

# Journal

MAY 2013  
VOL 64/04



**The Block**  
**All Stars alumni**  
How our members  
shaped the show

**Independent**  
**or franchise**  
Which structure  
is right for you?

**Sowing the**  
**seeds for return**  
Exploring the value  
of gardens

**Printing protocol**  
Your in-house and  
external options

## Spirit of service

The agents who make charity a priority







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Liliana O'Toole, Director at Doyle Spillane, discusses the importance of giving back to her community in this month's cover feature.



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[Quote: Why risk it]

## PRESIDENT



# The spirit of giving in your community

The focus in this month's edition of the *Journal* is the spirit of giving. The benefits of pulling your team together to give back to your community, to charity or society at large are numerous.

Plain and simple: giving back is good for the soul. There is an inherent feel-good factor associated with giving time, effort and often money to those in need.

From my experience, the sharing of such positive emotions with workmates helps build a strong sense of camaraderie that continues once back in the office.

In addition, your team may learn new skills. They will most certainly meet new people — and potential clients or referral sources — and will likely come away with a sense of achievement.

For a business, incentives for giving back can also include positive brand marketing and recommendations.

Receiving funds or help to complete projects that would otherwise be unachievable for them, means that communities and charities are able to continue in their endeavours through the spirit of giving.

If you haven't already, consider how your business could give back.

### Novice auctioneers

In the coming months, REINSW will once again be holding the annual Novice Auctioneers Competition.

Many of our former novice auctioneers have gone on to great things.

In the spirit of this month's charity-focused issue, the event raises significant funds for our charity of choice, St Vincent de Paul, along with local charities nominated by each Division organiser. Find out how you can get involved in the competition, and other ways you can help Vinnies by reading this month's cover feature.

### Awards for Excellence

Entries open this month for the 2013 REINSW Awards for Excellence. By shining the spotlight on performance, creative initiative and successes, the application process encourages members to reflect on their most outstanding qualities and achievements. Winners will be judged across 17 categories, for their skill, knowledge and innovation.

Visit our website at [reinsw.com.au/2013Awards](http://reinsw.com.au/2013Awards) for more information.

**Christian Payne**  
REINSW President

## CEO



# REINSW is on the road again

With 2013 now well underway, I am looking forward to the next few months as the team at REINSW hits the road to meet members and speak about the issues that are important to us all.

REINSW has learnt over the years that the best way to engage with you is to meet face to face. As a result, we are committed to reaching you no matter where you are.

REINSW President Christian Payne and I, together with representatives from NSW Fair Trading, the Office of the NSW Small Business Commissioner and the Real Estate Employers' Federation (REEF) will be travelling around NSW during June and July.

We have allocated sufficient time so that you, our members, can let us know about the issues that you are facing.

REINSW will be spending a full day in each location, bringing you a program packed with the industry information, training topics and networking opportunities you have asked for.

### Industry update

In the morning, we are delivering an industry update session. During this session, Christian and I will give you an update on the key issues that REINSW is currently focusing on, including our proposed model for partial self-regulation of our profession, mandatory professional indemnity insurance, national licensing and harmonisation, and more.

You will also hear from REEF about the employment issues that are likely to affect agency practice in 2013, and learn what is happening on the Fair Work front and how with the help of REEF agencies can get workplace relations right.

The NSW Small Business Commissioner will also be joining us to explain what resources are available to help you manage your small business and deal with disputes quickly and efficiently with little or no cost.

### Tailored CPD

In the afternoon, REINSW will be conducting a CPD training session. It will cover Agency Agreements and the common mistakes which are made in relation to Contracts for Sale. We will ensure you are up to date with all the latest legislative changes and give you a refresher course on key areas of agency practice.

We are travelling to 19 locations across NSW. In addition to locations across metropolitan Sydney, we will be visiting 13 regional locations.

Find out more about where we are going and what we are covering by going to our website at [reinsw.com.au](http://reinsw.com.au). I look forward to seeing you in June and July.

**Tim McKibbin**  
REINSW CEO



## O'Farrell announces push for NSW investment

NSW Premier Barry O'Farrell has made a concerted effort to encourage overseas and interstate investment in New South Wales under his NSW Now campaign.

"We want to provide business leaders within NSW, throughout the rest of Australia, across Asia and the rest of the world with confidence in the scale of investor opportunity in NSW," said O'Farrell.

"The NSW Government wants to share why it's a better, stronger and healthier state for business – one that's worth investing in, and worth investing in now."

The NSW Now campaign will include billboards inside and outside Sydney Airport, online advertisements in international newspapers and billboards on the border of NSW and Queensland.

Since March 2011, NSW has created nearly 100,000 jobs. The state has the second lowest unemployment and economic rate of growth in the country.

"We are building for the future – over the next four years we are delivering the biggest state infrastructure agenda in Australia's history, investing \$61.8bn – including Australia's two largest transport projects – the North West Rail Link and WestConnex."



## Legislation targets child fatalities

NSW Fair Trading hopes to reduce the number of children falling from windows through the regulation of window locks in strata buildings.

The proposals, outlined in its *Children and Window Safety Consultation Paper*, stipulate that all windows above the ground in existing residential strata schemes must be retrospectively fitted with a lock or safety device which prevents the window opening more than 12.5cm.

"In 2011-12, 39 children aged nine or younger were hospitalised in NSW due to window falls," said Minister for Fair Trading Anthony Roberts.

"Adult vigilance is critical when it comes to preventing a child fall, a window safety device is the last line of defence and it could save a child's life."

The NSW Government will amend strata and residential tenancies legislation to require

Owners' Corporations to install safety devices on all windows that pose a safety risk to young children.

The proposals will also allow owners to install safety devices regardless of the bylaws of the strata scheme and to include window safety devices in the prescribed condition report for rental premises.

Owners' Corporations will be given five years to retrospectively fit windows with safety devices under the proposed scheme.

Window safety devices will be compulsory in new residential buildings from 1 May 2013 in line with changes to the Building Code of Australia.

There are more than 70,000 strata schemes across NSW and by 2030 it is estimated that more than 50 per cent of the state's population will live in a strata scheme.

