

# Journal

MAY 2015  
VOL 66/05

## THE BIG MO

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OUTSTANDING SALES RESULTS

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Peter Chauncy, Sales Agent at McGrath Crows Nest talks about creating momentum for outstanding sales results.

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# Next steps for partial self-regulations

Now that the dust has settled on the state election campaign that saw the Baird Government re-elected, it is an opportune moment to reflect on what the major parties saw as relevant to the electorate.

It was a hard-fought campaign by both sides and property featured heavily in policy announcements and in the media generally. Because the major parties brought property and the profession into the political arena, we were able to shed light on some of the issues on our agenda.

Our approach was to tackle the issues head-on and to highlight the problems that have been created by poor education standards, particularly at entry level. We did not hesitate in taking a strong stance on the issues that cause harm to the reputation of the profession.

Most consumers are horrified to learn how easy it is to become an agent. Under REINSW's proposed partial self-regulation model, we plan to significantly increase the minimum training requirements for entry into the profession and ongoing professional development.

While underquoting is not a practice that we would ever condone, it received a disproportionate amount of attention due to the political cycle. That said, it does highlight that the lack of education has let the profession down. The discussions also revealed the need for greater consumer education, as the difference between underquoting, a successful marketing campaign and a better than expected sale price is lost on most consumers and, of greater concern, on government itself.

During the election campaign we also took the opportunity to put the need for tax reform squarely on the government's agenda. In particular, the need to address government's dependency on property taxes. We also highlighted the unconscionable inactivity in regard to bracket creep with respect to stamp duty rates.

We have met with government on a number of occasions and during those meetings a commitment was given to pursue a resolution on a number of the issues that have been concerning the market, the industry and the profession.

We are hoping government will recognise the merit in the partial self-regulation model proposed by REINSW and work towards its implementation. The model provides for a suite of interlocking services that will collectively increase professional standards, conduct and compliance with the regulatory environment. The cornerstone of its success will be dramatically increasing education requirements.

Over the coming months we will continue to meet with government with the aim of realising our goals. We will keep the government accountable and will not stop until we achieve our objectives.



**Tim McKibbin**  
REINSW CEO



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## BEHIND THE SCENES



### MEMBER LOGO

Are you using your official REINSW member logo to promote your membership? Displaying the logo on your website, business cards and marketing materials gives your clients the assurance that your agency is backed by the best information, training and advice in the industry.

You can download the member logo by going to [reinsw.com.au/memberlogo](https://reinsw.com.au/memberlogo)



### WEBSITE GOES RESPONSIVE

Did you know that the REINSW website has been upgraded to a responsive design? This means that the website is now optimised for viewing on mobile devices, so it's never been easier to stay on top of all the latest industry news and knowledge.



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## You get what you pay for

Bargain basement priced courses are a long way from the far more rigorous education path of the past.



REINSW President, Malcolm Gunning, reflects on the inadequate education standards of our profession.

I regularly speak to the media about the issues facing our industry, and throughout the recent election campaign I found that discussion kept returning to our profession's inadequate education standards.

I was horrified when a journalist spoke to me about completing a certificate of registration course via a discount daily deals website for just \$300.

When you consider the education standards for other property professions – including town planners, quantity surveyors, architects, engineers and valuers – you see a common thread. They all undertake tertiary education. Alarming real estate agents are paid amongst the largest fees,

however education standards are far below par.

Consumer expectations in relation to agents' expertise are well beyond that which is served by current levels of entry-level education. The *Property, Stock and Business Agents Act 2002* assumes that agents are in a position to act at a certain level. When this is not in fact the case, we are often made an example of by NSW Fair Trading. I am of the opinion that many agents are simply not aware of some important areas essential to being an effective real estate agent.

It is unbelievable that the least educated are amongst the highest paid and that they are expected to provide meaningful advice in regard to the transaction of property, which is one of the most important decisions a person can make in their lifetime.

I am a firm believer that in life you get what you pay for. Paying \$300 for training equates to very little and yet you are expected to know a lot, including balancing a highly-sophisticated negotiation process and satisfying both vendor and purchaser. The reality is this takes confidence, knowledge and experience.

The solution is to go back to the past, when a far more detailed education path was mandated. Current education standards do not cover in-depth subjects such as valuation or building and construction matters that our clients assume we have knowledge about. What is really required is an apprenticeship or traineeship for two years that coincides with improved education standards.

Lifting education standards is important for everyone in the profession. Too often we are looked upon in a negative light, and the current standard which enables inexperienced and inadequately trained people to be let loose on the public is not good for anyone's reputation. We must continue to draw this issue to the attention of the government and will leave no stone unturned until education standards are improved. ♦

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## News in brief

### TAXATION REVIEW

An overhaul of Australia's taxation system is long overdue and REINSW welcomes the decision to conduct a review. Treasurer Joe Hockey's discussion paper *Re:think: Better tax system, better Australia*, which launched on 30 March 2015, outlines that state taxes and stamp duty will be considered in the review.

"Stamp duties are some of the most inefficient taxes levied in Australia," the discussion paper reads. "Stamp duties also impact on consumers by increasing the cost of buying and selling houses."

REINSW President Malcolm Gunning said the need for a broad based tax system and the removal of state taxes, inclusive of property taxes, has been something that REINSW has been lobbying on for some time.

"We must move away from the narrow-based discriminatory taxes, in particular stamp duty and land tax, which we know inhibit growth and affect those seeking to purchase property, particularly first home buyers," Mr Gunning said.

"What we really need is a modern broad based tax system that will provide government with its revenue and not impede or deter investment.

"We will submit our opinion to the review and encourage other state property representative bodies to voice their support for tax reform.

"We all have a strong voice and together we cannot be ignored."



# Underquoting in the spotlight

In the lead up to the NSW Election, both sides of politics put real estate squarely on the agenda and there was a great deal of media hype about underquoting.

The issue of underquoting isn't a new one, but it was dragged into the media spotlight due to the election and a recent high-profile case where a Sydney real estate agency allegedly underquoted in relation to two of their properties for sale.

However, what was primarily highlighted by the media coverage was the lack of understanding about what the real issue is.

"In simple terms, the offence is telling a prospective purchaser that the property is worth less than the agent's estimated selling price as stated in the agency agreement," REINSW CEO Tim McKibbin said.

"Potential purchasers then spend time and money on pre-purchase inspection reports and subsequently participate in the auction in the hope of being the successful bidder, only to find out that the property is out of their price range.

"That is illegal and unethical, and we would never support it."

According to Mr McKibbin, there is a big difference between a vibrant market and underquoting and these issues are regularly confused.

"Notably, there are very few allegations of underquoting in a flat or declining market. It's when the market is on the increase that these allegations start to come out," he said.

"Purchasers mistakenly believe that they are a victim of underquoting simply because a property has sold at a record price.

"Agents and vendors are being accused of being greedy. Importantly, however, agents and vendors don't set the price of a property. Purchasers in competition do. If you want to see this, go to an auction and watch the purchasers set the price."

Mr McKibbin believes that banning the advertising of the term "offers over", as proposed by Premier Mike Baird, isn't a solution.

"Removing the agent's ability to say "offers above" or "from" isn't a solution. These terms are just language. We need to educate the public as to precisely what underquoting actually is."

# TOP TIPS OF THE MONTH

Facebook has become a great way to attract new clients. The *Journal* shares some top tips for real estate agents to use Facebook effectively.

1.

## Supply detailed image captions

Everyone likes good visuals, but when advertising a business or product, the captions accompanying an image are what is important. Is the home close to parks and primary schools? Are the floorboards new? This will allow you to focus on genuinely interested buyers.

2.

