent more for the same basic goods or service.
- They grew two times faster than their competition.
- Perceived service leaders improved their market share an average of six per cent each year, whereas the perceived poor providers lost as much as two per cent market share per annum.

The word 'perceived' is an important one, because there was no data to show if customer perceptions were, indeed, an accurate barometer of actual service levels. However, customers need not be rational. A customer only cares how they feel they are personally treated in any given situation.

Perception is also vital when it comes to understanding your role in customer service. There are many definitions of service. You can understand it as being a servant to a 'master', which implies subservience, or you can view service as 'being useful'. If you adopt the latter definition, you are more likely to feel good about helping people as part of your role, and have the right mentality required to be successful in the market today.

#### Dealing with complaints

While a successful business will naturally strive to minimise

any error in the first place, understanding the impact of customer perception can help with your approach to dealing with complaints.

“  
**Market research shows that the most loyal customers are also those most likely to take the time to complain.**”

A smart business owner should never allow an irate customer to retell their complaint to more than one employee in the company. Stories, particularly recounting frustration or dissatisfaction, are inevitably exaggerated with each recall.

Research shows 77 per cent of customers believe a complaint has been handled satisfactorily if they only need to deal with one individual. This level of satisfaction dropped to 61 per cent if more than one employee was involved in solving the problem.

#### WOMBAT marketing

It costs five times more to obtain a new customer than to retain an existing one. And if you can harness the power of a satisfied customer, you can use what I call the Word Of Mouth — Best Advertising Technique, or the WOMBAT theory of marketing.

What may be common sense needs to be transposed into common practice among every employee in your real estate office — not just the sales team. Each and every member of your team must be committed to give their personal best in terms of service, every time

they deal with a customer — whether they are buying, selling or renting.

The standard for customer service is always going up and you must constantly meet and exceed customer expectations to merely remain competitive. Organisations that provide great service will reap long-term financial benefits, regardless of the current state of the economy.

*Catherine DeVrye is the author of #1 best sellers Good Service is Good Business, Hot Lemon & Honey, Who Says I Can't and Hope Happens! She is also a past winner of the Australian Executive Woman of the Year Award, and speaks internationally on managing change, customer service and turning obstacles to opportunities. Visit [www.greatmotivation.com](http://www.greatmotivation.com) ♦*

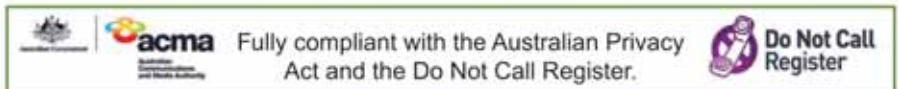
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# Agency app strategies

By 2013, mobile internet usage is anticipated to surpass desktop usage. Is your business ready?

Understanding and adapting to trends in consumer behaviour has always been a vital component of a real estate agent's success.

As the use of mobile communication technology in the every day life of consumers continues to grow, an agent's ability to embrace this cultural shift is more important than ever.

Analysts predict mobile internet usage across the globe will surpass desktop usage by 2013.

Smartphone use in Australia is now second in the world only to Singapore, making this a prime opportunity for real estate agents to connect with consumers.

Developing an app for a Smartphone can be costly and not necessarily right for your business, but an

effective mobile web strategy is becoming increasingly important for connecting with consumers.

With thousands of apps available for work, play and everything in between, being able to differentiate yourself from competitors when you enter this market is vital.

“It is integral that real estate agencies not only invest in a good website, but begin to experiment with newer technologies.”

## Keeping up with changing needs

According to Head of Marketing and Product for realestateVIEW.com.au, Teresa Sperti, most organisations are failing to meet the market in terms of delivering digital experiences in line with consumer consumption habits.

“For example, the majority of consumers these days are accessing email via their mobile device but despite this only 20 per cent of organisations have optimised their email templates to effectively render on mobile phones,” she said.

“In this rapidly changing digital environment, it is integral that real estate agencies not only invest in basics such as a good website, but begin to experiment with newer technologies to reach their target audience.”

## CASE STUDY:

Ahead of designing and launching their own apps, realestateVIEW.com.au conducted research into mobile usage to better understand property seeker behaviour.

More than 2000 property seekers across Australia completed the survey. Among other findings, the research showed 40 per cent of property seekers used their mobile as a primary or secondary device to search for property.

Head of Marketing and Product for realestateVIEW.com.au, Teresa Sperti, said information gathered from the survey helped them understand what was important to consumers and developed apps to meet those needs.

“As we were third to market with our apps, it was really important for us to find a way to differentiate our offering,” Teresa said.

“We used the research to identify gaps in the market, which led us to produce the first app that provides customers with median prices and latest auction results.

Our research also showed one of the most important things consumers wanted was easy access to an agent's contact details, so we ensured our apps featured quick and easy access to contact details.”

Targeted analysis of their market resulted in 15,000 downloads of the realestateVIEW.com.au iPhone app during the first two weeks after it was launched. It was also featured in the App Store after just two days on the market.



This, however, does not mean your organisation needs to have a presence across all social networks and build apps across all major mobile devices.

“With digital, it is important to focus on the channels and experiences that are most relevant to your target audience and to apply focus to ensure the channels you do invest in are leveraged effectively rather than spreading your resources to thin,” Teresa said.

### Is an app right for your agency?

While an app will enable your agency to connect with property seekers, Teresa said there are also some significant drawbacks, which should be considered.

“On average, consumers download a total of 11 apps, this is a huge barrier to entry for usage and is vastly different to the mobile web where consumers can easily switch from site to site,” Teresa said.

“In addition, each device is different so if you want to connect with the majority of property seekers you need to not only build an iPhone app, but also an Android app to reach the masses.

“I recommend that agents embarking on an app strategy also ensure that their mobile web strategy is in order as well, particularly if your agency is not going to invest in developing both an Android and iPhone app.” ♦

## TIPS FOR YOUR BUSINESS

- **Do your homework.**  
A range of organisations develop app solutions for real estate agents. Before choosing your supplier, compare their services with others and download apps they have built to see their product for yourself.
  - **Build for context.**  
When building an app, consider how it can help property seekers while they are on the move.
  - **Understand your market.**  
Before determining if your agency will build an app for iPhone, Android or both, consider which device your market is using to search for property. A review of your website analytics should provide this information.
- REMEMBER:**
- Apps are ‘sexy’, but ensure your website renders well via a mobile browser too.
  - If you are going to build an app, think about how you can do something different/unique to get cut through.
  - An app or mobile website will only get traction if you effectively distribute it.