The number of high rise residential apartment

buildings in NSW has grown in recent decades, driven by demand from families.

"Some owners and tenants will already have safety devices fitted to their windows, but this will ensure any child living in or visiting an apartment above the ground floor will be safe," said Mr Roberts.

REINSW has prepared and submitted a response to the consultation paper. It is available for download at [reinsw.com.au/lobbying](http://reinsw.com.au/lobbying).

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# City of Sydney regenerates laneways

Sydney is to follow in the footsteps of Melbourne with the makeover of its laneways by the City of Sydney, as part of a strategy to reclaim unused spaces.

Under the scheme, a pedestrian short cut between Pitt and Castlereagh Streets will receive a makeover.

Hosking Place and Penfold Lane will be updated with granite paving, LED street

lights and public art. Lees Court, near the Theatre Royal is also earmarked to receive a similar upgrade.

“It is part of our ongoing strategy to enliven the city’s laneways to build a more vibrant and welcoming city centre that people can explore, and creating new spaces for small bars, live music or other cultural activities,” Lord Mayor Clover Moore said of the proposed scheme.

“Sprucing up the lanes with new paving, better lighting and a lower speed limit will create a safer and more attractive space for pedestrians and encourage small businesses such as cafes or retail to set up shop.”

The Council has approved the project design concept to proceed to the detailed design stage before going to tender. Construction is tentatively scheduled for early 2014.



## Barbie to buy in Australia

LJ Hooker has teamed up with Mattel to find Barbie’s Australian dream home.

Barbie has apparently been spotted trawling through the LJ Hooker iPhone app, website and property magazine looking for an Australian pad.

*The New York Times* reported in February that Barbie is selling her Malibu Beach House in California for US\$25m and looking for a new home.

“Barbie is one of the world’s biggest brands and LJ Hooker is one of Australia’s, so it was a natural decision for us to partner with them,” said LJ Hooker Head of Communications Sarah Stewart.

“We also identified it was a great way to give our brand an injection of fun and personality, connect with our customers and fuel brand awareness.”

According to her Twitter feed, Barbie has been enjoying Mercedes Benz Fashion Week Australia in Sydney, taking in the Camilla and Marc show.

## Member discounts set to increase

# 40% OFF

### REINSW STORE PRODUCTS FOR MEMBERS

In line with REINSW’s Strategic Plan put in place in 2012, we will be increasing the discount our members receive on REINSW Store products from 25% to 40% effective from 1 May 2013.

In addition to the discount, by 2015, Store products will be offered exclusively to members, making membership even more beneficial.

Updated Store pricelists and order forms have been sent out to all Licensees-in-charge of member agencies, and a copy is available for download from our website at [reinsw.com.au/pricelist](http://reinsw.com.au/pricelist).

To find out more, please email our friendly team at [servicecentre@reinsw.com.au](mailto:servicecentre@reinsw.com.au), or call (02) 9264 2343 (and select option 5).

# Confidence rising

BY JILL PARK

Prompted by the Reserve Bank's Assistant Governor's buoyant speech about the state of the real estate industry, is consumer confidence returning to the market?

Assistant Governor of the Reserve Bank Christopher Kent gave a speech to the Australian Institute of Building in Sydney on 14 March 2013. He presented a positive picture of the future of the property market in Australia, driven by dwelling investment and beneficial interest rates.

"Overall the data over recent months suggests that demand in the established housing market is strengthening gradually, and this should help to underpin further moderate growth in dwelling construction," he concluded.

The *Journal* invited Dr Chris Caton, Chief Economist of BT, and REINSW CEO Tim McKibbin to comment on the key takeaways from Mr Kent's speech.

## Kent on interest rates

"Overall the data over recent months suggests that demand in the established housing market is strengthening gradually, and this should help to underpin further moderate growth in dwelling construction. This general strengthening has been helped, no doubt, by 175 basis points worth of cuts to the cash rate since late 2011."

## Kent on housing prices

"For the country as a whole, housing prices have been rising gradually since about May 2012

and are now about four per cent higher than they were at that time. However, if you were a developer who had made plans and purchased land for development around October 2010, when housing prices last peaked, then you might be forgiven for focusing on the fact that housing prices are still below their previous peaks in many locations."



RBA Assistant Governor Christopher Kent forecast a confident future.

## Kent on auction clearance rates

"The general improvement in sentiment is also apparent in auction clearance rates. After falling sharply in 2011, these rates recovered to around average levels in both Sydney and Melbourne in late 2012."

## Kent on householder debt

"With household indebtedness no longer moving up since

2006, this long period of adjustment now seems to have run its course."

## Kent on dwelling investment

"Private residential building approvals, though volatile, have picked up noticeably from their trough in early 2012.

"This recovery has been driven by an increase in higher-density approvals, mainly apartments,

and was seen in all the larger states. Across almost every major region in Sydney, building approvals since mid-2012 have been higher than they were in the previous five years."

## Kent on turnover

"Despite the improvement in conditions in the established





housing market turnover remains quite low, at least by comparison with most of the previous decade. However, it may be that the experience of that era is not the right comparison. Perhaps we shouldn't expect to see turnover sustained at those very high rates again."

#### Kent on vacancy rates

"Vacancy rates have been quite low since 2006 in comparison to the average since the early 1990s, and (with a small delay) this has led to rents rising relative to incomes and remaining relatively stable at around levels seen during previous cyclical peaks."

#### Kent on planning approval

"For New South Wales, it does appear that there was a larger

and more sustained pick-up in approvals in the inner and middle regions of Sydney than in outer Sydney and the rest of the state. This may have reflected some limitations in access to land on Sydney's fringes, but nonetheless there was a relatively rapid pick-up in approvals in 2009." ♦

“  
This recovery has been driven by an increase in higher-density approvals, mainly apartments, and was seen in all the larger states.”



**CHRIS CATON,  
BT CHIEF  
ECONOMIST**

"Certainly the outlook for house prices is better than it has been. There are some important qualifiers; prices may be going up, but they are not yet back to their previous peak.

In addition, we are not going back to the days when prices rose at 10-12% per year.