## Post about the neighbourhood

Show off the neighbourhood of your listing. This will not only market the area to potential buyers but will also display your passion and knowledge about the location of where you are selling homes. You can post about new developments in the area, or local events being held.

3.

## Keep your posts positive and informative

Educate and inspire your Facebook followers. No one wants to constantly hear about how tough the real estate market is. Use your presence in an informative, and most importantly, entertaining manner.

## Checklist: Building your personal brand

Building your personal brand is one of the most important things you can do as a real estate professional. Here are three ideas to help you build your personal brand.

### 1. IDENTIFY WHAT YOU WANT TO BE KNOWN FOR

Think about the agents working in your local area. What are they known for? The most successful agents are known for something. What do you want to be known for?

Effective personal branding is all about highlighting the traits that make you unique. This requires a big dose of self-analysis, which can be quite confronting but is also extremely necessary. Whatever it is that makes you unique, establishing and promoting it will help you attract more of the clients you want and will help you to drive better outcomes. And once you identify what you want to be known for, stay true to it! Don't try to be someone you're not.

### 2. THINK ABOUT YOUR ONLINE PRESENCE

The digital world now plays a huge part in everything we do. How you appear when somebody checks online is important to your personal brand. Clients can look you up online in a matter of seconds, so being mindful of your

presence online is a must. Every time you post something online it contributes to your personal brand, so make sure you post regularly.

And think further than just social media. Your personal brand online extends further than simply social media and your agency website. Make sure you take advantage of the other opportunities that exist such as contributing to blogs and commenting on industry news items.

### 3. BUILD YOUR EXPERTISE AND KEEP LEARNING

Clients want to deal with experts, so you need to build your knowledge and expertise in a way that differentiates you from your competitors. Remember, developing a reputation as having knowledge and expertise in a specific area is generally better for your career than being a 'jack of all trades'.

A great way to ensure you stay ahead of the pack is to become a fully licensed

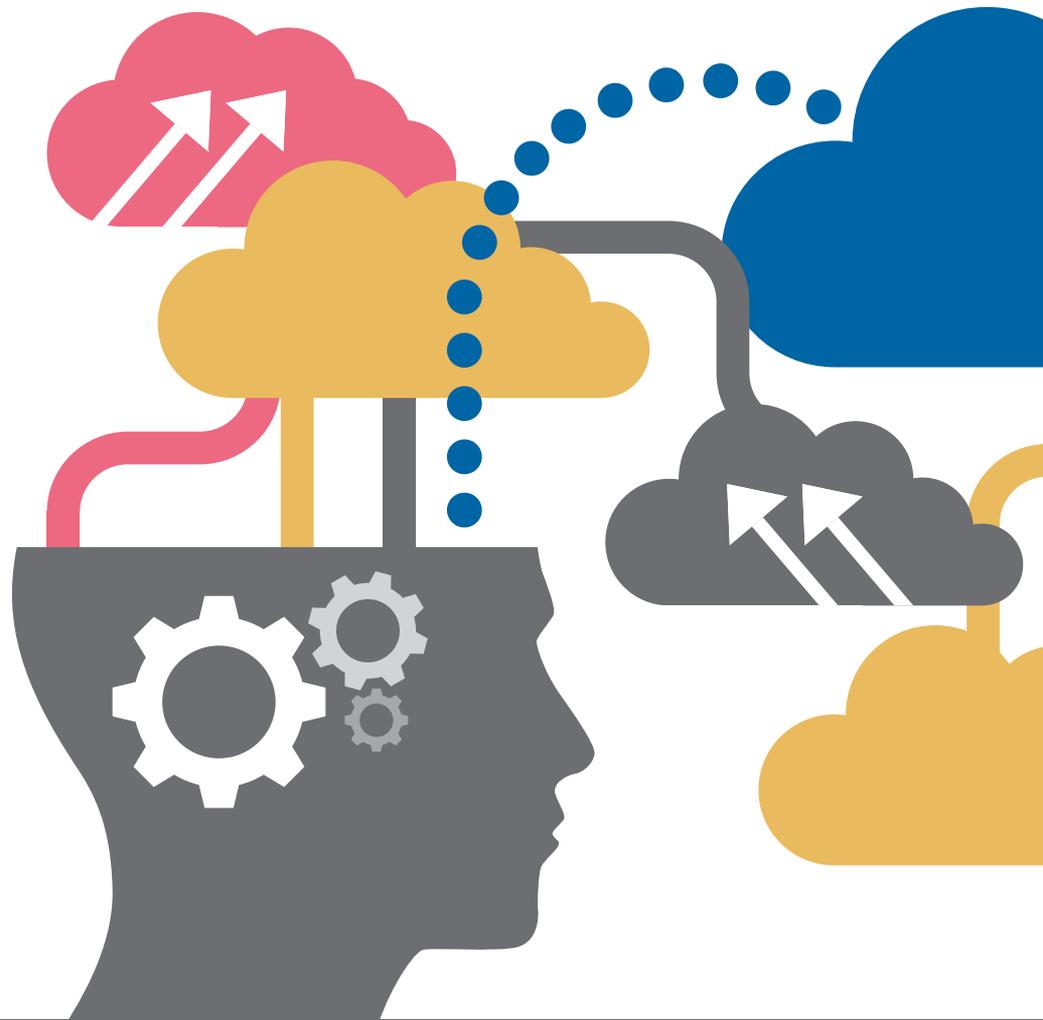
real estate agent. With so many agents competing for business, having your Real Estate Licence can really set you apart. And once you have your licence, don't forget to keep learning. Take advantage of continuing professional development courses tailored to your area of expertise.

*To find out more about courses that can help you to build your career and personal brand, go to [www.reinsw.com.au/training](http://www.reinsw.com.au/training)*



# Dream big

It takes the same amount of effort to dream small as it does to dream big. The only difference is that a bigger dream may need more time.



BY VITTORIA PIZZOLATO

Sales Agent at Callagher Estate Agents

My obsession with property began early on. I remember sitting on my father's lap when I was growing up and flicking through the real estate section of the *Inner West Courier*. Together, we would circle properties that possessed charm, character and, most importantly, potential!

Subconsciously, I always had an interest in property. The excitement I felt thinking about what could be next on the page while flicking through the paper triggered a strong emotion. One of the biggest decisions of someone's life is to purchase a home, and being able to assist people through this process is something I always wanted to do.

## Getting started

My first role in the industry came as soon as I finished my Diploma of Property. I began as a receptionist at Callagher Estate Agents in 2006 after being referred to them by a friend. Growing up in the Inner West, spending school holidays at my grandmother's house in Haberfield and having a family business in the area, it seemed like a natural choice to work in the local area with Callagher.



The most important lesson I have learnt is not to burn bridges. While it may sound simple, you never know who knows who, and it is essential to treat everyone you come across as you would want to be treated.



Starting out at the front desk opened my eyes to so many things. It was exciting to start learning the ropes from the admin side of real estate. During this time, I was given the opportunity to explore different aspects of the business and really develop my organisational skills. These skills have

stood me in good stead and I certainly wouldn't possess them today had I not started in admin.

## Moving forward

I decided to take the leap into sales after a few years in admin. It was always my personal goal and I was very fortunate to have the opportunity to work closely with the company Director, Cary Giezekamp. As my mentor, Cary introduced me to a whole new world.

The most important lesson I have learnt is not to burn bridges. While it may sound simple, you never know who knows who, and it is essential to treat everyone you come across as you would want to be treated.

In the real estate world, no two days are ever the same. I enjoy the diversity I experience on a daily basis, particularly the diversity of people and of cultures. I still get an overwhelming feeling of excitement when I hear the phone ringing. While it may sound corny, all I think about is whether the person on the other end of the phone call is the next person I am going to be able to help. ♦

## VITTORIA PIZZOLATO SHARES HER ADVICE ON HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF A CAREER IN REAL ESTATE.