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# Outside the square

At just 25 years of age Leighton Walters has overcome adversity and received accolades for his community service, but it's all in a day's work for the 2011 REINSW John Greig OAM Community Service Award winner.

BY TINA LIPTAI

A passion for making a difference in the world has always been a driving force behind Leighton Walters' success. But it wasn't until a chance encounter that the compassionate young professional discovered the opportunity of a lifetime.

"I had just gone shopping after work for a few groceries and as I was loading my car, I noticed a homeless gentleman sitting on a busy street corner and saw person after person just walking past and simply ignoring him," Leighton recalled.

"It wasn't the first time I had seen this happen, but on this day I chose to listen to the voice in my heart and meet the needs of the homeless man. On this day, homelessness really became human to me and I decided I had to do something about it."

## Passion into action

In the days following this encounter, the concept behind Leighton's not-for-profit organisation Heart for the Homeless began to blossom. Using his knowledge of the real estate industry, Leighton realised a system could be devised to tap into existing services giving people the opportunity to donate unwanted goods effortlessly.

"Approximately 79,000 Australians move house each week and about 85 per cent of those people throw away up to 50 kilograms of usable resources. This equates to about two million items destined for land fill each week," he said.

"There are approximately 105,000 homeless people in Australia, and in such a prosperous country, it is simply unacceptable.

By rescuing the furniture, clothing and non-perishable food that people send to landfill when they move, we could furnish and fill almost four million properties each year."

Leighton said when people are moving home it was the perfect time for a charity to be in the mix to take items people no longer wanted.

"It's a win on every level — environment, economy and corporate," he said.

"It's great for the industry and the goal is to make resource donations the norm when people move home."

It's the innovative concept and passionate implementation that caught the eye of REINSW and landed Leighton with the coveted John Greig OAM Community Service Award in 2011.

Leighton said winning the award helped to reinforce for him that Heart for the Homeless was ready to be taken to the next level.

“It was very much unexpected,” he said of the win.

“When I was up against other people in the industry who are all doing such great things in the community, it really was a surprise.

“I’m excited and honoured by the award, but this is not just a win for me, it is a win for our team and everyone involved.

“The main result here is that it also sends an important message of hope to homeless people that Australia sees you, Australia cares about you and we are willing to do something about it. Moving forward, the industry and my fellow estate agents will decide how successful it will be.”

### Involved and empowered

Real estate agents can do their bit by simply passing a Heart for the Homeless ‘register your move card’ to clients and encouraging people who have items to donate to register their move at [www.heartforthehomeless.org](http://www.heartforthehomeless.org)

Endorsed by and supporting Salvos Stores, The Salvation Army and OzHarvest, Heart for the Homeless aims to bridge the gap between people with excess and people with need.

“There is no denying people want to help and want to give, but sometimes we can feel overwhelmed by the

complexity of the problem or don’t know how to implement a solution,” Leighton said.

“It is this feeling that breeds a sense of hopelessness within our generation making it too easy or acceptable to turn a blind eye to people in need, and that is simply unacceptable.

“To change the world, we don’t all need to go beyond the norm, we simply need to redefine what the norm is.”

### A growing heart

Since it was established in 2009, Heart for the Homeless has proved not only useful for people in need but also a great opportunity for the real estate industry to combine business with philanthropy. Now operating in four states — NSW, ACT, SA and QLD — Leighton has plans to expand the program nationally within 12 months.

The son of Bob Walters, one of Australia’s most well-known property managers, Leighton grew up around the real estate industry.

“I want to find a way to stop people donating out of guilt or finding the process too hard, and replace that with empowerment.”

He began working in hospitality at the age of 15, was in management by 16 and owned his own business at 21, but always knew real estate would be the career for him.

Leighton has worked in real estate for three and a half years. “I’ve been around the industry for as long as I can remember and, without a doubt, it was an industry I was going to be involved with in some way, shape or form,” he said.

“Real estate is all about people, and I am passionate about people, I love them, I believe in them, so I feel blessed to be able to do something I love and help people in need at the same time.

“I wouldn’t trade it in for anything, I feel incredibly privileged to have had the opportunity to devote my life to establishing and building something bigger than myself in Heart for the Homeless.”

### Charity for a new generation

As a young agent, Leighton is aware of the common stereotype of real estate agents, but he believes that real estate at its core is the ultimate community business. He believes most agencies are community-minded, and Heart for the Homeless will help dispel myths about the industry.

“There are real estate agents that do care and do want to make a difference, and that’s who we want to be involved with,” he said.

“Heart for the Homeless will start to identify and display those agencies who believe in



## GET INVOLVED

### Sponsorship

Heart for the Homeless is run by dedicated volunteers using funds donated by generous sponsors.

They have developed a Tiered Sponsorship Program specifically tailored to real estate agents wanting to get involved and help those less fortunate in their community.

For more information or to register your interest visit [www.heartforthehomeless.org](http://www.heartforthehomeless.org)

### Subscribe

Keep up to date with all the latest news and events by subscribing to the Heart Beat e-newsletter, blog, or following Leighton on Twitter. Find out more at the Heart for the Homeless website.

### Donate

Spread the word about organisation by telling your tenants and owners they can register their move on the Heart for the Homeless website. By registering their move, their details will be synchronised with the local partner charity that will co-ordinate the free collection of furniture, clothing or non-perishable food.

“

I feel blessed to be able to do something I love and help people in need at the same time.”

”

corporate responsibility and who genuinely care for those in need in their communities.

“I want to help bring the not-for-profit sector into the next generation and utilise technology to make it accessible to people and really bridge that gap before it gets too wide.

“I want to find a way to stop people donating out of guilt or finding the process too hard, and replace that with empowerment and excitement. Simply put, I want to empower people to make a difference.”

Though he has already achieved so much in his career, Leighton said he had no plans to slow down any time soon.

“I wake up and get paid to make a difference in the world, which is a dream come true,” he said. “The thing is, now every real estate agent can do the same with Heart for the Homeless.

“At the end of the day, it is all about devoting your life to your passion and a cause. Investing your life into your passion will always result in growth and investing your life into a cause will always result in meaning.” ♦



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## Christian Payne

**Position:** President  
(Sydney Metropolitan)  
**Agency:** Payne Pacific Real Estate, Cronulla

Early in his career at Payne Pacific Real Estate, Christian decided to follow in his father Sid's footsteps and lead by example by becoming a member of REINSW in 1995. He later chaired the Sutherland Shire Division to two consecutive Max Sewell Awards for best Metropolitan Division.

