

Journal

SEP 2014
VOL 65/09

OUR INDUSTRY'S ACHIEVEMENTS
UP IN

AWARDS

excellence

What's inside

2014 Awards finalists revealed | How to build your admin team | Infrastructure in NSW

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finalists!*

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30-32 Wentworth Avenue
Sydney NSW 2000
(02) 9264 2343
info@reinsw.com.au
www.reinsw.com.au

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Editors:

Jill Park and Jessica Abelsohn
jill@mahlabmedia.com.au
jessica@mahlabmedia.com.au

Advertising Executive:

Aoife Royston
aoife@mahlabmedia.com.au

Designer: Katherine Gennusa

Managing Editor: Martin Wanless

Head of Client Services and Strategy:

Roslyn Atkinson

Sales Director: Sara Lewis

Cover and feature photography:

Studio Commercial

REINSW Managing Editor:

Cathie Dickinson

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OUR INDUSTRY'S ACHIEVEMENTS UP IN



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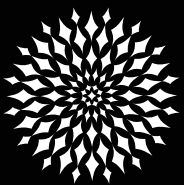
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Fighting the good fight

Over recent years we have campaigned very hard for and against on a range of issues at the core of the real estate profession and on many occasions, I am proud to say, we have won the fight.

Our most recent battle, which is still ongoing, is against Minister for Fair Trading Matthew Mason-Cox's proposed removal of licensing requirements for agents servicing large commercial clients.

The removal of protections under the *Property, Stock and Business Agents Act 2002* is being fast-tracked without going through the prescribed review process.

Not only do we strongly oppose these proposed exemptions, we are disturbed by the very nature of the way in which the NSW Government is going about fast-tracking this important regulatory change under the guise of cutting red tape.

These licensing regulations were established to protect consumers and other third parties. Removing the requirement for large commercial agents to hold a licence is pure nonsense and something we strongly oppose.

World without regulation

Removing these licensing requirements means the protections associated with trust accounts are lost. Further, material facts in relation to premises no longer need disclosure. This leaves the door open for inexperienced and incompetent providers.

We believe the introduction of this exemption will erode the confidence and security that the current regulatory environment provides those who seek to invest in the commercial market, in particular foreign investors who see our market

as a safe haven. Their confidence is boosted by the lack of complaints and problems, which can be attributed to compliance with the Act.

The proposed lack of regulation could enable inexperienced, untrained and incompetent agents to act inappropriately on complex transactions. If the current training is irrelevant, as suggested by proponents of the exemptions, then it should be reviewed and modified to become relevant, rather than be abolished.

Unskilled workforce

It is frightening to think that, under the proposed changes, people who have had their licences suspended or cancelled would have no impediment to rejoining the profession. This is clearly a huge concern.

There are very serious consequences associated with the remake of the Property, Stock and Business Agents Regulation 2003 if it were to include the exemption. Although the clock is ticking, we will continue to lobby hard to ensure the rights of consumers, tenants, prospective buyers, buyers and other third parties are protected.

Tim McKibbin
REINSW CEO



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BEHIND THE SCENES



↑ POSTERS

In the lead up to our inaugural 100+ Conference, we asked members to take pictures of themselves posing with our conference poster and then share the pictures via social media using #100plusConf. By entering the poster competition, members had the chance to win a free ticket to our 100+ Conference on 8-9 September 2014 at Randwick Racecourse.



↑ YOUR PICS

We had a great response. Past Presidents and members of our Education & Training team got involved, alongside many of our members. Go to our Facebook page at facebook.com/REINSW to view all the entrants.



↑ THE WINNER!

Congratulations to our winner Kerry Hudson from Belle Property Ramsgate Beach. We'll see you at our 100+ Conference on 8-9 September 2014. Find out more about the conference at 100plus.com.au

News in brief

USING DRONES FOR MARKETING

A real estate agent landed in hot water when he disturbed a neighbour while using a drone to capture marketing images.

Police were informed of the situation, however the agent had the appropriate documentation to fly the drone.

Drones are used in the industry for marketing photography. As long as they are used appropriately and agents have suitable authority, their use isn't a problem.

"REINSW insists agents should be cautious when using any technology that may disrupt someone's privacy," REINSW President Malcolm Gunning said. "Agents should adopt the right protocol and be respectful of neighbours."

While REINSW doesn't have set guidelines in place for the use of drones, recommendations will be made to NSW agents.

COMMERCIAL MARKET UPDATE

Despite predictions that capital could begin falling, Australia is still a preferred destination for investors, according to data from Colliers International.

With yields comparatively higher than those overseas, commercial property assets in Australia are highly desirable to offshore groups.

Motivations are varied for international investors, however strong buyer demand tends to be at the forefront.

FORMS LIVE UPDATE

REINSW has been hard at work over recent months enhancing REI Forms Live – the industry-leading solution for online agreements and forms. Four standard industry letters commonly used by property professionals are now available on REI Forms Live, as well as a number of other enhancements. Find out more at reinsw.com.au



Clarifying compensation

Changes to section 100(1)(c) of the *Residential Tenancies Act 2010* (NSW) have commenced, providing clarity for agents on early termination of a fixed-term agreement.

The amended section allows the tenant to give notice of termination if the landlord has notified the tenant of an intention to sell, unless the proposed sale was disclosed before entering into the Residential Tenancy Agreement, as required by section 26 of the Act.

Section 26(2) requires a landlord to disclose any proposal to sell the premises prior to the tenant entering into a Residential Tenancy Agreement. This is only if a Contract for Sale has been prepared.