"Those years were driven by a willingness of households to increase their debt faster than their income. Those days are finished.

"I think the outlook is pretty uniform across the country — all heading in the same direction.

"Certainly over the past 10 years or so NSW was probably underperforming [in the property sector], but this won't necessarily continue."



**TIM MCKIBBIN,  
REINSW CEO**

"I agree with Mr Kent to the extent that I think there's been an improvement in confidence in the market. I think that has come in part as a consequence of some interest rate cuts announced by the RBA in 2012.

"I also think that the world economy has demonstrated an ability to better manage its problems. Focusing on the EU, Greece and Cyprus you can start to see plans put in place to address the many issues they have faced. The US economic data is also improving.

"We are now seeing improvement in the volume of property transactions taking place and auction clearance rates are improving. In 2012 they were in the mid-sixties, but they have since moved up into the early seventies.

"I am also expecting to see some foreign investment coming into the market."



# Planning a future


The NSW Government has called for comment on its plans for Sydney, but what will its proposals mean for the real estate industry?

New homes are at the centre of the NSW Government's draft metropolitan strategy for Sydney 2031. The draft, which is available for comment until 31 May 2013, outlines plans for the city and greater metropolitan area of Sydney until 2031.

"Our vision is simple – to cement Sydney as the best place to live and do business in Australia," said Minister for Planning and Infrastructure Brad Hazzard.

Feedback so far has highlighted that housing affordability is a major problem for Sydney residents, as are the variety of properties available and proximity to amenities and jobs.

The draft proposes a minimum housing target for Sydney's six sub-regions to help deliver the intended 27,500 new homes across the city each year.

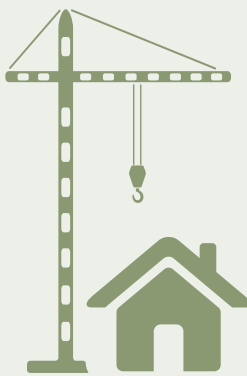


**NEW HOMES**

**NEEDED BY 2031**  
545,000

**EACH YEAR**  
27,250

**HOMES BUILT EACH YEAR IN THE LAST 5 YRS**  
14,500



**SYDNEY 2013**

 4.3M PEOPLE

 1.7M HOMES


 2.2M JOBS


**AVERAGE COMMUTE TIME IN SYDNEY**



**35MIN**

**SYDNEY 2031**

 5.6M PEOPLE

 2.2M HOMES

 2.8M JOBS

**PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE WHO TAKE PUBLIC TRANSPORT TO WORK**



**24%**



A new Land Release Policy, due for release later in the year, will focus on developments near Sydney's existing city centres and the development of greenfield sites.

Under the Urban Activation Precincts Program, precincts including North Ryde Station, Epping Town Centre, Wentworth Point, Carter Street Homebush, Herring Road Macquarie Park, Mascot Station, Anzac Parade South and Randwick will benefit from investment in more housing, public spaces,

community facilities and other infrastructure.

Meanwhile, a new website showcasing examples of different housing will be developed to promote different housing types, and will be supported by new design and development guidelines. The subdivision of properties will also be made easier under the proposals.

"The transformation of Sydney will be delivered as a critical part of the new planning system for NSW," Mr Hazzard said.

"This will provide the foundation for housing and jobs growth, well-planned infrastructure, and more certain decision-making to stimulate investment."

REINSW CEO Tim McKibbin said some people are now prepared to trade the luxury of a large backyard for the more convenient lifestyle available closer to cities.

"We have advocated for many years for an improvement in the planning system. As it stands it is complex and unnecessarily convoluted, and as a

consequence expensive and time consuming. These costs are ultimately borne by consumers who buy the property.

"We cannot have a planning system that is out of date."◆

## FEEDBACK

Provide feedback on the proposals online by the deadline 31 May 2013 at [planning.nsw.gov.au/Sydney](http://planning.nsw.gov.au/Sydney) or email [metrostrategy@planning.nsw.gov.au](mailto:metrostrategy@planning.nsw.gov.au)

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BY ROD STOWE, NSW FAIR TRADING COMMISSIONER

# A matter of trust

NSW Fair Trading puts trust accounts under the microscope.

NSW Fair Trading will be placing a priority on detecting trust account fraud in the real estate industry throughout 2013.

We are currently investigating 35 individual cases of alleged trust account fraud and we have channelled additional resources, including an increase in the number of investigators working in the field, towards this end.

The matters being investigated have come to our attention either through agents reporting alleged wrongdoing on the part of a staff member, or by our investigators identifying irregularities in agents' audited accounts.

Since 2010 there have been six convictions of agents for misappropriating trust funds in NSW. These are indictable offences and real estate agents can face prison terms of up to 10 years for meddling with trust accounts.

Under the *Property, Stock and Business Agents Act 2002*, real estate agents must hold clients' funds in a trust account kept at an authorised deposit-taking institution in New South Wales that has been approved by the Director General.

There are strict rules governing the naming of these accounts. The words 'trust account' must be used in the account's name and these words must also appear on all cheques drawn

on that account. Corporations must also include their company name in the account's title while accounts opened by individual licensees must include their full name.

“  
Since 2010 there have been six convictions of agents for misappropriating trust funds.”

A licensee must give notice to the authorised financial institution at the time of opening the trust account by using the 'blue form', which can be found by searching on our website at [fairtrading.nsw.gov.au](http://fairtrading.nsw.gov.au). The original form must go to the institution, the duplicate must be sent to Fair Trading and the third copy is retained by the licensee.

The Property, Stock and Business Agents Amendment Bill 2012 was passed in February this year. We are expecting the changes to strike a balance between providing adequate protection for consumers and minimising red tape for real estate agents.