Christian has been an REINSW Director since 2001 and became Deputy President in 2007. He is also a member of the management committee of the Real Estate Employers' Federation, which allows him to provide valuable input into industrial relations matters.

Christian is dedicated to improving the standards of practice and level of service provided by the industry.

### What is the best part of being an REINSW member?

The knowledge that you are exposed to the very latest trends, results and information. It is great for our businesses to have this information. The Member Helpline is always available for our staff to call. It's great they have this support right at their fingertips.

### What do you hope to bring to the 2011/13 Board?

As President, I want to provide leadership and work with the Board and REINSW staff to continue to improve member services. I want to help increase REINSW's public profile so consumers understand they are better off working with a REINSW member agent.



## Malcolm Gunning

**Position:** Deputy President  
(Business/Commercial Real Estate)  
**Agency:** Gunning Commercial, Hurstville

Malcolm specialises in commercial property and is also a qualified valuer. He is Principal of his own family business – Gunning Commercial – where his wife and three of their four children work. Gunning Commercial operates from two offices, in Hurstville and Surry Hills, and focuses on commercial, industrial and retail property.

Malcolm is actively involved in the Sydney CBD business community and is a past President of the Kings Cross Partnership – a business association that addresses business development in the area. He is also REINSW's representative on the Valuer General's Committee.

### What is the best thing about being a member of REINSW?

Having the opportunity to network and mix with my successful peers, and being able to give back to an industry that has been kind to me.

### What do you hope to bring to the 2011/13 Board?

I bring a range of experience, particularly in the commercial, industrial and retail property market. I have a wide range of experience in most areas of agency practice and I'm looking forward to sharing that.



## John Cunningham

**Position:** Vice President  
(Sydney Metropolitan)  
**Agency:** Cunninghams Property, Balgowlah

John has been a licensed real estate agent and registered valuer for more than 30 years, and has run his own business since 1991 in the lower northern beaches suburb of Balgowlah. His team of highly-motivated and successful agents operate in a competitive market and are local market leaders.

John is passionate about the industry and improving its professionalism, and is looking forward to building on his past six years on the Board. He is a multi-award winner and received REINSW's John Greig OAM Community Service Award for Excellence in 2006.

### What is the best thing about being a member of REINSW?

The best part of being on the Board for the past six years is that you can actually see what a difference REINSW makes to the property industry in NSW. Without it, this industry would be in a mess and the fact that we can make a significant difference makes all the time invested worthwhile.

### What do you hope to bring to the 2011/13 Board?

In my fourth term on the Board, I hope to complete many of the projects I have been driving for some years. These include getting the accreditation program running, as well as being involved in moving forward on presenting a co-regulation model to the State Government as part of an overhaul and reform of the PSBA Act for the betterment of agency practice in NSW.





### Brett Hunter

**Position:** Vice President (Sydney Metropolitan)  
**Agency:** Raine & Horne Terrigal-Avoca Beach; CentralCoastHolidays.com.au

Before joining the real estate industry, Brett enjoyed a wide-ranging career in South Korea, Thailand and the USA working with Korea Post, Viewlocity, Pricewaterhouse Coopers and BHP.

Located in two coastal areas, Brett's team of 30 offer sales, auctions, rentals, holidays and commercial leasing services. His father and brother are also part of the company that started in 1951, and are committed to growth and provision of quality services.

Brett is involved with the Avoca Beach SLSC, is an organiser of 'A Journey of Hope' (mental health conference), the 5 Lands Walk (coastal art exhibition), the Terrigal Ocean Swim and Avoca Beach HUNTERS Ocean Swim. Brett is a Justice of the Peace, has a Bachelor of Civil Engineering and an MBA.

**What is the best thing about being a member of REINSW?** REINSW membership brings to my team a heightened understanding and awareness of our industry, packaged with member bonuses and discounts. My team regularly use the Member Helpline to ensure advice to our clients is accurate, complete and timely.

#### **What do you hope to bring to the 2011/13 Board?**

As Vice President I look forward to helping drive industry and policy changes, representing the members and promoting property as the investment of choice for all Australians.



### Christine Clarke

**Position:** Director (Non-Metropolitan)  
**Agency:** Raine and Horne, Coffs Harbour

Christine began her career in real estate in 1988 and specialises in residential sales.

Christine has been an active member of REINSW since 1990. She served as Chair of the Coffs Harbour Division for eight years and has also been part of the Political Advisory Committee.

#### **What is the best thing about being a member of REINSW?**

REINSW membership assists agents to keep up-to-date with ever-changing legislation and agency practice issues. Training is always available, so agents can keep abreast of changes that affect their business and offer a point of difference from many of their competitors. The Member Helpline is an invaluable tool for members.

#### **What do you hope to bring to the 2011/13 Board?**

This year will be my 24th as a licensed agent, so I hope my experience of the highs and lows of real estate practice in a regional area enables me to effectively present issues affecting non-metro members to the Board.



### Luke Fahy

**Position:** Director (Non-Metropolitan)  
**Agency:** Professionals Armidale

Luke began his real estate career in 2001 and since that time has won more than 50 awards, including the REINSW Award for Excellence for Residential Sales in both 2005 and 2010.

A skilled sales trainer, Luke has also been a keynote speaker at more than 40 real estate events and conferences since 2004.

Luke has been the Chair of the New England Division since 2009 and said his appointment to the 2011/13 Board of Directors is without doubt a career highlight.

#### **What is the best thing about being a member of REINSW?**

To me, belonging to REINSW means allowing everyone to be part of 'something bigger than us'. It is where all franchises and independents can come together to be part of what I believe is a 'super brand'. The knowledge that all your training through REINSW is up-to-date and that you have REINSW in your corner to help with any issues that may arise in your business is very reassuring.

#### **What do you hope to bring to the 2011/13 Board?**

My major goal for this term is to bring in some fresh ideas on how we can better promote REINSW, especially in regional areas. I would also like to be part of raising public awareness about REINSW and build an attitude among consumers that they are better off if they deal with an REINSW member agent.



### Miles Felstead

**Position:** Director (Residential Real Estate Practice)  
**Agency:** Miles Felstead Realty Pty Ltd, Mosman

Miles started his property management career in 1970, and has run a specialist residential and commercial property management business in Mosman since 1976.

Miles has been a member of REINSW since 1976 and has served on the REINSW Property Management Chapter Committee since 1981 (as Chair in 1989/91 and again in 2011). During this time he and other Chapter volunteers provided property managers with affordable, hands-on support by way of conducting many seminars and forums in Sydney and country NSW.