### **BE HONEST, COMMUNICATE AND DREAM BIG**

Communication is key and you need to talk to everyone that you are exposed to. Whether or not they are a buyer today, the service you provide to everyone you come across should be as if they are your best and most loyal client. Treating people as you would want to be treated at all times will reap great rewards down the track. It takes the same amount of effort to dream small as it does to dream big, so why hold back?

### **ALWAYS STAY GROUNDED**

After experience as a buyer, and witnessing first-hand how some sales people treat buyers, it became apparent to me how important it is to stay grounded, be true to yourself and most importantly to remain human. My experience made me vow not to treat

buyers the way I had been treated and had seen other buyers treated.

### **CONTINUOUSLY EDUCATE YOURSELF**

It is essential to always make the time to attend as many industry events as possible. Mingle with your peers where possible and continuously seek to learn from others. The more you learn, the better you will be at delivering a high level of service to your clients.

### **COMPETITION KEEPS YOU HONEST**

If you are a good agent, there is no need to constantly knock your competition and focus all of your attention and energy on talking badly about them or belittling them. There are enough pieces of the pie to go around. Competition not only keeps you honest, but it demands that you are constantly at the top of your game.



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# Your questions answered

The *Journal* puts your questions to key industry experts. This month, REINSW's own Helpline is on hand.

## Q. What does an agent need to look at in order to come up with an accurate estimated selling price?

Agents are required to include a sales price estimate on all agency agreements and they must be able to substantiate that figure. Agents should look at the following in order to assist in producing an appropriate sales price estimate:

- Historical sales of similar properties
- Properties available on the current market that are similar
- Market demand in the area
- Local issues that can influence the sales price
- Recent valuations
- The circumstances of the vendor
- Seasonal factors (these are not as critical in the city)
- General economic factors
- Level of marketing
- Economic circumstances
- Interest rates and any other relevant data

Bearing in mind the above, it is important to always make notes in your files regarding sales price estimates. This way, if anyone queries the estimate, you have background information readily available.

## Q. What does a property manager need to do when a tenant vacates a residential property, but leaves behind personal possessions and goods?

Property managers must be very thorough and careful when dealing with abandoned personal possessions and goods. While some goods may seem like rubbish, the vacating tenant may have a very different view.

First, you need to treat the goods as abandoned (see Division 2, clauses 126-135 of the *Residential Tenancies Act 2010*, which relate to goods left on residential premises). You must pay particular attention to clause 127, which outlines the ways in which notice may be given for abandoned goods.

After 14 days from the date on which the disposal notice is given, you are able to dispose of the goods in accordance with the *Residential Tenancies Act*. The exception to this is where personal documents are concerned. Personal documents must be kept for 90 days before returning them to the issuing authority. If it is not reasonably practicable to return them to the issuing authority, then they may be disposed of in any other lawful way that ensures they do not become publicly available.

When you record the itinerary of what has been left behind, it is a good idea to also take photos. This will help if the tenant returns at some point in the future and makes a claim.

In the end, there is only so much you can do to contact a tenant. There are stringent privacy laws in place, therefore property managers must be very careful when calling the emergency contact of the tenant in question. ♦

## REINSW RESOURCES

REINSW members benefit from a series of resources that help them in their business and give them a voice in the industry. Here's just a selection.



### HELPLINE

Contact the REINSW Helpline for unlimited professional guidance and advice when you need it on (02) 9264 2343 (option 4) or email [helpline@reinsw.com.au](mailto:helpline@reinsw.com.au)



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# THE BIG MOMO

## CREATING MOMENTUM FOR OUTSTANDING SALES RESULTS

In a highly-competitive marketplace, momentum is the key to sales success and longevity. REINSW speaks to top-performing sales agents to find out how they create momentum and, more importantly, sustain it.

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BY HELEN HULL

Peter Chauncy, Sales Agent  
at McGraths Crows Nest

To have great success as a sales agent, you need momentum. When you have momentum and take full advantage of it, the results can be outstanding. A premium should be placed on making momentum last, and agents who recognise this will thrive.

“Things like school holidays and public holidays are probably the biggest things that interrupt sales momentum in a normal market,” Peter Chauncy, Sales Agent at McGrath Crows Nest, said.

“In a less competitive market, things like increasing interest rates, poorer global economic conditions and a high Australian dollar, which decreases expat interest, can have an impact and cause the real estate market to tighten up.

“Of course all of these things are out of your control, so it’s simply about planning ahead and also not falling into unnecessary paradigms about what seasons, holidays or events could stop campaign and sales flow.”

As the winner of the Residential Salesperson category at the 2014 REINSW Awards for Excellence and the number one real estate agent in the entire McGrath network, Mr Chauncy knows a thing or two about creating momentum. He exceeded \$3 million in commissions in the 2013/2014 financial year on \$170 million worth of sales, and holds a market share of 74 per cent of the 1,400 residential homes in Naremburn.

### **Building momentum**

“My belief is that that you only have down periods in this industry if you allow yourself to have them,” Mr Chauncy said.

“Creating a certain degree of healthy pressure on yourself also never hurts. You know as a sales agent that if you don’t have at least 5-8 listings on the go at any point in time then it’s difficult to maintain momentum, and pushing a little harder when you are flat out is always preferable to having to kick things off from a lull.

“I thrive on that constant challenge of keeping myself busy, which in turn creates consistent momentum in my business.

“With the obvious exception of the Christmas period, we work hard to minimise gaps in our performance. Above all, it is about planning well ahead and never forgetting to prospect, regardless of how busy we are selling.

“As soon as you lose momentum, a competitor can very quickly come into your core area and gain traction for themselves, which is hard to regain. I don’t believe anybody can truly enter the momentum stage unless they are well past 30 per cent market share and it is well worth the energy to get there and keep it rolling.

“

**I thrive on that constant challenge of keeping myself busy, which in turn creates consistent momentum in my business**

”

“Show me a low market share business and I’ll show you a hard business. Many people bite off too much across huge territories and wonder why their business is losing momentum. I’ve always focused on high share in a focused area,” Mr Chauncy said.

### **Become a specialist**

Matthew Bourn, Founder and Director at mcconnell bourn, agrees that being a specialist rather than a generalist is key to creating momentum.

“I see some agents that are here, there and everywhere. They aren’t gaining momentum because they are trying to be everything to everyone rather than having a core target market,” Mr Bourne said.

“I am now focused on a price point rather than a specific area, and the referral network that I have set up with a long list of satisfied clients creates a steady stream of business and momentum for me.”

Mr Bourn, who along with his wife Samantha, founded mcconnell bourn on the Upper North Shore of Sydney 15 years ago, said it is important to deliver on your promises and ensure that you don’t have too many properties diluting your time.

“You have to ensure that you are still prospecting and nurturing your call backs of past and future clients.

"If you drop the ball you can find yourself in a real estate dip where you lose your reliability and consistency, which can create a large hole in your momentum," Mr Bourn said.

Cathy Baker, Sales Agent at Gittoes East Gosford, agrees that taking on too much can be a momentum killer.

"I never take on more listings than I can handle," she said. "I use a tracking app and ensure that I have six market appraisals and two new listings a week, so that I have an optimal stock level of about 27 at any given time," Mrs Baker said.

"I work harder on providing consistency to clients and stagger the listings to two or three at a time to keep those stock levels the same.

"It does fluctuate, but I never have more than 30," she said. "I took on too much, 45, early on in my career, and I was working seven days a week and 12 hour days.

"I had some properties on the market for six months because of the poor market and over the years I have worked out what is manageable and works to service my clients effectively," Mrs Baker said.