Prior to the amendment, a tenant was able to validly terminate a fixed-term agreement without compensation to the landlord, even if the landlord did not intend to sell before the Residential Tenancy Agreement was entered into but subsequently decided to do so. The amendments prevent a tenant from relying on section 100(1)(c) in this situation.

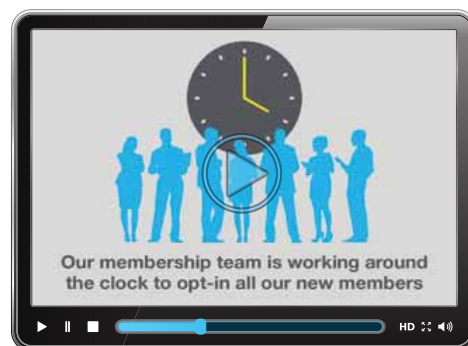
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Spotlight on: Wollongong

Median house rent: \$350pw
Median house price: \$468,500
Median unit rent: \$240pw
Median unit price: \$370,000

Source: REINSW Property Profile – March 2014



SIMON KERSTEN

MANAGING DIRECTOR AT
COLLIERS INTERNATIONAL, WOLLONGONG

Generally our market is quite buoyant and we normally track about a year behind Sydney, so our low-mid residential sectors have been strong for some time.

The upper end of the residential market is starting to gain a bit of momentum now as well. Lack of stock is the only thing holding the market back. If we had more stock, I think the sales volumes would be higher.

Commercially, the market is still a bit patchy. There have been some good sales across different market segments, but nothing solid, consistent or predictable.

PERRY BEEBE

MANAGING DIRECTOR AT
ALL RESIDENTIAL REAL ESTATE

The market in Wollongong is still going up. Properties are being sold quickly, with average days on market 50 per cent of what they were 12 months ago. This applies across all levels of the market. Buyers are often making full price offers or above at first offer.

The biggest demand is for investment properties. There are lots of investors from Sydney looking in this area, as there are still good rental returns and low vacancy rates. Investors often seem to be more interested in units, but this year they are very interested in houses as well.

TOP TIPS OF THE MONTH

**Double Bay's
Gavin Rubenstein
was last year's
No. 1 salesperson
in the NSW Ray
White group.
He shares his top
tips for securing
referrals.**

1.

Be available

Clients recognise and reward good customer service. Make yourself available to owners and potential buyers by returning every phone call and always go one step further, such as scheduling open inspections or taking calls on a Sunday.

2.

Do it differently

Finding a gimmick may seem outlandish, but people will remember you for the little things that set you apart from agents. Make it easy for people to recognise and remember you by embracing qualities that break the stereotype – be yourself.

3.

Focus on the result

Always act in the best interest of your clients and do the right thing by the buyer. Build your business around your principles and clients will notice. It only takes one good result to make the sellers advocates for you and your business.

Checklist: Tracking a campaign

BY TIFFANY GLOVER, DIRECTOR OF MARKETING AT WILSON PROPERTY AGENTS

BUYER ENQUIRY

1. Survey buyers

When speaking to potential buyers during open home call backs, ask them where they found the property. This allows you to track enquiry from the more traditional marketing methods such as flyers, newspaper ads and signage.

2. Update database

Enter this information into your database, along with the buyer's details. From this information, you will be able to generate vendor reports indicating where enquiry is coming from and tracking the return on investment on advertising. You can then benchmark these results against similar properties.

3. Benchmark

Although it only takes one buyer to make a transaction a success, having a number of interested parties helps with social proof and ultimately competition amongst buyers can drive the final sale price up.

ONLINE MARKETING METRICS

1. Email engagement

When tracking email analytics it is interesting to look at the percentage of emails opened, however the number of click-throughs received on the website can be the most important metric, as it indicates how many people are actually interested enough to want more information.

2. Video engagement

In terms of video you can use YouTube Analytics to track success, again benchmarking the results against previous video campaigns. In particular, focus on the number of views and the number of minutes watched by viewers.

3. And the rest ...

Further analytics that can be tracked include website analytics such as the number of unique visitors to the page and length of time spent on the page. Social media analytics, including 'shares', 'likes' and 'comments' or simply reach (i.e. the number of people who saw the post) can also be useful.

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COMMERCIAL GAINS

REINSW President Malcolm Gunning explores the burgeoning commercial investment market in NSW and the opportunities it creates.



Banks have regained confidence in the commercial investment market, according to Malcolm Gunning.

Commercial property is back in business. Interest in commercial investment has been reignited on the back of the confidence in the residential market.

So where is this money coming from? Investment in the commercial sector has been driven by a range of different investors. These include individuals with cash deposits, syndicates, as

well as self-managed super funds (which have become increasingly popular in recent years). Similar to the residential market, the commercial investment market has been driven by a mix of local and foreign investors.

When it all began

The commercial investment market kicked in at the beginning of 2014 and is now buoyant. The properties are selling on net annual yields from 2.5 per cent to eight per cent.

What has helped to underpin that demand is the banks' renewed confidence in the commercial investment market. Ever since the GFC began in 2007, the banks have had no appetite for commercial property. At the time, businesses were visibly struggling so banks did not have confidence in lending into the commercial market.

Now that there has been an improvement in the NSW market, things have changed in Sydney and the regions of NSW.