This is Miles' third term as an REINSW Board Member.

#### **What is the best thing about being a member of REINSW?**

No real estate agent can really appreciate the full benefits of membership until they become a member of REINSW and get involved with the various Chapters that provide for their speciality.

#### **What do you hope to bring to the 2011/13 Board?**

I look forward to supporting and representing the complex specialisation of property management during a time of so much change and assisting with Board-level decisions that may impact on property management.



### Sarah Lorden

**Position:** Director  
(Sydney Metropolitan)  
**Agency:** Sarah Lorden Real Estate, Balmain

Sarah and her sister Kate established Sarah Lorden Real Estate in 1996, and they currently employ more than 30 specialist staff. With a unique, forward-thinking approach, Sarah has developed the independent agency into one of Sydney's most successful and highly-awarded real estate businesses.

Dedicated to delivering more to her clients, Sarah has nurtured a loyal customer base. She has also ensured that the success of her agency is shared, with Sarah Lorden Real Estate recognised for its generous ongoing support of charities and local community organisations.

#### **What is the best thing about being a member of REINSW?**

We have been an REINSW member since our company's inception in 1996. REINSW has always been there to support our agents through education and representation. We feel REINSW has a strong reputation for integrity and honesty and we are proud to be members.

#### **What do you hope to bring to the 2011/13 Board?**

This is my second term as the representative for the Sydney Metropolitan area. I have really enjoyed my role representing REINSW members and look forward to my next two-year term as a Director.



### Leanne Pilkington

**Position:** Director  
(City of Sydney)  
**Agency:** Laing+Simmons

Leanne has more than 25 years' experience in the real estate industry and in this time has developed an extensive knowledge of the full spectrum of real estate services. She has a thorough grasp of the issues that affect the NSW property market.

In her role as General Manager, Leanne oversees the operation and growth of the entire Laing+Simmons group, as well as focusing on the growth and development of each franchise. She plays an instrumental role in developing new products, services and training systems to meet the varying needs of each franchise.

#### **What is the best thing about being a member of REINSW?**

Having someone available to give you advice on legal matters and legislative questions is invaluable. It provides enormous peace of mind, as well as saving a lot of time and money. I also like being able to access REI Forms Live – it means that the documentation we use is always up to date.

#### **What do you hope to bring to the 2011/13 Board?**

I am passionate about the real estate industry and believe that most agents deserve a higher level of respect and recognition for their skills than they currently receive. I am hoping that my involvement with the 2011/13 Board will allow me to place a spotlight on this issue and encourage us to work towards improving this situation.



### Tony Santolin

**Position:** Director  
(Non-Metropolitan)  
**Agency:** Griffith Real Estate

Born and raised in Griffith, Tony commenced his real estate career in 1989 after many years as a horticultural farmer and television advertising executive.

Purchased in 1994, Tony's agency now has the largest sales team and property management department in Griffith.

Tony has been an REINSW member since 1994 and specialises in both residential and horticultural farm sales. Griffith Real Estate was awarded the Australasian Real Estate Results Achievement (ARERA) Rising Star Agency of the Year and ARERA Property Manager of the Year in 2011, and was also a finalist in the REINSW Awards for Excellence in the Rural Marketing category.

#### **What is the best thing about being a member of REINSW?**

There is comfort in knowing you have a team of experts available to help you either through direct contact or the Member Helpline. REINSW promotes high professional standards from its members and continues to be relevant in all areas of our industry.

#### **What do you hope to bring to the 2011/13 Board?**

I have a desire to see REINSW move forward though continuing to offer training, innovation and technology to members, to give them a competitive edge in the industry. Through things like accreditation, I hope to see REINSW continue to set the standard and continue to widen the gap between members and non-member agents.



### Wayne Stewart

**Position:** Director  
(Immediate Past President)  
**Agency:** Century 21 Five Star Properties, Newcastle

Wayne began his career with training and experience in the fields of architecture and building, and joined the real estate industry in the late 1970s working in residential sales. In July 2000, Wayne bought out his employer of some 20 years and remains the Principal of his Newcastle CBD business. He has been on the REINSW Board since 2003.

Wayne's success has come from knowing his marketplace thoroughly, being focused on the needs of customers and having a true passion to assist them in achieving their property goals.

#### **What is the best thing about being a member of REINSW?**

The best thing is that you are part of a real estate fraternity and peak industry body, which is at the forefront of agency practice. REINSW keeps their members informed with the latest services, data and provides strategic information on the latest legislation and planning issues.

#### **What do you hope to bring to the 2011/13 Board?**

I'll bring my years of experience from being involved with REINSW and from my own practice to focus on problems that face our industry from a planning and development point of view.

# Chapter Committees 2011/13

REINSW is pleased to introduce our new Chapter Committees.

We would like to thank all new Committee members for getting involved and playing a role in the advancement of our industry.

REINSW Chapters provide a forum for networking, sharing common interests, exchanging ideas and opinions, and developing new policies.

Chapter membership is free for individual REINSW members. To find out more call (02) 9264 2343 or email membership@reinsw.com.au