A mother of four who entered real estate at 40 because she "needed something to get her teeth into", Mrs Baker says customer service is the essence of her success and repeat business comes because of this level of commitment to clients.

"Failure wasn't an option for me when I first started out. To me it was about how quickly I could get on top of things and be successful in the industry.

"I had lots of mentors and I have a coach that I speak with on a monthly basis to hold myself accountable and ensure that I am achieving my goals."

Mrs Baker said she is not afraid to let clients know a realistic date for listing to achieve maximum service and ensure that there is consistency in her stock levels.

"I tell perspective vendors a time frame of when I can get them out to market to ensure that I give the best amount of attention I can give," she said.

According to Mrs Baker, the most important part of the job, and something that attracted her to the industry, is nurturing people. She said it is about building the relationships with both the vendors and the purchasers, who she sees as playing a key role too.

"It has allowed me to build the business from \$150,000 GCI [Gross Commission Income] to \$1.5 to \$2 million."

Mr Bourn, who operates predominantly in the Roseville to Wahroonga area, also sees



CATHY BAKER  
Sales Agent at  
Gittoes East Gosford



Failure wasn't an option for me when I first started out. To me it was how quickly I could get on top of things and be successful in the industry.



referrals as one of the most important aspects of creating momentum.

"There are lots of clients at the \$4 to \$6 million bracket, which we are currently operating in, that know each other and you can really get momentum via that.

"Having a long list of satisfied clients and a steady stream of them means that it doesn't matter if the market is average, poor or strong.

"We give respect to our buyers. One of our mantras is that they aren't second rate citizens. You must treat buyers with the utmost respect as buyers turn into sellers, just like tenants turn into landlords," he said.

### Keeping up with the times

"Exceptional service, reliability, being consistent in regard to what I am saying to clients and working ethically and honestly all help to provide a great referral network," Mr Bourn said.

"You have got to be constantly evolving. You must be true to your brand but keep up to date. Training and personal development are paramount.

"Constantly improving leadership skills and looking at how to sell and buy property is important. It's essential to be a brand willing to invest in its people."

Mr Chauncy said he is always looking for ways to become a better sales agent and person.

"It is important to invest in yourself through more training and coaching. You need to be able to see the bigger things, such as increasing your market share in your core area and getting even more involved with your community to really give back."

Mrs Baker also enjoys working with her local community on charity and fundraising activities which helps create momentum and boost morale.

"Real estate agents have an untrusted reputation, but when people see that I am in there doing it they notice, and that gravitates people towards doing business with you."

### School holidays and long weekends

It is essential to understand the role that school holidays and long weekends play in the market, according to Mr Chauncy.

"I don't ordinarily let normal school holidays affect our campaigns. We usually still run a week or two of the campaign over this time and would auction on the fourth week when school has returned, or potentially run the campaign prior to holidays and have it in the first week of school holidays (if it is a family home).

“If you completely stop everything, that’s when your momentum potentially gets interrupted and you can get a bit complacent.

“Same with long weekends,” he said. “We run all our campaigns through long weekends and generally find that these are busy inspection days particularly in a more competitive market.

“I don’t tend to take leave during the year for extended periods, but it’s important to take short breaks to keep refreshed and focused.

“Our role is to make every client happy and a ‘raving fan’. If you deliver that every time, you will have momentum and a successful business.”

### Effect of the media

Mr Chauncy recognises that the media can also have an impact on momentum.

“As we all know, bad news often sells newspapers, however I have never been one to focus too much on the media’s opinion.

“If you stay positive and committed during these sorts of times then you tend not to fall into the trap of believing negative press.

“Regardless of whether market volume swings 20 per cent either way, there is always an unlimited amount of business available and it’s simply about adjusting and not allowing excuses to get in the way.”

### Catering for Chinese buyers

It is important to understand the unique characteristics of the vendor, property or potential purchasers, and tailor a marketing

approach to fit their needs in order to help continue momentum.

In recent times Mr Chauncy has seen an increase in Chinese buyers, which has led him to advertise in Chinese newspapers and myfun.com, a property portal for the Chinese market.

“McGrath has a China desk, which was launched in September 2013 due to increased demand from Chinese clients,” Mr Chauncy said.

“It is important to communicate with them in the way that they want to be, which often is in their own language. It adds terrific value because many of the agents on the North Shore don’t speak Chinese.

“It has been a big help to our business and in creating extra momentum in the marketplace,” Mr Chauncy said.

Being flexible in your approach to servicing your clients is also a major factor according to Mr Bourn.

“I am on call 24/7 because I work with lots of clients in the medical, legal and finance professions,” he said. “You have to work around their scheduling, whether it be a 7.00am meeting or at 10.00pm in their home. This level of service helps build momentum through word of mouth, as property is dinner party conversation and is spoken about at schools and other social occasions.

“My support network helps with momentum, including my Executive Assistant and marketing team. You can’t operate effectively without having the right people in place,” he said. ♦



**MATTHEW BOURN**  
Founder and Director at  
mconnell bourn



I am now focused on a price point rather than a specific area, and the referral network that I have set up with a long list of satisfied clients creates a steady stream of business and momentum for me.



## TOP TIPS FOR MAINTAINING SALES MOMENTUM

MICHAEL SHEARGOLD, REAL ESTATE COACH, SPEAKER AND TRAINER

1. Generating is a mindset – that’s why the number one agents in the business make it a priority.
2. It’s about being constant and consistent and turning basics into essentials that you do every day.
3. It is better to have great relationships with 100 people that you know well, than to have 2000 people in your database whom you don’t know.
4. The best in the business keep their prospecting, nurturing, networking and marketing really simple – so should you.
5. Think like a farmer – nurture, nurture, nurture.
6. Review your “wow” service – upgrade your buyer management because two in 10 buyers are also pipeline sellers.
7. The goal of generating is uncovering future listings and putting them in your pipeline.
8. Remember the more, the more – simply ask more people if they’re thinking of selling.
9. Get yourself an accountability buddy so you stay on track.
10. You can’t beat connected conversations – so have more of them!





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Tennille Mugridge - Principal  
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**Email: [info@propertysafe.com.au](mailto:info@propertysafe.com.au)**



# Park potential car space claims

Agents need to be aware of how to avoid making misrepresentations when selling a property with a car space.

BY NANCY RAINBIRD

Claims & Compliance Manager at Realcover

There are many factors that go into a decision to buy a property, and whether or not there is a car space on title can be an important decision-making factor. Purchasers' expectations can be quite specific when it comes to car space requirements. In inner city areas, for example, some purchasers will place a high premium on having a car space on title, as on-street parking pressures increase and paid parking becomes more and more expensive. If a car space is located under shelter or is in a secure environment, then it has the potential to have a real impact on the overall value of the property.

So correctly specifying the particulars in relation to car spaces is critically important.

## Some examples

In recent months, Realcover has received a number of enquiries from agents that specifically relate to car spaces.

In one instance, a sales agent on instruction from the vendor advised a purchaser that the property included a car space, however the executed contract did not include a car space. The purchaser threatened to proceed with a damages claim against both the vendor and the agent for misleading and deceptive conduct.

In another instance, an agent marketed and sold the property in question with one car space. The purchaser alleged that they purchased the property on the basis of a large undercover area that was pointed out by the agent to be the car space, but which was not in fact the correct car space.

## Beware misrepresentation

Caveat emptor, or buyer beware, is a commonly known principle of property law. However, court cases have shown that a real estate agent will be liable to any purchaser for the loss flowing from a misrepresentation made by the agent. This is the case regardless of the fact that the contract for sale includes clauses to the effect that the purchaser cannot claim compensation for any alleged insufficiencies. However, an agent will not be liable unless it is proven that the purchaser of the property actually relied on the information that was presented by the agent.