Beyond Sydney

In cities such as Dubbo, Albury and Tamworth, which have a

very strong local economy, commercial investment properties are sought after. The yield in these areas is typically 8-10 per cent. The reason being that there are typically fewer buyers. However, many Sydney buyers are now looking to regional NSW cities for a better return, so things may change over time.

However, not all aspects of the commercial market are strong. The office market in Sydney has remained weak in recent times. This is not surprising when you consider how business has changed since the GFC. Whereas businesses previously required 15sqm for their teams to work in, today this has shrunk to 10sqm. In addition, growth in white-collar employment has slowed and many government organisations have moved from the Sydney CBD to the regions.

Market strength

At REINSW, we believe the strength of the commercial investment market is a good thing. There's a lot of money looking for a home in property. While the share market is still volatile, commercial property investments can be a stable investment and investors are recognising this.

A lot of these investments are fuelled by foreign investors. This is especially the case in Sydney, where the NSW Government is actively encouraging this group to invest in the property market.

At REINSW, we're still waiting to see how the market develops, but I think we'll see prices in the commercial investment market level out. ♦



ON THE MARKET

The following property recently sold for a significant amount over the reserve. For me, this is a perfect example of the properties being sought after in the commercial investment market and the solid returns they can offer their investors.

PROPERTY: 266 Forest Road, Hurstville

TENANT: Hungry Jacks

LAND: 346sqm

BUILDING: 400sqm over two levels

SOLD FOR: \$6,500,000

RESERVE: \$3,500,000

SALE PRICE: \$6,650,000

STYLE: Large two-level building complete with ground level retail and lower level staff amenities and storage. Also features access for rear loading and parking from Humphreys Lane.

LOCATION: Ideally situated beside the main entrance to Westfield Shopping Centre and approximately 100m from Hurstville Station.



BE REMEMBERED BEYOND THE SALE

Celebrate with your clients by sending them a branded gift from your online go-to supplier Signed Sealed Delivered.

Just because the deal is done, doesn't mean your client relationship has to come to an end. Send them one of our fabulous gifts with your corporate branding so you are front of mind when it's time for their next move.



Finding success in franchise

From the Australian Army to real estate, Andrew Cocks, Executive Director at Richardson & Wrench, shares his secrets to franchise success.

I started my career as an officer in the Australian Army. After I left the army, I joined a Thredbo ski resort where I undertook a range of technical, property and commercial roles, so real estate was never far away. A big part of what we did there was business acquisition. This included a lot of research, analysis and helping companies that we acquired through the transition process. I learnt a lot about the psychology of organisations. We were really focused on turning what could have been a scary and threatening process for employees into an empowering process for the companies that we purchased.

Transitioning into real estate

Before joining Richardson & Wrench, I was at a national business advisory practice, which specialised in providing strategic business development support. We helped companies achieve business outcomes that really wouldn't have been possible using their existing resources.

At Richardson & Wrench, I'm focused on making sure that we achieve maximum engagement with our franchisees and making sure there's an environment for all franchisees to be as successful as they possibly can be. When I came on board, Richardson

& Wrench was an organisation that wanted to go to the next level and really reposition itself.

I think getting to interact with so many different people is what I love most about real estate, especially when you're dealing with so many people across so many franchises. Being able to have conversations that help people understand their potential is really important to me.

When it comes to business

I think you have to look through the noise of what's going on around you and really understand the implications of everything you do.

It's all about thinking deeply. Make sure you plan and implement, and then be ready to adapt and respond really quickly because nothing is ever going to stay the same as you expect it to.

I always try and avoid the trap of confusing activity with progress. A lot of people feel happy if they're doing something but if, in reality, that activity isn't achieving your commercial objectives, you're really just wasting time.

Most importantly, really get to know your people. Understand how your team works. Very few organisations really get the best out of their team. ♦

Andrew Cocks shares his opinions on what you need to get a foot in the franchise door.

GETTING STARTED

Treat your customers right. Treat your staff right. Innovate, get out of your comfort zone and keep asking questions. Make sure you collaborate with your suppliers, staff and clients. Trust the knowledge and the wisdom of those around you. The more quickly you can recognise and adapt to change, the better you can provide products and services and the stronger your organisation will be.

If you've got a mind to move into that area, take risks but understand why you're taking them.

CHALLENGES

The most challenging thing is actually making sure your mind is positioned to move from whatever you've been doing to actually running a business and taking full responsibility for every part of it.

Ultimately, the responsibility for that business sits with the person who is running it. You can't deflect and you can't blame. Certainly seek advice and take on advice from everyone around you, but at the end of the day, you're the one who calls the shots and you're the one who has to take on the responsibility for what happens.

CHARACTERISTICS AND TRAITS

It's important for people to understand what they're good at and what they're not good at. For any areas where you don't have the skills or background or capabilities, it's okay to rely upon those who you bring in.

You need to be honest, always be open and really build genuine relationships with those who you're working with.

It's amazing how many people don't take that first step and be honest about what they're good at and what they're not good at.

Q. Are sales people the most important people in the real estate office?

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

“YES”



ANDREW SORENSEN
Director/
Principal
at R&H
Charmhaven

Ask any salesperson this question and the answer will most surely be yes! However, after 12 years in the profession of real estate I can now, with a high level of confidence, confirm this statement.

Sales people actually are the most crucial part of the real estate machine. While the receptionist may be the ‘director of first impressions’ for the agency, the salesperson is an extension of the office. While the property management team may spend the day meticulously wading through maintenance requests, repair quotes and communicating with landlords, salespeople are charging forward oblivious to the rejection that they face.