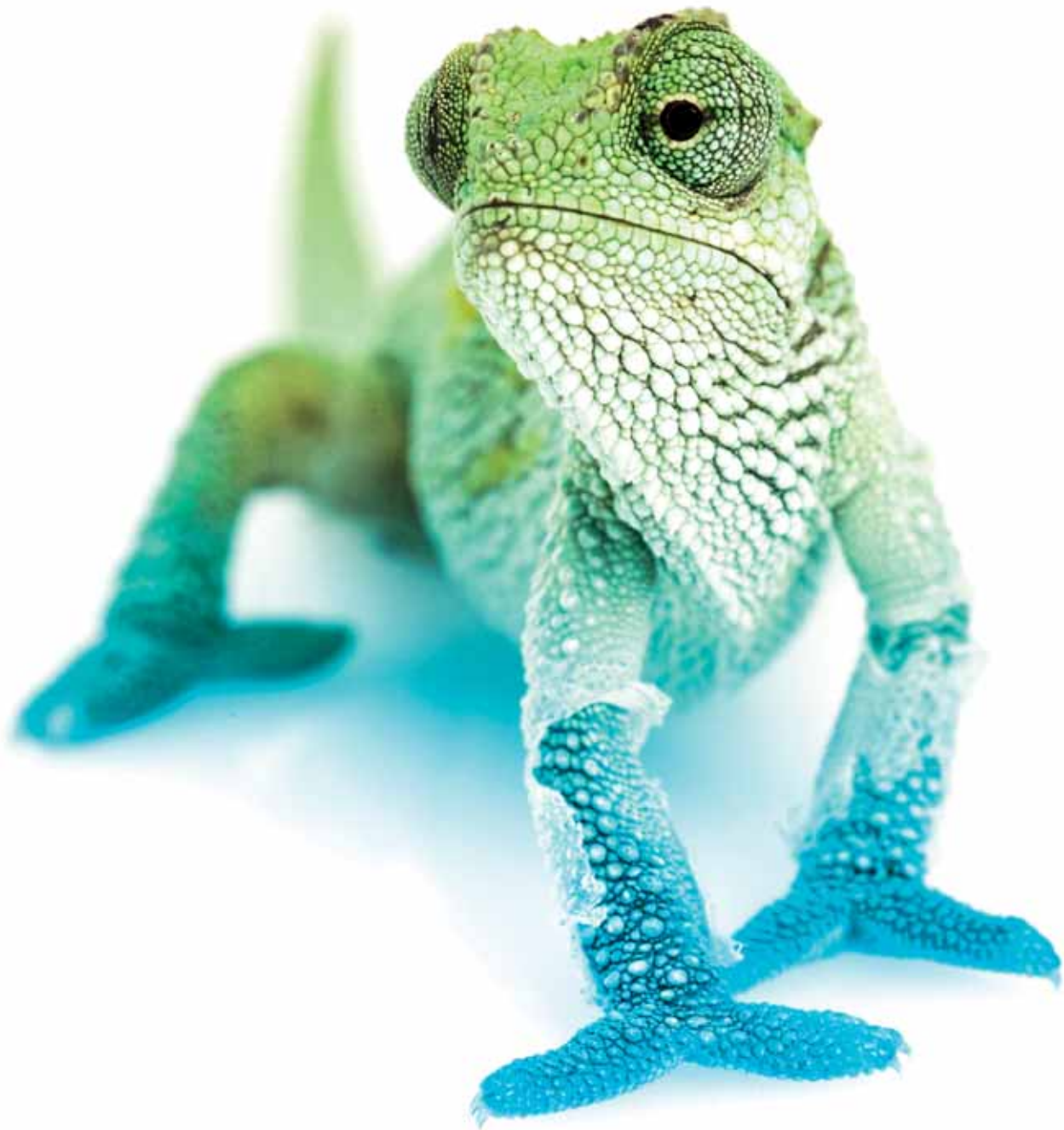
From July 2013, agents will only have to lodge their annual audit return with Fair Trading if it is



qualified by their auditor. Agents who have not received any trust money during the financial year will no longer be required to lodge an annual separate statutory declaration with the department of Fair Trading.

There are 31 deposit-taking institutions approved by the Director General for the purpose of holding licensed agents' and conveyancers' trust funds. For the full list, go to our website at [fairtrading.nsw.gov.au](http://fairtrading.nsw.gov.au) ♦





# Time for a change?

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Belle Property CEO Peter Hanscomb has been involved in the growth of many leading agencies. Here, he gives his top tips for agency growth.

BY PETER HANSCOMB, CEO AT BELLE PROPERTY

## Building blocks for growth

My career in real estate started in 1982 when I joined Ray White when they opened their first franchise office in Australia in a commerce role. I rose to the position of Deputy Managing Director, and by the age of 26 I was the only non-family director on the Ray White Board.

In 1990, at 30, I left the company to setup Realty Business Consulting – a specialist real estate business consultancy, which coached the majority of Ray White's top offices.

Next I launched the Australian arm of RE/MAX in 1997 and grew the business from zero to 126 offices in eight years. From my dining room table, we grew to 1,400 people across Australia and over \$4bn turnover.

When I left RE/MAX in 2006, I became a consultant for McGrath where I helped set up their franchise model.

More recently in October 2007 I acquired a 50 per cent stake in the Belle Property group. The company was very small at that point with only 12 agents.

Later we bought the trademark for Belle Property from ACP Magazines. At the same time I bought out one of the partners so my wife and I hold a 75 per cent stake in the company.

Everything about the brand is very structured. We have about 1,800 templates that allow people to get on with the job without having to reinvent the wheel.

We use a lot of technology in our processes and our intranet is extremely strong.

I'm heavily invested in the growth of the company. I think it's very important that you get to know the people you bring into the business.

Growth is absolutely critical for the company. We have tended to grow quickly as we have a philosophy of scalable growth. The company now has 46 franchises in key lifestyle locations across New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia.

A well-structured database is very important. The value of your data is dependent on the

frequency of contact and value of your communication for your clients.

The thing to remember is the biggest driver in this business is your values. Do you believe in giving people great service, being just, and telling the truth and communicating constantly with your clients?

Training is a big part of this. A common mistake is that people go to a conference and expect to come away and change the way they do things.

Actually I think conferences are about motivation.

I encourage people to take on a coach. We offer individual

coaching to our sales people, but we also offer group workshops.

We have the Belle Property Academy where we develop our franchisee staff from the Principal through to the back room administrative team through training workshops.