Therefore, it is not enough to rely on provisions in the contract for sale as a defence to such a claim. Agents must be attentive when

ensuring that appropriate measures are in place to avoid allegations of misleading or deceptive conduct.

## Practical steps

It is important to confirm that the details provided in relation to the property are in fact correct. Agents must ensure they obtain these details in writing from the vendor or their solicitor prior to commencing the marketing campaign for the property.

The Licensee-in-charge should ensure this is common practice within the business, so that all information put forward to the public is correct from the very beginning.

In the case of a car space in particular, ask the vendor to physically show you the space – this way there is no confusion.

When it comes to documents such as brochures, flyers, sign boards and any online advertising, use the same font size throughout, including where there may be any disclaimers. This avoids important details getting lost in the fine print.

Once the advertisements are confirmed, request that the vendor checks and signs off on them before they are released. It is also a good idea to send a copy of the marketing material to the vendor's solicitor. Furthermore, checking the contract for sale to ensure that the details are consistent with the previous details issued from the vendor is a way to avoid any miscommunication.

While being proactive is essential in order to avoid claims, always remember that adequate professional indemnity insurance is also important. Taking a few simple measures could see you avoid any potential claims of misrepresentation. ♦

*Let Realcover protect your business with professional indemnity insurance designed with your needs in mind. When it is time to renew your policy, contact Realcover on 1800 990 312 for a quote. REINSW members receive a discount.*

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# At what cost? The importance of strata insurance valuations

When it comes to strata insurance valuations, agents need to be aware of the issues that can potentially arise and ensure they are complying with the correct legislation.

---

BY SHANE FOLEY  
Director of BIV Reports Pty Limited



The *Strata Schemes Management Act 1996* requires that all strata properties are appropriately insured. In order to calculate the appropriate level of insurance cover, the Owners Corporation must, at least every five years, obtain a valuation of the building from a suitably qualified person.

In order to comply with the legislation, it is essential to correctly instruct the valuer who is carrying out the building insurance valuation. Providing incorrect or incomplete instructions may result in an inaccurate valuation and could potentially leave you liable for the additional insurance premium that your clients may have been required to pay had the correct instructions been provided. It may also leave you exposed to any financial shortfall in the event of a total or partial loss of the improvements.

There have been some recent examples where agents have wrongly instructed and obtained a valuation for the 'market value', rather than a building insurance valuation in compliance with the *Strata Schemes Management Act*. Some of these valuations were more than 200% higher than that which was necessary. As a result, the Owners Corporation was paying a higher premium than what they should otherwise have paid. In such circumstances, an Owners Corporation may have a claim against the instructing agent.

### Complying with the legislation

The two most common terms for these valuations are 'building insurance valuation' and 'insurance replacement valuation', and they are generally carried out by specialist valuers who are familiar with the requirements of the relevant legislation.

For strata insurance valuations, compliance with the following legislation is essential:

- *Strata Schemes Management Act 1996*: Section 85 requires valuations of strata buildings be obtained at least once every five years and that they are carried out by a qualified person.
- Strata Schemes Management Regulation 2010: Clause 11 details the qualifications that a person must have in order to carry out a valuation for strata insurance purposes and clause 12 sets out the manner of calculating the amount to which the

liability of an insurer may be limited under a damage policy.

- *Valuers Act 2003*: This Act provides for the qualifications and regulation of valuers.
- Valuers Regulation 2010: Clause 10 and Schedule 1 set out the Rules of Conduct for valuers.

Valuers should also adhere to accepted valuation practices in compliance with the relevant Code of Practice and Guidance Notes.

### Considerations

Every building insurance valuation must follow the requirements set out under clause 12 of the Strata Schemes Management Regulation and show each of the components found within that clause. These include:

- the cost to replace specified improvements
- professional fees
- demolition and removal of debris
- GST
- building cost escalation during the period of insurance, as well as cost escalation during the periods of documentation and construction.

This task is best handled by a specialist valuer with experience in building insurance valuations for strata properties. The building insurance valuation must be on replacement basis, rather than on a reinstatement basis. It's essential that the valuer really understand the difference between these bases, as the differences are significant.

In addition to the above requirements, further consideration must be given to unusual properties and construction types (see box).

### Using specialist registered valuers

It is important to always engage a person who has the qualifications as prescribed by the legislation. For example, it is not sufficient for a valuation to be signed off by "Inspector No 22", as this does not comply with the *Strata Schemes Management Act* or the *Valuers Act* and could leave the instructing agent open to a claim in negligence.

The Valuers Regulation requires a registered valuer to provide their registration number and any conditions or limitations on the registration. The valuer must also sign the valuation and disclose

any relevant limitations or qualifications to the valuation.

### Co-insurance clauses

Under most insurance policies, an insurance company has the right to invoke the co-insurance clause where the strata building has been underinsured. For example, in a case where the property is insured for \$3,000,000 and it can be proven that it should have been insured for \$4,000,000, and in the circumstance of a loss of \$1,000,000, the insurer will only have to pay \$750,000 (or 75%) of that loss. The shortfall of \$250,000 may be able to be claimed as negligence against an instructing agent, if the agent did not properly obtain a valid building insurance valuation.

As can be seen, there is a strong case for liability against non-compliance from agents. Owners Corporations rely upon agents to do their job correctly and transparently, while also providing accurate advice. Obtaining a valuation from a non-specialist valuer, or any other kind of non-qualified individual, could have serious implications for the instructing agent. ♦

## UNUSUAL PROPERTIES AND CONSTRUCTION TYPES INCLUDE:

- heritage features
- unusual building materials
- sandstone work
- slate rooves
- high ceilings
- steep building blocks
- difficulty in obtaining site access during normal work hours (cranes for battleaxe properties, limited loading times for busy roads)
- time delay in obtaining approvals
- easement for crane swing
- longer construction times

*This is not an exhaustive list.*

# Rent rolls – To build or to buy?

If you are serious about building long-term wealth in your real estate business, investing in your rent roll can be a great place to start. But when it comes time to increase the properties under your management, what is the best strategy: to build or to buy?

BY TINA LIPTAI

## To build

Director of InStyle Real Estate, Ladele Jones, has experienced both buying and building a rent roll. Though she recommends taking your business' individual position and goals into account before deciding, Ladele sees building a rent roll over time as a great option.

"When you first open your business it seems like a great idea to purchase a rent roll because then everything is set up and ready to go," she explained.

"However, based on past experience, I believe it's better to organically grow a rent roll when you first start out. It's cost effective, lets you build strong relationships with owners and tenants, and you know it's a good quality roll because you're the one who built it."

### Plan for growth

To successfully grow a rent roll, you need the right strategies in place. Start with a written business plan including your growth goals and how you are going to achieve them.

Employing a Business Development Manager with a good working knowledge of property management and sales to grow your rent roll, rather than a property manager, could also be of huge benefit.

A number of factors can affect the future value and return of your rent roll. It's important to consider the number of agencies in the area, how many properties are in the area, and whether they are older or new. Always factor in distance from a property to your agency; travelling even 5km from your office can have a huge impact on time management.

"Communication and following up, with your staff and clients, are key. Maintain a good contacts database and look for opportunities to make more contacts by being involved in the community, holding events and even contacting private landlords you see advertising on social media or local newspapers," Ms Jones said.

"Make growth enjoyable by giving your staff incentives to gain new managements and, where possible, look for ways to incorporate new technology to work more efficiently."

Weekly team meetings, which include the sales team, to discuss potential opportunities for growth can also be of huge benefit. This will also make it easier to know when to employ additional staff so the rent roll can keep growing.