External optimist

A salesperson needs to be the eternal optimist, as they never have a guaranteed income. Salespeople are forced to constantly remain positive and upbeat. This outlook only strengthens an office, and I have seen on many occasions where a salesperson has been able to look at a rental issue with a glass half full attitude and lighten the heavy load on the property management team.

Income

In a business sense, property management provides a steady income that doesn’t vary greatly. In most cases, this can be the most certain income that a real estate office can get.

The simplest demonstration to the answer of this question is to look at some of the most successful real estate businesses in operation today. You may have noticed a large number of independent brands and boutiques operating around Australia, a number of which started as top sales people splintered off to create their own versions of real estate businesses.

Sales people are crucial to real estate as they provide the energy, the enthusiasm, the never say die attitude, the entrepreneurship, the vision and the highly competitive nature required to drive growth in any market. ♦

“NO”



ALEX HART
Principal at
Hart Real
Estate

Our office has had an outstanding quarter in sales. Our bottom line this quarter will be great. I’m happy.

Our sales team was the main contributor to this spike in our bottom line. However, if I were predicting the health of our business in five years’ time, would their performance this quarter be the most important factor in my calculations? I’m not so sure.

It’s fantastic to have a great sales team. It’s even better to have a genuine rainmaker or two in your office.

However, your rainmaker may desert you and the sales market is unpredictable. If you don’t also invest in the other areas of your business, you’ll likely struggle to thrive in the long term.

Critical players

While sales people are important, other team members are just as critical.

First among these is the property management team. A strong, efficient property management team significantly contributes to the health of the entire office by creating a solid basis for a lasting and viable business, creating an administrative structure for the office, and providing an excellent training and professional development ground. In a well-run office, the property management team contributes a great deal to sales, as well as providing a valuable and reliable source of revenue in its own right.

Team

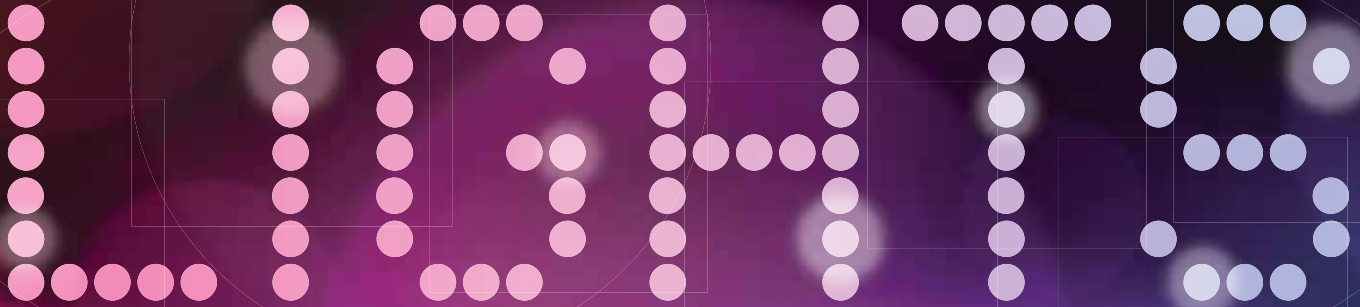
Our office has always had a strong property management team. It has been galvanised by the recent explosion of regulatory and compliance obligations to become an extremely efficient and effective administrative operation. This has helped to improve the functioning of the office as a whole, which benefits everyone, including the sales team.

Neither the sales nor the property management teams could operate effectively, and successfully compete in the marketplace, without strong administrative, HR, and IT/marketing support. Investing in these teams is also essential to the health of the business over the medium to long term. ♦



**NEXT MONTH
WE ASK:
Q. SHOULD
PRINCIPALS
SELL?**

OUR INDUSTRY'S ACHIEVEMENTS UP IN



Join us at the **2014 REINSW Awards for Excellence Gala Dinner**

Date

Thursday, 2 October 2014

Venue

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Pyrmont Point, Sydney

Dress

Black tie

Cost

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Your questions answered

The *Journal* puts your questions to industry experts. This month, we're talking to the Australian Environmental Pest Managers Association about how to manage unwanted visitors.

Q: What are the most common causes of pest infestation?

Densely populated areas, such as city suburbs, make it easy for cockroach infestations to spread. Bed bugs can be introduced if you purchase secondhand goods such as bedding and furniture, or they may have been picked up on your luggage from a holiday in the tropics. Termites may occur more often if dampness is present in buildings such as leaky showers, poorly ventilated underfloor areas, building defects or timber that is in contact with the ground. Good hygiene and maintenance of buildings, which includes no holes, no dampness and no rubbish laying around the house, will definitely help prevent problems. However, many times infestation will still occur in clean, well looked after properties.

Q: If tenants have young children or pets, they tend to be a bit concerned about using harsh chemicals. What are the types of chemical treatments being used?

There are various treatments available for different pests. In the case of termites, baiting systems are available on the market today that target termites only and have no effect on other organisms or people.

With other pests, products will vary depending on the kind of pest, the extent of the infestation, geographical conditions, and any medical requirements of the occupants.

Generally, the philosophy is to use the safest product available.

The Australian Environmental Pest Managers Association (AEPMA) is a good place to source a pest control expert, preferably Pestcert Accredited (professional accreditation). They have to follow the AEPMA Code of Ethics, plus the Code of Practice for the Control of Bed Bugs and the Code of Practice for Prior to Purchase Timber Pest Inspections.

Q: When it comes to buildings where the pests can come into an apartment through common property, is there anything you can do to treat the situation as a whole, rather than individual apartments?