To contact your Chapter Committee, email chapters@reinsw.com.au

## Auctioneers Chapter

### Tony Byrne

Tony Byrne Realty

### Benjamin Chaston

LJ Hooker Auction and Sales

### David Gray

Mint360 Property

### Peter Matthews

Ray White Lower North Shore

### Neil Moore

Robinson Property/  
Winning Holidays

### Mark Morrison

McGrath Estate Agents

### Charlie Powell

Practice Member

### David Sanders

Sanders Realty

### Matthew Shalhoub

Under the Hammer Auction

### Phillip Virgona

Practice Member

## Business Agents Chapter

### Rodney Crowfoot

Ray White Real Estate Dubbo

### Charles Verheyden

J McArthur Pty Ltd

## Buyers' Agents Chapter

### Nita Arora-Parkes

Location Relocation Pty Ltd

### Richard Harvey

propertybuyer

### Gina Machado

Finders Keepers Buyers Agents

### Jacqueline Parker

House Search Australia

### Byron Rose

Rose & Jones

### Nicholas Viner

Buyer's Domain

### Debbie Upward

Upward Real Estate  
Buyers Agents

## Commercial Chapter

### Jenine Cranston

CBRE

### Rod de la Harpe

Practice Member

### Kymbal Dunne

Knight Frank Australia Pty Ltd

### Joseph Gambino

Practice Member

### Malcolm Gunning

Gunning Commercial

### Barry Johnston

Balmoral Partners

### Michael P Laing

Raine & Horne Bondi Junction

### Evan Singer

Practice Member

### Rick Sombroek

Shead Property

### Dan Walker

Colliers International  
(NSW) Pty Ltd

## Country Chapter

### Michael Gray

Yass Real Estate

### Andy Madigan

Practice Member

### David Nolan

Webster Nolan Real Estate

### Phil Rourke

Landmark

## Holiday & Short Term Rentals Chapter

### Justin Butterworth

Rent-A-Home.com.au

### Dirk Hertford

Park Beachside Real Estate

### Joanne Quirk

Borrelli-Quirk Newcastle  
Real Estate MNGT Sales

### William M Quirk

Borrelli-Quirk Newcastle Real  
Estate MNGT Sales

### Dominique Vasers

Pacific Palms Real Estate

### Rick Wraight

Tea Gardens Real Estate

## Property Management Chapter

### Tim Anderson

Life Fellow

### Miles Felstead

Miles Felstead Realty Pty Ltd

### John Gilmovich

Ray White Balmain

### Sandra Hodgkins

North Nor'West Property

### Lyn Kimball

Fitzpatricks Real Estate

### Sandra McGee

Starr Partners Real Estate  
Merrylands

### Michelle McLean

Cripps & Cripps  
Property Sutherland

### Suzie Reid

Laing+Simmons Double Bay  
Property Management

### Colin Rodgers

McGrath Cronulla

### Lyn Tamsett

K G Hurst Real Estate

### Jessica Thei

Practice Member

### Gary Triganza

Kellys Property

## Residential Sales Chapter

### Rodney Burrige

Century 21 Prime Property Dural

### Reece Coleman

Place Double Bay

### Kathryn Hall

Kathryn Hall Real Estate

### Lene Mitchell

Manson Property

### Eddy Piddington

Cunninghams Property

### Wayne Stewart

Century 21 Five Star Properties

### Zoran Veleski

Crown Property  
Group Australia

### Braden Walters

True Property

## Strata Management Chapter

### Gary Adamson

LJ Hooker Cronulla

### Ashley Bassa

Norwest Commercial &  
Industrial Real Estate

### Suzanne Dowling

Dowling Management Services

### Dean Eades

LJ Hooker Cronulla

### Shane Foley

Practice Member

### Heather Lake

Gilbey Burgess Strata  
Management

### Christine Nesbit

Albury Wodonga Real Estate

### Leo Paternoster

Strata Management Specialists

### Carolynne Pitt

Gilbey Burgess Strata  
Management

## Valuers Chapter

### Phillip Johnson

LJ Hooker St Ives

### Colin Rooke

Practice Member

### Richard Wood

Practice Member

## Young Agents Chapter

### Stephanie Campbell

Doyle Spillane Pty Ltd

### Lachlan MacDonald

Ray White Terrigal

### Eddy Piddington

Cunninghams Property

### Jessica Thei

Practice Member

### Dan Walker

Colliers International  
(NSW) Pty Ltd

### Braden Walters

True Property



BY GERI FORSAITH, LICENSED  
CONVEYANCER AT SYDNEY  
PROPERTY CONVEYANCING



# Beware air conditioning that can put your sale on ice

Don't let a strata property sale be jeopardised through a lack of understanding about common property regulations.

You've been negotiating with a purchaser for days. You're finally ready to exchange. Then you find out there's an unapproved air conditioning unit installed on the common property and now the purchaser is about to walk away. What do you do?

## Defining common property

Generally, 'common property' comprises the land in a strata scheme that is not contained within the individual lots.

Ownership of a unit, on the other hand, is comprised of the airspace within each owner's lot,

which is the area between the ceiling, floor and the boundary walls. It can also include the airspace over balconies and courtyards. Internal walls within the airspace are generally part of the lot owner's responsibility, but all other parts of the property are defined as common property.

Common property is created on registration of any strata plan or strata plan of subdivision (s 7(2) of the *Strata Schemes (Freehold Development) Act 1973*) and is the responsibility of the Owners Corporation.



Challenges can be avoided in the first place by making sure you ask the vendor if their air conditioning unit has been approved by the Owners Corporation.



Common property can include:

- Common passageways such as ramps, stairways, landings, foyers, walls and windows that do not form an interior part of the lot.
- The airspace above and below the building.
- All land outside the building, excluding land occupied by the strata lot or any part of a strata lot not within a building, for example courtyards and car spaces.
- Balcony doors, if the plan was registered after 1 July 1974.
- Originally fitted door and window furniture, including locks, door knobs and peepholes.
- Electrical wiring and pipes in common property that service more than one lot.
- Roof and swimming pool areas.

You can examine which areas are considered common property by referencing the registered Strata Plan, a prescribed document required to be included in a Contract for Sale of Land.

The boundaries of common property are clearly shown, usually by thick black lines. A copy of the Strata Plan may

be obtained from the NSW Land & Property Information.

### Up in the air

So why are air conditioners potentially an issue? First, they may affect the outside appearance of the building or have health implications and need approval by the Owners Corporation before installation. For approval, a by-law is required to be created through the Executive Committee on behalf of the Owners Corporation. Typically, the by-law will outline that the owner or occupant of the unit is responsible for maintenance of the air conditioner and the space of the common property that it occupies. Council approval may also be required before installation.

### Finding a solution

If you discover an unapproved air conditioning unit on the common property and you're at negotiation stage, there are a couple of ways that the problem can be resolved. A special condition may be inserted into the Contract for Sale stating that the vendor will request of the Owners Corporation that a by-law be created and that the vendor will indemnify the purchaser if the by-law does not proceed

by way of withholding of sale monies. Alternatively, the air conditioning unit can be removed as a condition of the Contract for Sale.

### Avoiding future problems

Despite the annoyance of such a situation, this is a great lesson for next time. Challenges can be avoided in the first place by making sure you ask the vendor if their air conditioning unit has been approved by the Owners Corporation. Ask them to provide evidence of approval.

Obtaining a copy of the minutes from the AGM, which may alert you to some other potential issues within the strata scheme, can also be useful. It's also wise to speak to the licensed conveyancer or solicitor who is preparing the Contract for Sale so they can be proactive in obtaining copies of all relevant approvals from the vendor and avoid any unnecessary delays. They can also provide you with quick easy to understand advice regarding common property areas.