Ladele Jones



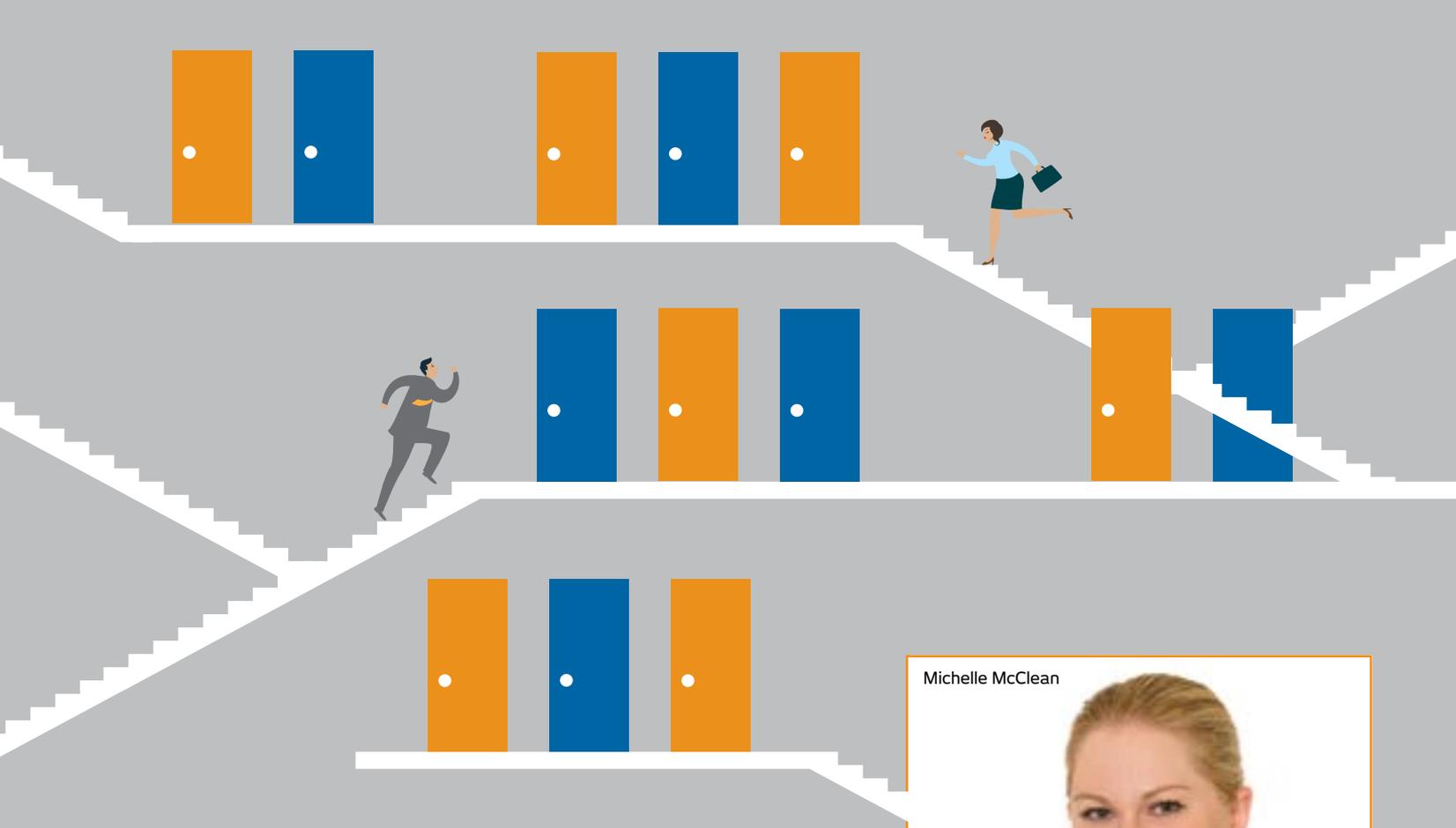
## POSITIVES

- You know it's stable, good quality and there will be few, if any, financial or maintenance surprises
- Tenants and investors know your processes and systems
- Less of an initial financial outlay and less risk
- It's a fantastic asset and investment



## NEGATIVES

- Time spent growing the rent roll may take focus from other areas of business
- No immediate cash flow from rental commissions and letting fees
- Initial expenses like marketing, hiring employees, renting an office, and other costs that can exceed the business' income.
- You have to build a strong presence in the market quickly



## To buy

Love Realty invested in a rent roll at the end of 2014 and the agency's Senior Property Manager, Michelle McLean, has first-hand experience of what it takes to successfully integrate an acquired rent roll into a business.

### Do your research

"Obviously, it's a huge financial investment but you'll also be investing a lot of time, so the purchase needs to be very carefully considered. Look closely at the previous management to help you assess if it will be the right fit for your business," Ms McLean said.

Ms McLean recommends closely researching management and other fees, the split of houses versus apartments, the number of older versus new properties, percentage of fixed term leases, how many owners hold multiple properties, arrears management and location of properties.

"Make sure the service you are offering is aligned or better than what the owners are receiving," she said.

"If the agency you are buying from has a superior offering, or use significantly different processes, than what you plan to deliver then you will lose owners and tenants very quickly.

"For example, we insist on direct debit payment of rent for all tenants. If they aren't used to this it can cause problems during the transition. You will probably have some tenants move out and landlords move on, and while that is not ideal, ultimately it might be for the best in the long run."

Also, consider the timing of the purchase and whether it might have an impact on transitioning staff and owners.

"We bought our rent roll in the Christmas period, which presented additional challenges for us as a large number of owners and tenants were away on holidays," she added.

### Once you've bought a rent roll

Communication is essential and you will need to quickly establish a good relationship with owners and tenants. Educating owners about your processes and service is also key to success.

"It is a huge challenge to transition owners from the previous management to your management without upsetting too many people," Ms McLean said.

"Make an effort to get to know everyone as soon as possible. I would recommend holding a meet and greet event and reach out personally to owners." ♦

Michelle McClean



## POSITIVES

- Immediate, sometimes exponential, growth of your business
- Banks will often lend money to acquire rent rolls against the value of that rent roll
- Potential to generate income off the sale of properties on the rent roll
- Cash flow from a good rent roll can sustain a business

## NEGATIVES

- Even with research and due diligence, you can never be 100% certain of what you are buying
- Possibility of losing owners and tenants during the transition period
- Potential for unforeseen and costly issues, like maintenance or arrears
- Huge time investment to quickly build relationships with new owners and tenants, and transition them to the new processes and systems

# Celebrating excellence

With entries now open for the 2015 REINSW Awards for Excellence, some of last year's winners share their thoughts and experiences about their success.

---



“

I used the Awards for Excellence to benchmark what I felt had been an amazing year for our team; a year full of hard work, outstanding results and business improvements.

”

MARTIN WELLS  
Managing Director and  
Principal at Atkinsons Real  
Estate  
*Winner of the Real Estate  
Agency – Small Award in 2014*

“

Because the REINSW Awards for Excellence are industry based, their credibility is second to none.

”

ANASTASIA WHITTAKER  
Principal at Bathurst Real Estate  
*Winner of the John Greig  
OAM Community Service  
Award in 2014*

“

We entered the Awards for Excellence because REINSW is the largest and most influential industry body in NSW and we knew recognition as a winner would be advantageous.

”

CRAIG MARSHALL  
Principal at Century 21  
Cordeau Marshall Group  
*Winner of the Innovation Award  
in 2014*

“

When we were announced as the winner, the team was elated. As team leader, I was so proud. Our team is like a strong steel chain, where every link is as important as the other – so it was gratifying to enjoy the success together.