In the case of infestation by large cockroaches, spiders, ants and rats, it makes sense to have regular inspections and treatments to common areas. However, this would be of little value in the case of German cockroaches or bed bug infestations where the attention has to focus on the individual units. In NSW, it is law for managing agents and pest control companies to notify the occupants of unit blocks at least five working days prior to treatment of a common area taking place.

Q: What can people do themselves to avoid infestation?

Keeping premises tidy, having regular inspections (at least yearly for timber pests) and following the advice on the report given by a competent pest manager is the key to avoiding serious and costly problems. Proper pest management requires a very broad knowledge and should be left to professionals. ♦

REINSW RESOURCES



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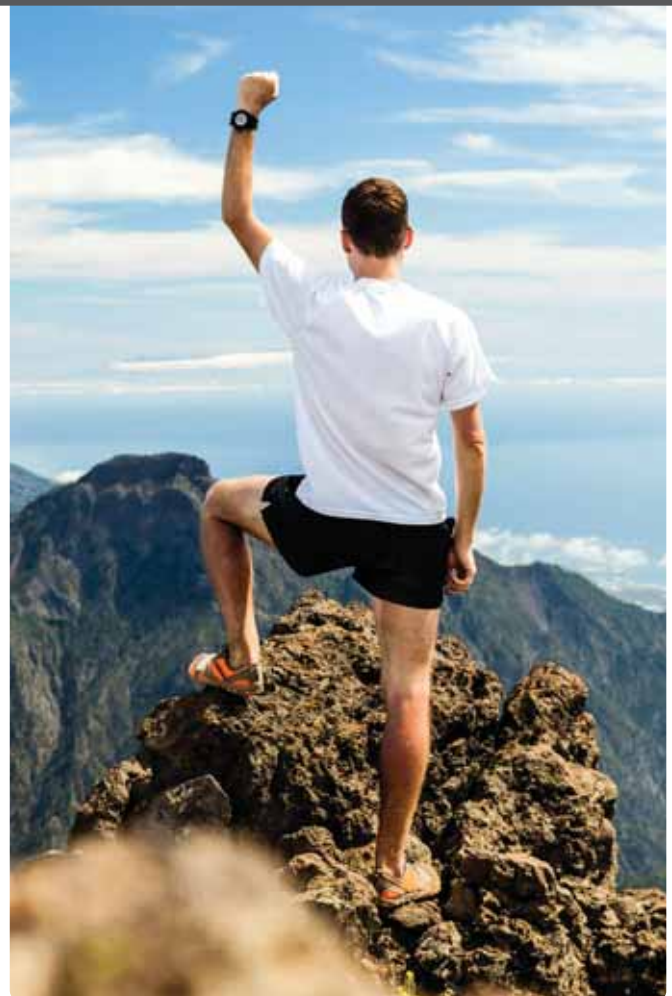
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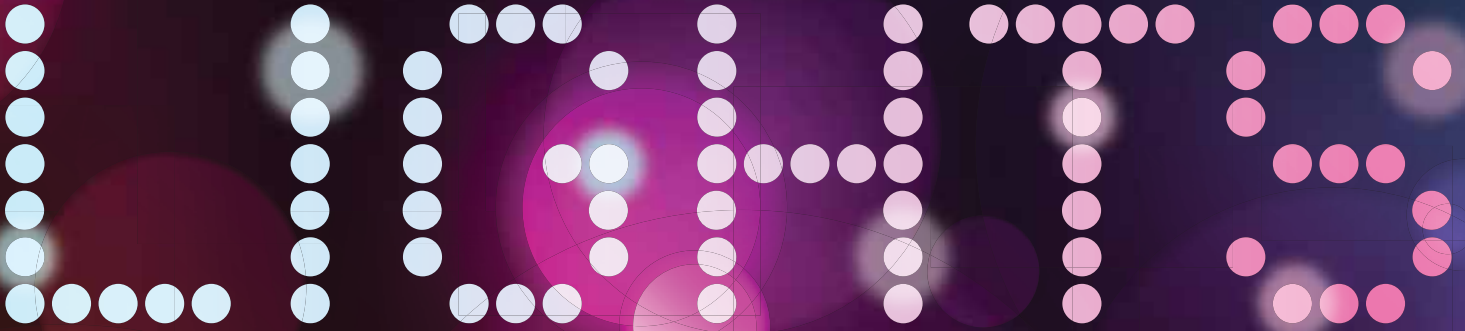


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The winners will be announced at the REINSW Awards for Excellence Gala Dinner on Thursday, 2 October 2014 at Doltone House (Jones Bay Wharf), Pyrmont Point, Sydney. Be sure to book your place at the premier industry event of the year. Go to reinsw.com.au

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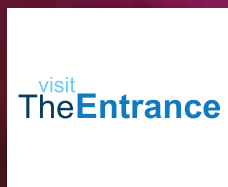
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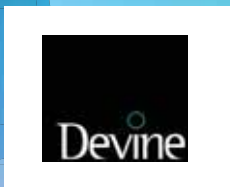


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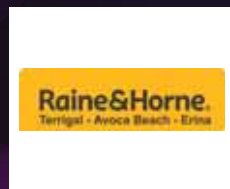
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Building on infrastructure

BY CHELSEA WALLIS

Investors in residential property are expected to benefit as the Federal Government increases its investment in transport infrastructure.

The Federal Government's recent commitment to infrastructure projects is stimulating new epicentres of growth in NSW.