For more information, visit *NSW Land and Property Management Authority* [www.lpi.nsw.gov.au](http://www.lpi.nsw.gov.au) or *NSW Fair Trading* at [www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au](http://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au) ♦

## COMMON PROPERTY EXPLAINED

1. Common property is anything not included within individual lots (units) in a strata building.
2. Air conditioners can impinge on common property, and need to be approved by the Owners Corporation before they can be installed.
3. If they're not, this can disrupt the sale of the property and all your hard work.
4. Check to make sure all air conditioning units have been approved at the beginning of the sale cycle. Ask for evidence.
5. Not approved? Solve it with a special condition in the contract, citing that the vendor organise approval by the Owners Corporation or else pay for removal.



BY MARIA LEE  
SENIOR PROJECT MANAGER  
AT BIS SHRAPNEL

# Office market on the way up

Positive signs point to an improvement in vacancy rates and rents, with the market upswing set to gain traction this year.

The NSW economy was weak last decade and the state underperformed markedly against the Australian average. Investment activity — a primary driver of growth — stagnated.

Healthy signs developed during 2010 that NSW was finally coming out of its economic doldrums. Public investment led the recovery, but the key driver was healthy growth in dwellings investment. Business investment also increased and employment growth staged one of the strongest rebounds among the states in 2010.

But the bounce-back hasn't been sustained. At present, the NSW economy sits in a soft patch. Along with the rest of Australia, residential construction in NSW stalled in the first half of 2011 and total construction remains weak.

The NSW economy is expected to strengthen from here and record moderate to strong growth over the next few years, although it will again lag behind the national average. A key problem is that the state only participates to a limited extent in the resources boom, while the strong \$AU has negative impacts on non-



mining tradeables sectors. Nonetheless, there will be a positive impetus from stronger investment activity.

## Market outlook

Private dwelling construction will be one of the key

drivers of activity over the medium term. NSW remains chronically undersupplied. Recovery is impeded at present by dismal confidence, excessive caution by households and a 'gap' in first homebuyer demand.

Nevertheless, moderate interest rates, lower housing margins, tight rental vacancies and rising rents will facilitate a solid recovery in dwelling construction over the next two years. Business investment is also expected to strengthen —

offsetting declines in public sector investment — as the improved outlook for dwelling construction and further increases in coal and minerals investment precipitate a broader pick-up in overall business investment.

“  
The NSW economy is expected to strengthen . . . and record moderate to strong growth over the next few years, although it will again lag behind the national average.”

But the high \$AU is likely to act as a drag on the state's performance through negative impacts on the state's tradeables sectors such as the rural sector, manufacturing, tourism and education services.

There is a danger that a prolonged period of a high \$AU will lead to a 'hollowing

out' of the manufacturing sector, lower levels of manufacturing investment and long-term damage to the state's tourism and education services industries.

#### The office market

As with the economy, the Sydney office market gave hope in 2010 that it was pulling out of the post-GFC downturn, but it wasn't sustained. During 2011, Sydney went backwards in terms of vacancies, whereas other office markets around the country recorded lower vacancy rates. The improvement in net absorption we saw in 2010 has vanished. At the same time, considerable new stock came online in the first half of 2011.

In this environment, the leasing market continues to favour tenants with building owners offering incentives close to 15-year highs. Nonetheless, there has been some growth in both CBD and non-CBD rents since the post-GFC trough, although experience is somewhat patchy market by market.

In contrast, the investment side has been robust, with numerous major sales to overseas investors. The high \$AU doesn't seem to be acting as a

deterrent. We are now seeing some signs of yields starting to firm, in both CBD and non-CBD markets, prime and secondary.

At the time of writing, December 2011 data is not yet available but we expect to see some improvement in the vacancy rate and further modest improvement in rents, especially in the prime CBD market. But it's really only from 2012 that we expect the market upswing to gain traction. That fits in with our outlook for the broader economy.

We're looking at solid — though unspectacular — net absorption over the next three years. Nonetheless, it will be enough to bring down vacancy rates because new supply will be constrained. In fact, the Sydney metropolitan office market is set to experience its leanest period of office completions since the mid 1990s. We have the GFC to thank for that; the development market remains depressed with project finance hard to achieve and rents and prices well below replacement cost levels. The market will remain tight until the next round of construction is able to get underway.

Vacancy rates should fall below five per cent in the CBD by 2014 (slightly higher in non-CBD

markets) and remain tight for a few years. That sustained market tightness will cause rents to surge. In turn, rapidly rising rents will reignite investor expectations of capital gain, encourage an inflow of funds and broaden the competition for assets. As a result, prime yields are forecast to firm, regaining 2007 levels.

We calculate five-year prospective IRRs of around 20 per cent across prime CBD and major suburban markets. This is the time to get set for what will be a period of extraordinary returns. ♦

“  
Moderate interest rates, lower housing margins, tight rental vacancies and rising rents will facilitate a solid recovery in dwelling construction over the next two years.”

MARCH 2012

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
<p><b>WANT TO KNOW MORE?</b>                      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
			<p><b>SYDNEY CPD</b>                      Young Agents Breakfast (7.30am-9.30am)</p>		<p><b>SYDNEY CPD</b>                      Leadership short course (9.30am-1.30pm)</p>	
			<p><b>SYDNEY</b>                      Real Estate Licensing Course (3 days per week for 8 weeks) continues (9.30am-4.30pm)</p>			
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
<p><b>CANBERRA CPD</b>                      Business relationships with clients for life (9.00am-4.00pm)</p>	<p><b>SYDNEY CPD</b>                      Telephone techniques (9.00am-12.30pm)</p>	<p><b>SYDNEY</b>                      Real Estate Licensing Course (3 days per week for 8 weeks) continues (9.30am-4.30pm)</p>				
<p><b>SYDNEY</b>                      Certificate of Registration Course (full time) – 4 days (9.00am-5.00pm)</p>				<p><b>SYDNEY CPD</b>                      Prepare for selling like never before (9.30am-1.30pm)</p>		
	<p><b>SYDNEY CPD</b>                      Managing yourself and your workload (1.00pm-4.30pm)</p>	<p><b>NEWCASTLE CPD</b>                      The ABC of Compliance (9.00am-1.00pm)</p>	<p><b>NELSON BAY CPD</b>                      The ABC of Compliance (9.00am-1.00pm)</p>			
	<p><b>TERRIGAL CPD</b>                      The ABC of Compliance (9.00am-1.00pm)</p>					
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
<p><b>SYDNEY</b>                      Certificate of Registration Course (part time) commences (9.00am-5.00pm)</p>		<p><b>SYDNEY</b>                      Real Estate Licensing Course (3 days per week for 8 weeks) continues (9.30am-4.30pm)</p>				
<p><b>SYDNEY CPD</b>                      The nuts and bolts of Residential Tenancies (9.30am-1.30pm)</p>	<p><b>SYDNEY CPD</b>                      Auctioneers short course (9.30am-1.30pm)</p>	<p><b>REGIONAL</b>                      Holiday &amp; Short Term Rentals Forum (3.00pm-5.00pm)</p>				
						