The thing that's really important to me is developing people and

“  
It's great to see someone who achieves greatness through guts and determination.”





creating an environment where people can be happy and build their careers.

I love being in the sales environment in this industry. I like the people and I like the challenges of the industry and the fact that not everyone succeeds in this industry.

I've really become a group builder over the past 30 years.

My proudest moment has been watching people grow and become more successful, and backing people that not

everybody might believe in. It's great to see someone who achieves greatness through guts and determination.

I think there's a big difference between the various franchise groups in Australia.

There are a lot of franchise groups that are purely marketing focused and do not offer real advantage to the franchisee.

I think the day is coming when franchises that are just 'name' franchises and do not offer support will become obsolete.

My top tips for growing your business are:

- 1 Get to know people well before they join you**  
Occasionally you get it wrong, but you have greater success by being involved in the recruitment process.
- 2 Don't reinvent the wheel**  
Have a plan and be very good at executing it. Don't feel that you have to keep reinventing the way you do things. Keep things simple and focus on the nuts and bolts.

- 3 Decide on a strategy**  
Decide on your strategy and do the top three things on that list very well.
- 4 Get a coach**  
We offer individual and group coaching to our sales people and support staff.
- 5 Delve into data**  
A well-structured database with frequent relevant communication is very important. You might as well have a phone book if your database is just a list of names. ♦

# Tired



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# Franchisee or independent?

BY JILL PARK

How does running a franchise office differ from an independent agency and how do you work out what is the right fit for you?

---



Are you an independent thinker or do you prefer to be part of a group? This is just one of the questions you should ask yourself when considering whether to take on a franchise or independent business.

So how do you decide which model works best for you? In the first instance it is worth undertaking an assessment of yourself and your existing business. Through this process you should learn how you operate and which model you are best suited to (see box).

The franchise model can be appealing for the business support the network offers. Franchisees have the benefit of marketing support, printing economies of scale, regular training and a large network of Principals whose knowledge and experience you can draw on.

Raine & Horne moved to a franchising model in the 1970s and now has offices across all of Australia, as well as international offices.

Raine & Horne CEO Angus Raine said that the resources available to franchisees are tenfold in terms of marketing, training and technology.

“We get over three million hits on our website annually, while our global database has over 1.2 million contacts,” he said.

Replicating this reach outside of the franchise model is nigh on impossible. Therefore, independent agencies are forced to be more creative with their marketing.

Independent agency BHR, for example, currently groups together with a number of other independents to produce *Boutique*, a magazine about the Sydney property market.

There are no restrictions around how you advertise your model as an independent so there is room for experimentation too, as Guy Saddleton, Director of Guy Saddleton Real Estate in Bellingen, explained.

“I’ve been brave and spent online and have ceased regular print advertising,” he said.

“It’s probably affected vendor recognition a little bit. I’ve had a few of the older people ask me if I’m still there.”

“**The franchise model can be appealing for the business support the network offers.**”

According to Angus, Raine & Horne encourages entrepreneurial spirit, but there are rules around marketing and brand compliance that franchisees must adhere to.

“It is critical that all of our offices have the same look and

feel in order to build a great and easily recognisable brand,” he said.

“You don’t see a blue ‘M’ for McDonald’s restaurants in some areas and a yellow ‘M’ in others.”

### Attitude

Andrew Cocks, Executive Director of the franchise group Richardson & Wrench, agrees that good franchisees must have the right attitude.

The R&W network stretches across 98 offices throughout NSW and Queensland. R&W offers exclusive franchise territories so franchisees do not have to compete with their own ‘family’. Having competition within your own group is not conducive to the sharing of information.

“We want someone who is engaged with the network [as a franchisee], is enthusiastic and willing to engage with others. They understand what they need from the company and

## ASSESS YOUR BUSINESS

Franchises and independent agencies are very different business models. Where franchises have the support of a larger network, independents operate as lone traders.

So, when considering whether to become a franchisee or to launch an independent agency, it is important to fully understand yourself and what you want your business to be.

Richardson & Wrench Executive Director Andrew Cocks recommends conducting a SWOT

(strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis to understand your business before entering into discussions with a franchise.

“We sit down with them to help them understand their business and to analyse their needs,” said Andrew.

“Once they understand this, the process of finding out who will best suit them is much easier.”

According to Angus Raine, CEO of Raine & Horne, it is essential that businesses

research the different franchise models available and the businesses behind them to work out which would be the best fit with their own business principles.

“Potential franchisees should consider a number of issues before buying in,” said Angus.

“For starters, they should consider how long the business has had a franchising model in place. What is their shareholding structure? Are the shareholders active in the business and, more importantly, do the

shareholders have working experience in real estate?”

Independent agency owner Guy Saddleton, Director of Guy Saddleton Real Estate, agrees that research is essential, especially if you are considering launching your own independent agency. In particular, he advocates having a clear understanding of your own finances.

“Make sure you’ve got six months’ worth of overheads in the bank before you start and make sure you’ve estimated conservatively,” said Guy.





“  
We all invest thousands in training for our teams, but you have to invest in yourself too.”

## WHAT SHOULD YOU CONSIDER BEFORE STARTING A FRANCHISE OR INDEPENDENT AGENCY?

### FRANCHISE

#### Marketing

Franchises have strong branding across all marketing collateral that franchisees must adhere to. While this restricts creative freedom to a degree, it gives franchisees access to an established brand and templates to work with.

#### Training

Continuing Professional Development is central to the franchise model. Franchisees are required to attend regular training, which ensures they are kept up to date with all the latest legislation as well as the key learnings from across the network.

#### Network

Franchisees can tap into a vast network of other franchise holders. Often there are opportunities to meet other Principals at training and networking events. Franchises often encourage Principals to share knowledge and also to work with the company's business development team to ensure the continuous improvement of the business.

### INDEPENDENT

#### Marketing

Principals of independent agencies have the freedom to develop their own brand and try different approaches to marketing that may not be possible within the franchise model. However, independents do not benefit from the same economies of scale for printing as franchises do.