”

JOHN CUNNINGHAM  
Managing Director at  
Cunninghams  
Property  
*Winner of the Residential Sales  
Team Award in 2014*



# excellence

Entries are now open for the

## 2015 REINSW AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE

It's that time of year when REINSW showcases our industry's top performers.

This is your opportunity to highlight your biggest successes and most outstanding achievements.

Finalists will be announced in August 2015 and winners will be revealed at the Gala Dinner on Thursday, 8 October 2015.

### TO ENTER

Visit [www.reinsw.com.au/awards](http://www.reinsw.com.au/awards) to view the criteria and enter.

Entries close on **Friday, 12 June 2015**.

### MORE INFORMATION

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

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Commercial Agency – Small  
Digital Marketing  
Holiday & Short-Term Rentals Agency  
Innovation  
Real Estate Agency – Large  
Real Estate Agency – Small  
Residential Property Management Team  
Residential Sales Team

### INDIVIDUAL CATEGORIES

Auctioneer  
Buyers' Agent  
Commercial Property Manager  
Commercial Salesperson  
Corporate Support  
John Greig OAM Community Service  
Property Marketer  
Residential Property Manager  
Residential Salesperson  
Rising Star  
Rural Marketer  
Young Agent

# Seven strategies for auction success

BY CLARENCE WHITE  
Licensed Real Estate Agent  
and Auctioneer at Mcgrath



Auction success is not a fluke. It is a result of diligent work by the selling agent throughout the campaign, and of judicious work on the auction floor by both agent and auctioneer.

---

Auction is a great way to sell real estate. It's transparent, it's efficient and when handled by a skilled agent it offers a unique opportunity to achieve a premium result. But a clearly defined, tightly controlled, highly-consistent auction process that repeatedly achieves premium results is not a matter of luck or chance. It is developed through practice and by applying proven techniques. Here are seven strategies I have observed that help high-performing agents consistently deliver strong results while maintaining outstanding client service for both vendors and buyers alike.

## 1. Be courageous on price

Be courageous enough to tell your owner what the market evidence says the home is worth when you list the property. Be courageous in passing on price feedback from buyers throughout the campaign. If you don't lay the groundwork to have the owner's expectations in line with the market as early as possible in the process, you're only delaying an inevitable tough conversation, and in so doing you are creating an uphill battle to sell the home. Getting pricing right from the start is crucial.

## 2. Control the timing of pre-auction offers using a do-not-sell period

For the first week (some agents do two weeks) when buyers inevitably ask "what would it take to buy it before auction", simply advise the buyer that your vendor will not be accepting offers for the first week as they are interested to gauge the market before they make any decisions. This gives you time to gauge how much interest there is in the home and puts you in a better position to know whether to encourage offers prior or take the property to auction

## 3. Diligent follow up

This sounds like a no-brainer, but you'd be surprised how many agents simply don't do this. Follow up all open home attendees; identify potential bidders; find out their situation, their budget and up to what price they see value in the home. Stay in touch with them regularly throughout the campaign. If a likely bidder doesn't see value in the home anywhere near the level of the owners' expectations and you don't know before auction day, you haven't asked the right questions. If they buy a different home the weekend before your auction, no longer intend

to come to your auction and you don't know about it before auction day, you've failed to stay abreast of their situation. Stay in touch. Ask good questions.

## 4. Bidder meetings

If you have done point 3 well, then inviting your likely bidders into the office to pre-register and discuss their auction day strategy should be a cinch. A quick 15-minute meeting with each of your bidders the day before the auction will shore up the likelihood of things going to plan on the day. Offer useful advice on how to bid at auction, discuss the advantages of being the opening bidder, of bidding strongly to intimidate the competition and of ending up as the highest bidder regardless of whether the reserve is reached. Help them define a figure they'd be comfortable to buy the home at, a stretch figure they could buy the home at if pushed and a figure at which they won't be buying the home. All of this will create a win-win for you and the buyer. They get some professional advice on how to succeed in securing the home and you set up the likelihood of a quick opening bid followed by strong competitive bidding.

### 5. Set the reserve strategically

Just because the vendor has a minimum price at which they will sell the home does not mean that figure should automatically be where you set the reserve. We are not paid just to get the home sold, our job is to achieve the best possible price. The key is to separate the vendor's expectation from the reserve price and treat these as two different figures. The reserve is a tool we can use to maximise the result. It could potentially bear as much relationship to the buyer price feedback as it does to the owners' expectations in some cases. Remember, the reserve price can always be amended in real time on the auction floor by agreement of your vendor, so if pushing for a high reserve fails you can always fall back to your vendor's minimum expectation.



Remember, the skills that make your process successful can be honed and perfected. So work with your auctioneer or a coach to fine-tune your process.

### 6. Talk to bidders on the auction floor

Too many agents are scared of talking to bidders on the auction floor or simply don't know what to say. Firstly be calm and confident. If you approach them

in a forthright manner and ask direct questions, you will be surprised what you can achieve. Remember, the bidders want to buy the home; you are helping them achieve their goal.

### 7. Work with a good auctioneer

It goes without saying, a great auctioneer who reads the auction floor well, thinks quickly on their feet, understands what action to take in each situation and has polished strategies to stimulate further bidding is worth money in your vendor's pocket.

Remember, the skills that make your process successful can be honed and perfected. So work with your auctioneer or a coach to fine-tune your process until you have it down to a fine art. The rewards will follow with an abundance of listings and sales. Happy selling. ♦

# Like to sell your rent roll?

Right now is the perfect time to sell. If you would like a confidential discussion about your rent roll call us today and together we can plan your selling strategy. We have a wide range of genuine buyers ready right now to negotiate confidentially and discreetly.

Ross Hedditch  
Mob: **0418 321 952**  
rhedditch@bdhsolutions.com.au

Stephen Francis  
Mob: **0418 223 933**  
sfrancis@bdhsolutions.com.au

**bdhsolutions.com.au**



**STEPHEN FRANCIS**

**ROSS HEDDITCH**

# 100+ Conference preview

Members and sponsors enjoyed a sneak peek at what's in store for the 2015 100+ Conference!

Following the outstanding success of the inaugural 100+ Conference in 2014, planning is well underway for this year's follow-up. More than 100 members and sponsors were the first to hear about what REINSW has planned at an exclusive, invitation-only preview event held on 3 March 2015. From keynote speakers and an inspiring program to an innovative and interactive exhibition hub, attendees discovered why the 100+ Conference will be the must-attend industry event of 2015.

The 2015 100 Conference will be held on 24-25 August 2015 in Sydney. To find out more, go to [www.100plus.com.au](http://www.100plus.com.au) ♦



## ROADSHOW 2015 REAL ESTATE'S BIG DAY OUT 2 sessions

It's all about **your** industry!

Only at the Real Estate Institute of New South Wales Roadshow will you find out what's really happening in your industry from the people who are in the know.

### ▶ PRINCIPALS-ONLY SESSION

**Industrial D-Day – A new era for the real estate industry**

Hear from the Real Estate Employers' Federation about what lies ahead in the industrial relations space.