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
	<p><b>SYDNEY CPD</b>                      The ABC of Compliance (9.30am-1.30pm)</p>	<p><b>SYDNEY</b>                      Certificate of Registration Course (part time) concludes (9.00am-5.00pm)</p>				
	<p><b>SYDNEY</b>                      Property Management Forum (3.00pm-5.00pm)</p>	<p><b>SYDNEY</b>                      Real Estate Licensing Course (3 days per week for 8 weeks) concludes (9.30am-4.30pm)</p>				
		<p><b>REGIONAL</b>                      Work, health and safety for property managers (9.00am-1.00pm)</p>	<p><b>CANBERRA CPD</b>                      Managing brilliant auctions (9.00am-4.00pm)</p>	<p><b>SYDNEY CPD</b>                      The commercial toolbox (9.30am-4.30pm)</p>		
26	27	28	29	30	31	APR 1
<p><b>CANBERRA CPD</b>                      Effective Tribunal preparation (9.00am-1.00pm)</p>	<p><b>SYDNEY CPD</b>                      Maximise your new management success rate (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 (full time) – 4 days (9.00am-5.00pm)</p>						
			<p><b>GOULBURN CPD</b>                      Country Forum (9.00am-1.00pm)</p>			



# APRIL 2012

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
<b>SYDNEY</b> Certificate of Registration Course (part time) commences (9.00am-5.00pm)		<b>SYDNEY CPD</b> Strata Management short course (9.30am-1.30pm)		GOOD FRIDAY PUBLIC HOLIDAY	PUBLIC HOLIDAY	PUBLIC HOLIDAY
<b>SYDNEY CPD</b> Business Agents short course (9.30am-1.30pm)	<b>TAREE CPD</b> Maximise your new management success rate (9.00am-1.00pm)					
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
PUBLIC HOLIDAY		<b>SYDNEY</b> Certificate of Registration Course (part time) concludes (9.00am-5.00pm)		<b>SYDNEY CPD</b> The nuts and bolts of Residential Tenancies (9.30am-1.30pm)		
		<b>SYDNEY CPD</b> The ABC of Compliance (9.30am-1.30pm)	<b>GRIFFITH CPD</b> Country Forum (9.00am-1.00pm)			
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
<b>SYDNEY</b> Certificate of Registration Course (full time) – 4 days (9.00am-5.00pm)						
<b>CANBERRA CPD</b> Growing your rent roll (9.00am-1.00pm)	<b>SYDNEY</b> Buyers' Agent Forum (3.00pm-5.00pm)	<b>SYDNEY</b> Business Agent Forum (3.00pm-5.00pm)	<b>SYDNEY CPD</b> Prepare for selling like never before (9.30am-1.30pm)			
<b>SYDNEY CPD</b> Property Management for experienced property managers (9.30am-1.30pm)	<b>BATHURST CPD</b> The ABC of Compliance (9.00am-1.00pm)	<b>ORANGE CPD</b> The ABC of Compliance (9.00am-1.00pm)	<b>DUBBO CPD</b> The ABC of Compliance (9.00am-1.00pm)			
		<b>SYDNEY CPD</b> Commercial training for experienced agents (9.30am-1.30pm)				
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
<b>SYDNEY CPD</b> Work, health and safety for property managers (9.30am-1.30pm)		ANZAC DAY PUBLIC HOLIDAY				
30	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;">  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #c00000; margin-right: 5px;"></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="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #00a0e3; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Certificate of Registration Course (Real Estate) (full and part time as indicated). Price includes REINSW Student Membership</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #008000; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Licensing Course</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #ffcc00; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Forums and Divisional meetings</li> </ul> </div>					

## MEMBER PROFILE: BARRY WHITE



“Just from a professional point of view, it is great to be able to tell clients you are a member of REINSW.”

Growing awareness of REINSW’s reputation for excellence made the decision to become a member easy for Barry White.

After 38 years in the industry, the Principal of First National Real Estate Barry White in Newport said he had always known about REINSW but only recently believed it would be useful for his agency to become a member.

“Just from a professional point of view, it is great to be able to tell clients you are a member of REINSW,” Barry said.

“I have also noticed a lot more agencies have become members and I believe REINSW has a lot to offer its members.”

Barry and his small but dedicated team of residential sales agents and

property managers believe in the importance of striving for excellence while helping clients to find their ideal home or rental property.

The availability of agency agreements and forms from REINSW has been a welcomed benefit of membership for Barry and his agency.

“The forms look professional and are easy for us to access and use, which is really helpful for my staff,” he said.

To find out more about REINSW membership, call (02) 9264 2343 or visit [www.reinsw.com.au](http://www.reinsw.com.au)

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**First National Barry White**  
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## RECIPROCAL MEMBER

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- 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”.

# New specialist system to benefit members

REINSW has just upgraded its in-house CRM to the iMIS product supplied by Advanced Solutions International.

This specialist Association Management System will allow REINSW to provide a higher level of service and support for its members, including the effective use of self-service functions. It also means that REINSW can standardise and automate more of its business processes and reporting,

providing efficiencies in how members are served.

One of the key requirements was for the software to meet REINSW's needs 'straight out of the box' without any costly and problematic customisation, and have an easy upgrade path to follow for future requirements.

ASI's flagship software product, iMIS, is used by more than 280 not-for-profit organisations in the Asia Pacific region including the National Breast Cancer Foundation, Cancer Council Victoria, The Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, The Royal Australian College Of General

Practitioners, Surf Life Saving Foundation and The Tax Practitioners Board.

Other Real Estate Institutes already using iMIS include the Real Estate Institute of Victoria (REIV), the Real Estate Institute of Queensland (REIQ) and the Real Estate Institute of South Australia (REISA).

## ADVERTORIAL

# Sales team expands

As part of realestateVIEW.com.au's growth strategy, new BDMs have been appointed to serve the NSW market.

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With a raft of industry experience between them, the new Business Development Executive team of Mike Andersen, Martin Thomas and Stephen Lord will help your business reduce overheads, increase return on investment from advertising spend and secure new listings in this competitive marketplace.