#### Training

Outside of the framework of a franchise, it can be hard to maintain regular training for your staff and yourself. Joining organisations such as REINSW gives members access to training for Continuing Professional Development.

#### Network

Being an independent agency owner can be lonely. The business decisions are the responsibility of the Principal alone and there are no guidelines within which the business is required to operate. Associations are often a great way for independent agencies to network, access training and share experiences with others in the same situation.

utilise our services as much as they can,” Andrew said.

### Processes and training

Independent agencies, meanwhile, are responsible for everything from advertising through to keeping up to date with new legislation.

“When you're an independent you have to develop your own processes and training. A lot of people struggle to do that,” said Reece Colman, Director at BHR.

Reece advocates joining networks such as REINSW to benefit from the knowledge of others and training. He personally uses a mentor to bounce business ideas and concerns against.

“We all invest thousands in training for our teams, but you have to invest in yourself too,” he said.

“My advice to somebody starting their own independent agency is to get a sounding board. It could be another real estate agent or agency, or it could be a business person.

“It can be lonely to be the boss. The hours are long, but just to be able to sit down with someone and ask their opinion can be helpful,” said Reece.

Guy has experience with both models, having owned

a franchise in the past and now his own independent agency. Adjusting from the more prescriptive model of a franchise to the freedom of the independent model was very cathartic for Guy.

He conceded that there is more brand awareness of franchises, especially in cities, but prefers the independent model.

“I've learned to be proactive in chasing up on my own training. You must be prepared to get regular training every year,” he said. “You've got to be prepared to go the extra mile.”

### Commitment

Raine & Horne expects the same level of commitment from its franchisees.

“Good franchisees have a willingness to embrace the culture of the network,” said Angus.

“In other words, if you are going to join the team, be prepared to put on the jersey.”

Franchises often serve as a stepping stone for those who wish to go on to their own independent agency. The support network they offer, while prescriptive, is a fantastic training ground. Whether you want to go the extra mile and start your own independent agency will depend on whether you prefer being a lone ranger or part of the pack. ♦

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# Adding value

BY JILL PARK

Enhance your value as an agent by promoting the key features and facilities your suburbs have to offer.



Shopping areas



Lifestyle



Sporting/outdoor facilities



Transport



Schools

As an agent, it is essential to fully understand the make-up of the local area in which you operate and be able to convey this information to your clients with confidence.

Knowledge of what has drawn the locals to an area can help agents understand who potential buyers could be for any particular property and what drawcards could help them effectively market a property in that area.

“Walk the area,” is the advice from Sandy Warburton, Director and Licensee of John Flood Estate Agents.

“Knock on doors and introduce yourself and ask what the residents like about living in that area,” he said.

Cilla Green, Property Specialist at Breakfast Point Realty, looks after a range of properties in the emerging suburb of Breakfast Point. According to Cilla, you need to be an ‘encyclopaedia’ for your area. She recommends agents make themselves known to local community executives, such as the country club manager or local shop owners, as they are key sources of local information.

“Our clients need to know how to get to work and school. Know the golf courses and sports facilities available and the good coffee shops and restaurants,” she said.

Residential Sales Committee Chair Kathryn Hall, Director of Kathryn Hall Real Estate in

Avalon, advises agents to go online and research their area.

“It is important for agents to have a thorough understanding of the area in which their listings are located. If you understand the make-up of the area then you can relay key information to clients, which could make the difference between a sale and someone walking away.”

The *Journal* has put together the following list of what you should know about your farming area.

## Demographics/cultures

Find out the neighbourhood’s demographic breakdown, focusing on average income and cultural diversity, by visiting the Census QuickStats function

on [censusdata.abs.gov.au](http://censusdata.abs.gov.au). The website allows you to search an area’s census information, which includes breakdowns on people, family and dwellings.

## Schools

Families and young couples looking to start a family will be keen to find out which of the local school catchment areas the property falls under. Research the reputations of local schools and how they rank in comparison to one another. Give the schools a call to find out if there are any restrictions to catchment areas and ask to be updated of any changes.

It is also useful to know where the nearest school bus stops and the safest route there



from the property. Search *The Sydney Morning Herald's* NSW database for ranking information at [smh.com.au/nsw/my-school-primary-2012](http://smh.com.au/nsw/my-school-primary-2012) or for secondary school information visit [smh.com.au/nsw/my-school-secondary-2012](http://smh.com.au/nsw/my-school-secondary-2012)

### Sporting/outdoor facilities

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, during the 12 months prior to interview in 2011-12, 65% of Australians aged 15 years and over participated in physical activities for recreation, exercise or sport. It is worth exploring your local area for clubs and outdoor facilities for

both children and adults, and noting the distance to these facilities from the property.



**Knock on doors and introduce yourself and ask what the residents like about living in the area.**



### Shopping areas

Everyone wants to know the closest place to buy milk when they run out, but what

about when they want to do a 'big shop'? Where is the nearest supermarket? Where is the nearest farmers' market? Where is the place to go for the perfect coffee? Familiarise yourself with the local amenities and the people who run them as they could be a good source of recommendations.

### Transport

Discover what the key forms of transport are that service the local area. If there is a central transportation hub nearby such as a train station or bus depot, find out the most efficient way to get to that destination and what time public transport begins

and ends. Also, research on-street parking options if no parking space is provided with the property.

### Planning

Maintain contact with the local council's planning department and/or economic development officer to check out any new developments planned for the area. This could include residential, leisure and key infrastructure projects such as new roads.

### Events

Find out what the big events are in the local area, what they entail and who they are aimed at. If there is an annual street carnival, let the buyer know. ♦

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FEATURE

# spirit of. service



Doyle Spillane Director Liliana O'Toole (pictured) holds an annual Pink Ribbon Breakfast at her children's school to raise funds for the National Breast Cancer Foundation.





Real estate professionals are inherently invested in the local community, so it is not surprising that many work closely with local charities. The *Journal* talks to REINSW members to find out how they make a difference.

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Fetes, flower shows, fundraisers - wander past the window of Dee Why-based agency Doyle Spillane and the first thing you will notice is the LCD screen in the window advertising local community events.