The move signals a step towards addressing the state's critical housing shortage. Population growth in NSW, and Sydney in particular, has outpaced the production of residential housing over each of the past six years – an unsustainable trend with a deficit of more than 10,000 houses annually.

But REINSW President Malcolm Gunning said the Government's current infrastructure pipeline has the backing of REINSW.

"Residential areas will benefit without doubt," he said. For example, "[the projects] will have a profound impact, because you'll have high volume trains into areas that traditionally have limited public transport."

The state's \$1.18 billion commitment to the Department of Planning & Environment includes \$83 million for the Housing Acceleration Fund, which delivers key infrastructure in order to support the generation of housing supply.

Extending west

The biggest growth area to watch is Western Sydney, which is the driving force behind the city's housing acceleration according to NSW Premier Mike Baird. He announced in June that land in the suburbs close to transport and infrastructure has been rezoned or released for precinct planning,

including areas such as Marsden Park North, Redbank, Richmond, Ashlar and Blacktown.

"In Western Sydney there is a massive housing boom occurring, and the unlocking of up to 6600 new housing lots at three sites will boost housing supply and make homes more affordable," Mr Baird said.

Construction of the North West Rail Link is already underway, extending public transit from Epping to Rouse Hill and creating heightened real estate activity around nearby Bella Vista and Baulkham Hills. The WestConnex, with the Stage 1 – M4 project which includes a tunnel to free up sections of Parramatta Road, is due to begin early in 2015, as well as the promise of a Badgerys Creek airport still to come.

Other areas to watch

Also of interest is the city's CBD and South East Light Rail project, running along George Street west to Pyrmont and Dulwich Hill and southeast to Kingsford and Randwick. A pedestrian zone slated for George Street between Bathurst and Hunter Streets holds the promise of a new retail destination to complement Pitt Street Mall.

While astute investors look for regional cities and centres where the Government is investing in essential services, such as schools and hospitals, transport is still a deciding factor.

For instance, Ballina has enjoyed times of growth as its airport hosts three airlines, keeping fares low and making



the commute to Sydney relatively easy for residents as far as Byron Bay and Tweed Valley. It has the added bonus of the M1 Motorway linking Ballina to Coolangatta and Brisbane.

Further planning reforms are also on the horizon. REINSW has welcomed the changes laid out in the state's planning reform system introduced late last year, including the elimination of red tape that delayed home renovations and major developments, and the improvement of the planning process for local communities.

The Community Participation Charter detailing these processes is scheduled for release this year. ♦



“

Population growth in NSW, and Sydney in particular, has outpaced the production of residential housing over each of the past six years.

”

WESTERN SYDNEY

Over the next few decades, the NSW Government expects an extra 200,000 people to move into the north-west, boosting the population to more than 600,000. The North West Rail Link is planned to support this growth, including eight new stations and 4000 commuter car parking spaces.

Although construction is only a few months in, both residential and commercial investors are already making a move.

In March, the NSW Government rezoned 54 hectares of land in Epping as part of an effort to create more than 500,000 homes by 2031 – when it predicted an extra 1.3 million people will call Sydney home.

In order to relieve those pressures, land around railway stations and infrastructure was the natural place to rezone, according to REINSW Director Barry Johnston of Balmoral Partners.

“The commercial space in Epping is about to halve because the owners are aware their assets are now worth so much more as a residential property than as a commercial property,” he said.

Traditionally, big companies have chosen Macquarie Park over the Norwest Business Park because of the lack of a rail system, Mr Johnston added. However, there will now be the option of commercial space in Norwest, four stops from Epping.

The Airbnb movement

BY JESSICA ABELSOHN

When it comes to short-term rentals, are you ever on the right side of the law?

Since its launch in 2008, Airbnb has grown rapidly around the world. However, it's now facing a backlash in a number of countries when it comes to its impact on holiday and short-term rentals.

A stranger is just a friend you haven't met

Collaborative consumption revolution, community marketplace, peer to peer networks - whatever you call it, these concepts have quickly taken over many aspects of our lives.

Cities around the world are using network technologies to do so much more with renting, lending, swapping and sharing on a scale that no one thought possible.

Enter Airbnb, where spare rooms, holiday homes, treehouses and even teepees become an avenue to make money.

The company describes itself as a "community marketplace for people to list, discover, and book unique accommodations around the world." With a presence in more than 190 countries, Airbnb's method seems to work. But at what cost?

Backlash

Recently, in New York City, Airbnb hosts were advised that they could be in breach of the law. Certain types of "Class A" multiple dwellings (for instance, apartment houses) may only be used for permanent residence purposes. The law is that a permanent resident must be present to sublet a residential apartment for less than 30 days.

In Spain, the Catalan Government has fined Airbnb 30,000 Euros for a serious breach of local tourism laws. Apartments advertised on the site did not appear in the region's official register of tourist properties and the site ran advertisements for individual rooms in private apartments, which is illegal in Catalonia. Further, Spanish law allows homeowners to rent to travellers on a short-term basis as long as they declare and pay income tax on revenue. However, in times of economic

crisis, those homeowners have 'forgotten' to declare the extra income and now face strict new laws.

In Berlin, a new housing law bans regular short-term letting of rooms without permission from the authorities, which may be subject to conditions, including paying compensation for lost living space.