7.45am to 9.00am

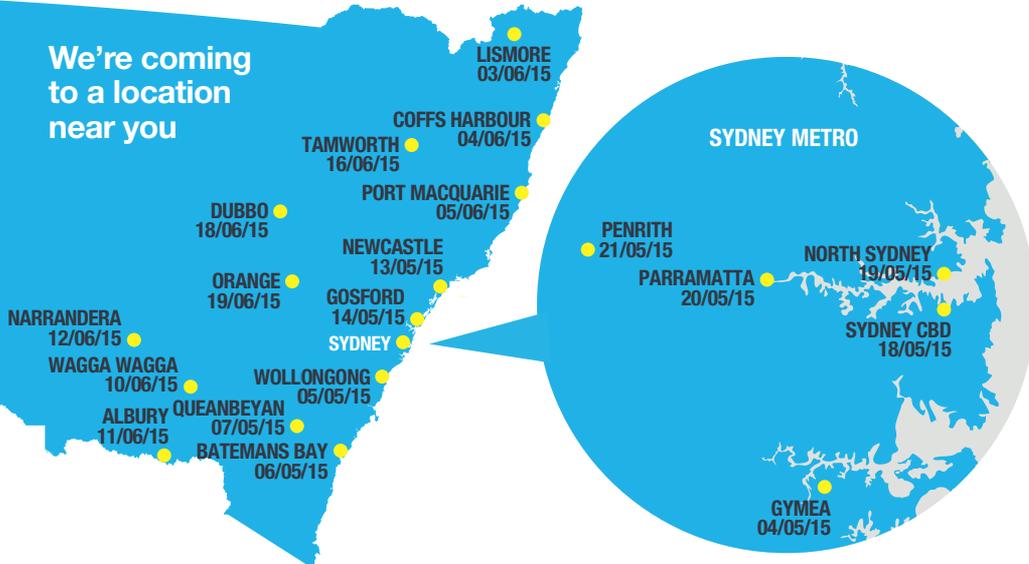
### ▶ INDUSTRY UPDATE

Don't miss a program packed with the industry information you've asked for!

- The digital revolution  
How to benefit from the digital world with realestate.com.au's Derek Taylor
- Your local housing market  
Current state and future prospects from Domain's Dr Andrew Wilson
- The issues that matter  
An update from REINSW
- Inside NSW Fair Trading  
Practical advice direct from Fair Trading

9.30am to 1.30pm

We're coming to a location near you



# Training calendar



## Roadshow 2015 - JUNE

Only at the REINSW Roadshow will you find out what's really happening in your industry from the people who are in the know. This year, we're bringing the industry's key players together at 19 locations across New South Wales. Don't miss your chance to get the inside scoop!

## JUNE 2015

**1 – 5 Jun • SYDNEY**

**Certificate of Registration Course ●**  
(9.00am–5.00pm) (full time)

**2 – 4 Jun • SYDNEY**

**Trust Accounting Essentials ●**  
(9.30am–4.30pm)

**3 Jun • LISMORE**

**REINSW Roadshow ●**  
(7.45am–1.30pm)

**4 Jun • COFFS HARBOUR**

**REINSW Roadshow ●**  
(7.45am–1.30pm)

**5 Jun • PORT MACQUARIE**

**REINSW Roadshow ●**  
(7.45am–1.30pm)

**10 Jun • WAGGA WAGGA**

**REINSW Roadshow ●**  
(7.45am–1.30pm)

**11 Jun • ALBURY**

**REINSW Roadshow ●**  
(7.45am–1.30pm)

**11 Jun • SYDNEY**

**Taking Your Website from Woe to Wow ●**  
(9.30am–4.30pm)

**12 Jun • NARRANDERA**

**REINSW Roadshow ●**  
(7.45am–1.30pm)

**12 Jun • SYDNEY**

**Maximise Your New Management Success Rate ●**  
(9.30am–1.30pm)

**15-19 Jun • SYDNEY**

**Certificate of Registration Course ●**  
(9.00am–5.00pm) (full time)

**16 Jun • TAMWORTH**

**REINSW Roadshow ●**  
(7.45am–1.30pm)

**16 Jun • SYDNEY**

**Cross Cultural Communication ●**  
(9.30am–1.30pm)

**18 Jun • DUBBO**

**REINSW Roadshow ●**  
(7.45am–1.30pm)

**19 Jun • ORANGE**

**REINSW Roadshow ●**  
(7.45am–1.30pm)

**22 – 24 Jun • SYDNEY**

**List and Market Property Essentials ●**  
(9.30am–4.30pm)

**22 – 26 Jun • SYDNEY**

**Certificate of Registration Course ●**  
(9.00am–5.00pm) (full time)

**25 Jun • SYDNEY**

**The Nuts and Bolts of the Residential Tenancies Act ●**  
(9.30am–1.30pm)

**29 Jun • SYDNEY**

**Certificate of Registration Course ●**  
(9.00am–5.00pm) (full time)

## JULY 2014

**6 – 10 Jul • SYDNEY**

**Certificate of Registration Course ●**  
(9.00am–5.00pm) (full time)

**7 Jul • SYDNEY**

**Your Digital Twin ●**  
(9.30am–1.30pm)

**9 Jul • SYDNEY**

**Setting Up A New Business ●**  
(9.30am–1.30pm)

**13 Jul • SYDNEY**

**Property Management Essentials ●**  
(9.30am–4.30pm)

**20 - 24 Jul • SYDNEY**

**Certificate of Registration Course ●**  
(9.00am–5.00pm) (full time)

**22 Jul • SYDNEY**

**The NEW Contract for Sale ●**  
(9.30am–3.00pm)

**27 - 30 Jul • SYDNEY**

**Property Sales Essentials ●**  
(9.30am–4.30pm)

**27 - 31 Jul • SYDNEY**

**Certificate of Registration Course ●**  
(9.00am–5.00pm) (full time)

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### COURSE KEY

- Certificate of Registration Course
- Toolbox Series
- Real Estate Essentials Series
- Finance and Compliance Course
- Roadshow (Principals-only session)

# Community care



After seeing local mothers struggling to find a clean and private place to breastfeed their children, the team at Di Jones Real Estate decided to open their office as a safe haven.

is the fact that many public buildings do not having the facilities to accommodate breastfeeding mothers. All too aware of the issue, the team at Di Jones Real Estate decided to take matters in their own hands and offer a room in their office as a clean, quiet and private alternative.

“We have an office full of working mums, so we felt it was the logical thing to do and we had the space to do it,” Ms Walsh said. “For us, it’s just about making life more comfortable for mums. It really does put the challenge out there for other businesses and companies to get involved and do things like this if they have the space.”

So is the extra traffic in the office disruptive? According to Ms Walsh, not at all. “Sixty per cent of the Di Jones Real Estate work force is female, and in fact my little terrors were in the office recently and it wasn’t an issue at all. It’s really par for the course!”

“It’s been great to see that we’ve been able to make a lot of mums’ lives easier,” she said. “The response has been overwhelmingly positive.”

Since the initiative commenced, three to five women a week use the room at Di Jones Real Estate. ♦



Kylie Walsh (R) appeared on the Today Show to discuss the agency’s initiative.

As the first woman in Australia to own a real estate office, Di Jones was undoubtedly a trailblazer and revolutionised the way in which women are positioned in the real estate industry. Since commencing trading in 1992, her namesake agency has become synonymous with continuous innovation and always striving to make the extra effort to help out in the local community.

And the local community has indeed experienced the benefit of the latest initiative from the team at Di Jones Real Estate in Woollahra. After seeing a local mother breastfeeding her child while sitting on the floor of a local public toilet

facility, the team decided it was time to take action.

“Just prior to Christmas, I went to the bathroom and saw this gorgeous mum sitting on the floor of the bathroom,” Di Jones Real Estate General Manager Kylie Walsh said. “She looked really anxious and so did the baby. So I invited her into our office, simply to have a comfortable environment to feed her child.”

Debate about whether or not it is appropriate for mothers to breastfeed in public is long-running. In some cases, mothers are forced to seek privacy so as not to generate any negative reactions. Further complicating the issue

## YOUR STORY

We want to hear your stories!

If you, or a member you know, supports a charity or works generously in the local community, please help us share the story. Email the *Real Estate Journal* Editor at [journal@reinsw.com.au](mailto:journal@reinsw.com.au)



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