The screen has been given over to the community for the past seven years. Through advertisements in its own mini magazine that the screen is available for community use, word has spread across the neighbourhood and the screen remains constantly booked up.

This is just one of the ways Doyle Spillane supports its community. Each of the agency's eight staff members takes on a sponsorship or charity event each year.

#### **Pink Ribbon Breakfast**

Liliana O'Toole, one of Doyle Spillane's six directors, has assumed responsibility for the annual Pink Ribbon Breakfast held at St Augustine's school where her two sons are pupils. The event raises money for the National Breast Cancer Foundation. Last year it netted close to \$6,500 - not bad for two hours' work.

"We do a lot with the Cancer Council, as we've had a couple of colleagues affected by breast cancer," said Lili of the agency's involvement in the event.

"The breakfast is for mums and the kids come along too," she said.

"We put out to the community asking for people to host stands, which include jewellery stands, flower stands and cupcake stands. All proceeds go to the foundation."

Doyle Spillane is involved in a number of local charities and community organisations, ranging from longstanding relationships with the Collaroy Cougars, Warringah Rats Rugby Club and Collaroy Surf Life Saving Club through to its recent sponsorship of The Sargood Centre, a recovery centre for people in wheelchairs.

"We've got six directors and each of us takes on an event," said Lili.

"We pick something that's close to our hearts."

For Lili, it's more than just a matter of handing over a cheque. Despite being regularly approached for



sponsorship, she won't commit to a project unless she can get actively involved.

"Whatever we do, we are there serving as helpers. It's about being there and giving something to them," she said.

### Variety Bash

Ray White Berry Principal Shane Hilaire has adopted a similar policy. He, and two others, are about to embark on their second Variety Bash from Newcastle to Burke. The threesome will be driving a 1967 Valiant and dressed as convicts.

In the lead up to the event, Shane has organised a charity poker night as well as a golf day and wine night at a guest house in Kangaroo Valley, to raise funds for children's charity Variety.

On a local level, his Berry office has grouped together with the Nowra and Gerringong offices to support centre for children with disabilities Noah's Ark. The agencies are involved in a support role for various events the charity runs and give sponsorship each year.

"We were looking for a local-based group that we could put on our agenda as well as support," he said.

"Obviously there are more national groups that we could be involved with, but we wanted to support something that helped local people."

For the past two years Shane and his son have competed in the Noah's Ark charity adventure race.

"We are one of the major sponsors. We put up money, we attend the event and we've people around that can lend a hand," said Shane, who adds with a laugh that, "everyone in the office has piked it so far!"

However, he commends his staff for getting involved in the local community through their work with the local pony club and schools, to emergency services.

"A lot of it is about giving a bit of time. I think sometimes that's the best value," he said of their commitment to local organisations.

### Charity auctions

However, charity can sometimes provide a platform to explore new employment opportunities. For auctioneer Charles Powell, charity auctions were his training ground.

"When I was deciding if I wanted to be an auctioneer, I was lucky to do a few school charity auctions," he said.

**“It’s not about supporting them one year and walking away. It’s an ongoing commitment.”**

"Some schools would call me and ask me to host their charity events. In the interest of getting better, I did a few of these events."

Seven years later, he is still in the auctioneering game and continues to do charity auctions.

"An auction is a great way to make money for a charity. I'm only one auctioneer that does charity work. There are another 30 or 40 auctioneers that are doing the same thing," he added.

As the charity dollar has tightened the number of items, Charles is asked to auction at

such events has dropped to six, on average. These could be small or big-ticket items, depending on the audience.

"Sometimes I do corporate events when they auction off two tickets to Phuket. There are all manners of things from high-end ticket events to lunch at Parliament House to jerseys. It's all going in the right direction."

Charity auctions have provided the perfect opportunity to learn his trade, particularly the patter of numbers.

"It's a good platform to get out in front of people. You can come down off the stage and say 'I really like that, that's for me' or you can say 'that is not for me at all'. I'm not saying it is for everyone."

Young agents who are interested in raising money for charity while also gaining sound auctioneering experience should get involved in this year's Novice Auctioneers Competition (see box). The annual event where up-and-coming auctioneers can experience auctioneering, while also raising money for local charities.

Doyle Spillane's Lili believes charity work should be a longterm commitment.

"It's not just about supporting them one year and walking away. It's an ongoing commitment."

For Doyle Spillane, charity work in the local community has given them a point of difference.

"It's about people out there knowing that we are real people like them," said Lili.

"It's taking your real estate hat off. It's really just connecting and letting them know you are one of them," she added with conviction.

According to Shane you don't have to go far to find a group to get involved in. He agreed that supporting your community should be about more than 'what's in it for me?' As he explained, "unless you show that to the community, you won't ever be part of it.

"I think you've got to treat it, not as a value add to your bottom line, but strengthening your core business," he added.

Ultimately, charity work is a way to support your local community that has supported your business.

Lili sums it up: "It's not just about handing over a cheque. It's about being there [at the event] and giving something back." ♦

## 2013 REINSW NOVICE AUCTIONEERS COMPETITION

Each year the REINSW Novice Auctioneers' Competition sees some of NSW's up-and-coming auctioneers battling it out on stage.

Entrants source an item that they will auction on the night in front of agents, members of the public and judges.

The winner is not determined by the amount of money raised, but rather their ability to auction the item with confidence, as well as how well the item is described, the competitors' control of bidding and use of the gavel. All proceeds are donated to local charities.

For further information visit [reinsw.com.au/NAC](http://reinsw.com.au/NAC) or email us direct at the address: [divisions@reinsw.com.au](mailto:divisions@reinsw.com.au).



## TOP TIPS FROM VINNIES

The St Vincent de Paul Society on how to get involved with a charity:

**1. Volunteer:** The St Vincent de Paul Society relies on the help of volunteers to help deliver much needed services to the community. Volunteers can use their workplace skills and experience in a way that can make a difference. You can volunteer with the St Vincent de Paul Society to tutor refugee children, offer friendship to a person with a mental illness through our Compeer program, work in a Vinnies shop, help out at one of our many services or accompany disadvantaged children on an outing.