Airbnb's terms of service, last updated 30 June 2014, now state that hosts need to check with cities for zoning or administrative codes on whether it is illegal or if they need to register, get a permit or obtain a licence. This essentially puts the onus on hosts to determine whether they are breaching local law. It reads: "Certain types of short-term bookings may be prohibited altogether. Local governments vary greatly in how they enforce these laws. Penalties may include fines or other enforcement. Hosts should review local laws before listing a space on Airbnb."

Local laws

In NSW, short-term holiday rentals are overseen by council and zoning usually determines whether your home can be let out as a holiday rental.

A recent case in the Land and Environment Court is likely to change the tradition of Central Coast homeowners supplementing their incomes by renting out their homes whilst they are not using them. In *Dobrohotoff v Bennic* [2013] NSWLEC 61, the Court found that the use of a dwelling house, zoned residential under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act*, for the purpose of short-term holiday rentals is effectively a separate and independent planning use that requires development consent under the Act. A development consent for a dwelling house is not likely to authorise such a use. This leaves many owners who rent homes to holiday makers vulnerable to litigation for breach of the Act. When considering what constitutes a "dwelling", the Court considered the critical element of permanence (amongst other things).



When it comes to Airbnb, many agents say the website is just another avenue to rent out homes for short-term stays.

"From an agent's perspective, Airbnb is just another advertising website like Stayz or Home Away. Just because it is rented through Airbnb doesn't make it a legal use, in fact many holiday lettings through the site are illegal," Simone Koen, REINSW Holiday & Short Term Chapter Chair, said.

According to Ms Koen, the holiday rental market is going through a period of change.

"Organisations are encouraged to endorse and agree to implement the Holiday Rental Code of Conduct, which addresses issues with noise and neighbourhood amenity. Agents who are members of REINSW are strongly encouraged to abide by the Code ♦

Airbnb in stats

98% OF HOSTS **SUGGEST** LOCAL ATTRACTIONS, RESTAURANTS AND SHOPS, **INCREASING LOCAL TOURISM**

59% OF HOSTS IN SYDNEY ARE **OVER 40**. A TYPICAL HOST EARNS **\$4505 PER YEAR**

80% OF AIRBNB LISTINGS IN **SYDNEY** ARE OUTSIDE OF **MAIN TOURIST AREAS**

48% OF AIRBNB GUESTS WERE **FIRST-TIME VISITORS** TO **SYDNEY** LAST YEAR



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Support teams

What does it take to be an exceptional support team and how can you recruit the best?

BY JESSICA ABELSOHN

The role of office administration has definitely changed over the past couple of decades. Twenty years ago, support professionals would have been called secretaries and there would have been no scope for growth, even for the most experienced. Now, the landscape has changed.

It takes a special person to work in real estate. Customer service is one of the most important skills – relating to buyers, sellers and renters – and it's often the administration team that clients see or speak to first.

Roles and responsibilities

The administration team undertakes the day-to-day running of the office, filing, answering phones and picking up the mail. But it's also more complex than that; assisting the management team with booking meetings, obtaining quotes, ordering advertising and chasing up arrears.

According to Bree Higgins, Partner and Office Manager at Cunninghams Property, the administration team keeps the office going. "The team really keep the wheels moving and it's the glue that holds everything together."

There can also be a difference in the role of administrators, depending on what department they are assisting. "Although the basic role is the same, the tasks do vary," Laura Paley, Strata Manager at PRD Nationwide Norwest, says.

When it comes to sales and leasing, an admin assistant is likely to deal with potential purchasers, vendors, lessees and lessors, whereas in strata and property management, you're more likely to deal with owners, tenants and landlords. Across both, admin assistants will also deal with legislation. "Assistants generally get to see a bit of all areas [of the business] and, from there, they will be able to work out what department they like and fit into best," Ms Paley explained.

If you're in support or looking to hire a support team member, Matt Lahood, Director of Sales for McGrath Estate Agents, said there are skills and traits that make good administrative staff members. Characteristics such as the ability to act before the team leader reacts, initiative, organisation and time management skills are essential, according to Mr Lahood. According to Ms Higgins, it's also being a 'yes person'. "Willingness to go above and beyond and excellent communication skills, within the team and with clients, are key," she said.



Willingness to go above and beyond and excellent communication skills, within the team and with clients, are key.



Climbing the ladder

Ms Paley started her role at PRD Norwest as a receptionist and she said there's always room to grow. "After a year, I was given the opportunity to move up within the company to become a strata assistant." After two years of assisting, Ms Paley was promoted to a manager of the strata portfolio.

According to Ms Paley, besides further study, you need to make sure you are doing your job to the best of your ability. "You need to show you are capable and show a willingness to learn. Talk to your managers about your future and what you want."

Mr Lahood also highlights the need for growth. "We emphasise that our administration teams have a one-year, two-year and three-year career plan." Mr Lahood stresses the importance a support role can have in career development. "Admin is a good stepping stone for people to learn the ropes which, in turn, gives them great value to progress into other roles within the company."

Ms Higgins started as a junior in property management and she's now a Partner. "Be a sponge and take in as much as you can from all team members," she said. "Everyone works differently and has different strengths, so it's vital to learn from all and cherry pick what you think might be useful in your life or career."

Recruiting

When it comes to recruiting support staff, the most important characteristic that many people value is a willingness to learn. Study isn't the be all and end all. According to Ms Higgins, there is a lot of on-the-job training and cultural fit is key. "Look for someone who is committed, has a willingness to learn, and fits within the culture of your office." ♦



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This means internal communication within your team, and also interpersonal communication with external clients. A good PA is composed under pressure and able to think on his or her feet.