*If you would like to speak further with your local representative please call 1300 695 645 or email sales@realestateVIEW.com.au*



### Mike Andersen

Mike Andersen's background within the real estate industry as a sales agent involved working with LJ Hooker, Ray White, as well as Raine & Horne. Two of Mike's proudest achievements were being awarded Best New Talent in 2001 at LJ Hooker and being acknowledged within the top five per cent of real estate agents nationally. Mike understands the needs of his clients in what has become a very competitive marketplace. Mike services the Sutherland Shire, south west and south Sydney regions.



### Martin Thomas

Joining the team with a fresh approach and extensive background in residential real estate with Ray White and McGrath Estate Agents, Martin Thomas has hit the ground running. Martin is pleased to represent a product suite that can assist him in providing genuine help to a growing and changing industry. Martin is responsible for North Shore, Northern Beaches, Central Coast and all other northern regions.



### Stephen Lord

As an existing member of the team, Stephen Lord has been working in the industry for more than 26 years. Prior to joining realestateVIEW.com.au, he owned and operated 10 Network Australian Real Estate offices in western Sydney. Stephen has also worked with Richardson & Wrench and the Professional's Group. Stephen is the local representative for agents in the inner west, Riverina, north west and Parramatta areas.

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 Inshgtrix on behalf of REINSW

SYDNEY	Dec-11	Nov-11	Oct-11	Sep-11	Aug-11	Jul-11	Jun-11	May-11	Apr-11	Mar-11	Feb-11	Jan-11	Dec-10
Inner	1.5	1.2	1.3	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.4	1.1	0.9	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.1
Middle	2.0	1.7	1.6	1.4	1.6	1.5	1.3	1.5	1.4	1.1	1.2	1.9	1.7
Outer	1.4	1.3	1.4	1.3	1.3	1.6	1.7	1.5	1.4	1.2	1.1	1.4	1.4
Total	1.6	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.4	1.2	1.1	1.1	1.5	1.4
HUNTER													
Newcastle	1.1	1.6	1.9	1.3	1.8	1.4	1.3	1.5	1.5	1.3	1.4	2.0	1.7
Other	1.2	1.4	1.5	1.8	1.8	1.6	1.3	1.2	1.5	1.3	1.1	2.3	1.9
Total	1.1	1.4	1.7	1.6	1.8	1.5	1.3	1.3	1.5	1.3	1.2	3.3	1.8
ILLAWARRA													
Wollongong	2.1	2.2	1.8	1.6	1.6	1.3	0.9	1.3	1.3	1.0	1.3	1.3	1.3
Other	1.4	1.6	1.4	1.3	1.5	1.3	1.4	1.3	1.2	1.5	1.4	2.0	1.9
Total	1.6	1.8	1.7	1.4	1.6	1.3	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.7	1.6
REGIONAL													
Albury	1.7	1.4	1.9	1.7	1.9	2.0	2.4	2.6	2.4	2.5	2.5	3.1	2.4
Central Coast	1.6	1.5	1.7	1.9	2.1	2.0	2.6	2.1	1.6	1.6	1.5	1.5	1.6
Central West	1.9	1.3	1.7	1.4	1.3	1.7	1.6	2.0	2.3	2.0	2.1	1.5	1.6
Coffs Harbour	3.6	4.2	4.1	3.8	3.7	3.5	3.4	3.1	2.8	2.1	2.3	1.7	1.6
Mid-North Coast	1.9	1.6	1.8	1.9	1.8	2.1	2.0	1.8	1.5	1.7	2.1	2.2	1.6
Murrumbidgee	2.8	2.9	2.5	2.2	2.4	3.0	2.6	2.7	2.7	2.2	2.2	2.1	2.9
New England	2.9	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.6	2.5	2.5	2.4	2.3	2.0	1.6	2.1	1.7
Northern Rivers	2.7	2.8	3.0	3.0	2.6	3.9	3.8	3.1	2.5	1.6	1.5	2.0	1.9
Orana	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.2	1.4	1.6	1.7	1.9	1.4	1.6	1.9	1.5	1.8
Riverina	3.5	4.2	3.7	3.4	3.1	3.1	3.0	3.4	3.0	2.8	3.1	3.5	3.1
South Coast	1.9	2.1	2.2	2.9	3.1	2.6	2.6	1.7	1.9	2.1	1.7	1.5	1.6
South Eastern	2.2	1.6	1.5	1.7	1.9	1.8	1.5	1.5	1.3	1.5	1.6	1.3	1.1

#### 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
18/12	681	\$203.14	56%	72	278	28	303
11/12	799	\$248.02	51%	110	284	12	393
04/12	657	\$234.29	55%	104	243	13	297
27/11	779	\$280.80	56%	122	299	16	342
20/11	632	\$231.00	58%	102	243	21	266
13/11	686	\$285.75	59%	122	265	15	284
06/11	605	\$238.70	59%	102	235	20	248
30/10	729	\$274.89	56%	119	279	11	320
23/10	518	\$197.40	57%	72	211	14	221
16/10	546	\$202.86	58%	88	215	14	229
09/10	366	\$125.02	55%	65	126	10	165
02/10	322	\$141.50	57%	50	122	11	139

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McGrath agents Kell Gray and Paul Kirton have donated money from their sales to Sydney Children's Hospital.

# Sales boost sick kids

A family fun day was the catalyst for two agents to team up to help a great cause.

Like many agents, Paul Kirton and Kell Gray are keen supporters of their local communities so the chance to do something different to help Sydney Children's Hospital was an opportunity they couldn't pass up.

The agents, from McGrath Estate Agents, are both proud supporters of the Coogee Family Fun Day. The annual event, now in its 17th year, raises money for Sydney Children's Hospital and this year Paul and Kell decided to kick in \$1000 on every settlement from properties listed until 29 February 2012 to help the cause.

With families of their own, Paul and Kell said it was easy to decide to support the children's hospital but agreed it was just one of many worthy charities.

"I think at the end of the day, any charity is going to help someone who really needs it," Paul said.

"So whether it's the hospital, or helping out people who are in a difficult financial situation, it's just great to do something to help out if you can.

"The main reason we decided to do this was because of the Coogee Family Fun Day. We're both keen to support local community events, so we just decided to get involved and donate the money."

Though both Coogee agents are often involved with local fundraising efforts, this is the first time Paul has raised money this way and said he was looking forward to seeing how much was raised. ♦



Whether it's the hospital, or helping people who are in a difficult financial situation, it's just great to do something to help out if you can.



**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 [tina@mahlabmedia.com.au](mailto:tina@mahlabmedia.com.au)

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