MULTI-TASKING

PAs will often need to have their hands on several tasks at once, so being able to answer an email, while filing, booking meetings and researching is a key attribute.

GOOD JUDGEMENT

A good PA needs to have the ability to judge urgent versus important and filter priority tasks, and needs to be able to judge appropriately under pressure.

HAS A PLAN

Know where you want to go and what skills you need to be the best possible PA. Set goals and identify possible training courses that you can do to further your abilities. A good PA will always be one step ahead.

GET INVOLVED

From 1 July 2014, all employees of REINSW member agencies, including support staff, can become individual members for no further charge.

For the first time, your agency's admin staff can become members and access REINSW's many member benefits. These include discounts on REINSW training, access to the new *Journal* app, research reports, the member-only section of the REINSW website, eligibility to enter the Awards for Excellence and much more.

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13 – 17 Oct • SYDNEY
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15 – 17 Oct • SYDNEY
Property Sales Essentials ●
 (9.30am–4.30pm)

15 – 17 Oct • ALBURY
Trust Accounting Essentials ●
 (9.00am–4.00pm)

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

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

21 Oct • SYDNEY
Making LinkedIn Work for You ●
 (9.30am–1.30pm)

22 – 24 Oct • SYDNEY
People Management Essentials ●
 (9.30am–4.30pm)

27 – 29 Oct • SYDNEY
You and the Law Essentials ●
 (9.30am–4.30pm)

27 – 31 Oct • SYDNEY
Certificate of Registration Course ●
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30 Oct • SYDNEY
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Women in Real Estate Conference - 18 Nov

Sydney This year the Women in Real Estate Conference is all about inspiration, motivation and relaxation, with entertaining speakers, fun activities, prizes up for grabs and champagne and networking afterwards. Be sure to book your place!

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3 – 7 Nov • SYDNEY
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10 Nov • SYDNEY
Introduction to Commercial Real Estate ●
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10 – 14 Nov • SYDNEY
Certificate of Registration Course ●
 (9.00am–5.00pm)

11 Nov • SYDNEY
Inspection Processes for Commercial Property ●
 (9.30am–1.30pm)

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 (9.30am–4.30pm)

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 (9.30am–4.30pm)

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 (9.00am–5.00pm)

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Mangoes under the hammer

Auctioneer Edward Riley has been auctioning off mangoes for charity since 2008 and each year just keeps getting bigger and better.

Edward Riley with Prime Minister Tony Abbott during his most memorable auction to date.

Every September, the Sydney Markets Foundation auctions off the first tray of mangoes for the season. The money raised goes to various worthwhile charities, which in the past have included the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia, Cancer Council of NSW, OzHarvest and the Sydney Children's Hospital at Westmead.

The first box of mangoes ever to be auctioned sold for \$65 in 1970. Last year, Edward Riley managed to sell the first box for \$30,000. And that's not even a record.

In 2012, Mr Riley received a result of \$50,000, trumping the previous record of \$40,000 from 2009.

Mr Riley's involvement with the mango auctions began in 2008. Over the past 10 years, Mr Riley has offered his services to charities, schools and sporting clubs as a way of giving back to the community.

He is also now on the organising committee for the mango auction and recently was appointed the MC. "There are other things that happen on the morning including a mango eating competition for the kids. A couple of years ago we had a spaghetti eating competition for the adults," Mr Riley said. "We also have some live entertainment and the

event is always attended by a number of celebrities and sporting stars."

Mr Riley's job is simple: to get the most amount of money out of the crowd, playing on the egos in the room and encouraging some competitive bidding. There are also about half a dozen other items that are auctioned prior to the tray of mangoes to get the crowd warmed up, including memorabilia, holidays and experiences.

Mr Riley credits 2013's auction as his most memorable to date. Coinciding with the final week of the Federal Election campaign, Tony Abbott decided to visit the Sydney Markets. "I had the great pleasure of introducing both Mr Abbott and Joe Hockey up on stage. Mr Abbott stood next to me, holding the first tray of mangoes, while I conducted the auction," Mr Riley said. ♦

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 jessica@mahlabmedia.com.au



IN THIS YEAR: 1970

Our members have always been a talented bunch, but our extra-curricular activities have evolved somewhat over the years. This month, the *Journal* explores the archives for some of the extraordinary hobbies of past members.

It seems we were always looking to the past for an easy chuckle. In the 1970 *Journal*, one of Sydney's oldest real estate agents, Hardie & Gorman, staged a historical re-enactment of a thrilling 1820s land sale from its archives.

Players donned outfits befitting the 150-year-old period and acted out a transaction for 1 1-6 acres of land sold by Captain John Piper to Mary Reiby for £2000.

It was all in good fun. The event marked the opening of a charity auction of 'bric-a-brac' and copies of sale contracts taken from the 1881-1882 company archives.

Skits may not be very 2014, but there was at least one 1970 event that may be worth re-enacting.

At REINSW's annual golf day, Bert Watkins shot a hole in one at the Oatlands Golf Club, an achievement we're still talking about to this day. The outstanding feat took place at the 14th hole, which today is a par-4 hole of 378 metres for the men and 345 metres for ladies. He also took out the trophy for nearest to pin on the 18th hole.

The guest of a Mr Holden, Watkins was clearly a ring-in, but it wasn't enough to take the tournament. The overall winner on the day was the Eastern Suburbs Branch, which took out the trophy for the third year in a row with 199 points.

Perhaps we should bring back a bit of the '70s, when they passed the golf trophies around with a bit of bubbly.

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