**2. Fundraise or donate:** By fundraising for the St Vincent de Paul Society you can help us continue providing assistance to over 600,000 people across NSW each year. Supporting events such as the annual Vinnies CEO Sleepout or Vinnies Christmas and Winter appeals are simple ways you can get involved.

**3. Become a sponsor:** Becoming a St Vincent de Paul Society event sponsor allows us to offset our event costs and also allows you to create connections for your own business. Many companies and individuals donate services or goods to support our events or services.

*For more information on getting involved with the St Vincent de Paul Society head to [vinnies.org.au](http://vinnies.org.au)*



# Commercial gains

BY JILL PARK

## What are the key 'green' technologies in commercial property development and how are they rated?

Government initiatives to lessen the environmental impact of commercial properties in NSW have driven investment in the introduction and retrofitting of 'green' technology in commercial developments.

State Government programs to incentivise the retrofitting of existing buildings to increase energy efficiency include the NSW Energy Savings Scheme, where tradeable Energy Saving Certificates are awarded for the installation of more efficient equipment and services.

The NSW Government can also provide funding assistance for building energy audits, which include an energy improvement plan for buildings.

Several Local Government Areas have introduced Environmental Upgrade Agreements or EUAs, according to CBRE Head of Sustainability Rebecca Pearce.

"This is more of an alternative financing methodology that allows the sharing of upgrade costs with the building tenants via an Environmental Upgrade Charge levied by the council," she said.

"Where savings are made, these charges can be passed on to tenants through outgoings.

"This overcomes the split-incentive argument that the tenant is the main beneficiary (through reduced outgoings) of the owner's investment in energy efficiency," Pearce said.



It can be difficult to keep abreast of the various building ratings schemes. Some companies now have a minimum National Australian Built Environmental Rating System (NABERS) and Green Star rating requirement for their office space.

For example, the Commonwealth Government has a minimum 4.5 Green Star rating requirement for its properties. It currently has office space located at the office 1 Bligh St in Sydney, designed by Architectus and Ingenhoven Architects of Germany. The award-winning property has a 6 Green Star rating and a 5-star NABERS rating.

So just what are these two ratings schemes? NABERS launched under the name Australian Building Greenhouse Rating in 1998 as a ratings tool for office buildings (see box on the right). The scheme is managed by the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage and is a key element of the Commercial Building Disclosure program.

It is easy to confuse NABERS with the Green Star rating scheme that was launched a few years later in 2003. The system, developed by the Green Building Council of Australia, rates buildings on their environmental design

and construction across nine categories (see box).

"Buildings that are better to be in, with more natural light and fresh air and low Volatile Organic Compound materials [such as fumes from paints and protective coatings applied to furnishings], are healthier for their inhabitants, which has a direct bearing on productivity," said Architectus Managing Director Ray Brown.

"Energy savings made with more efficient technology lower outgoings and ensure buildings built today are competitive when their second and third lease cycles come around."

The top green features being incorporated into commercial properties today are:

### Electricity

- Photovoltaics (solar panels) generate energy locally.
- Gas fired tri-generation is the local generation of electricity through burning gas, then the capture of the waste heat to create hot water and to power an absorption chiller to cool the building.
- Biomass such as waste paper products or waste timber can be used to create biogas through a gasification process. This can then be used in co- or tri-generation systems to generate energy and heat.

### Heating/cooling

- Double skin facade technology allows ventilation to flow between the outer wall of a building and a second skin. The cavity can be naturally or mechanically ventilated and can be conducive to cooling and heating a property.
- Chilled Beam air conditioning passes pipes of water through a 'beam' (heat exchanger) that cools hot air as it rises to the ceiling. As the air cools it gets denser and falls creating a convection cycle.

### Water

- Recycled black water and rainwater can be used for washroom flushing systems as well as plant irrigation. ♦

## NABERS VS GREEN STAR

### NABERS

The National Australian Built Environmental Rating System (NABERS) is an energy rating system used to benchmark the greenhouse performance of office premises. Ratings can be awarded for a whole building, base building (central services) and/or tenancy. The ratings scale goes from 1 (poor) to 6 (market leading). The current average for office buildings in Australia is 2.5-stars. It is essential to get accredited in order to report or promote your rating.

### GREEN STAR

Green Star is the building rating system for the Green Building Council of Australia. The rating tool assesses buildings against nine categories, ranging from water to emissions, and rates their environmental impact. The certification scale starts at 4-star (Best Practice) through to 6-star (World Leader). Green Star requires an official certification, but in the meantime it is possible to download the tools so as to benchmark and improve environmental attributes.

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# Be print savvy

BY ALEXANDRA CAIN

## In-house or outsource: what's the right approach to printing all your marketing material?

There are two main options when it comes to printing the reams of marketing material that go with being a real estate agent: printing in-house or outsourcing printing to a commercial printer. Here, we explore the pluses and minuses of both options.

### Press the print button

Steve Flory is in charge of marketing and design at real estate agency Cunninghams Property, which uses a range of different approaches to printing. Primarily, Cunninghams uses software called CampaignTrack to produce signboards and to print ads and brochures. The software is a centralised system through which agencies can design artwork, order printing and book advertising.

Steve explained that Cunninghams Property produces DLs in-house and then uses an external print house to print premium brochures and sold stickers. "On average the business produces around 5000 DLs and 600 brochures a week," he said.

"We're increasingly using CampaignTrack because we have so many properties. Anyone can log in and see what needs to be approved, and it makes it very easy to track a job. Sending something to print is just a click of the button. It also gives uniformity to our design because we use templates that allow us to add photos and text for individual properties."

The business uses a local printer for brochures because they can cope with variations and can quickly turn around jobs.

"If we need things done immediately our local printer can do it, whereas CampaignTrack takes a day or two to print," Steve said.

"With CampaignTrack, templates are set up with our brand colours and the printer calibrates the colours once a month. The system will also check that high-resolution photos are supplied for printed material and will warn us if a shot is not print quality. It's up to us to check this when we send material to our local printer, but we run pre-press software over every job to make sure everything is print-ready."

### Economies of scale

Ali Holmes, Marketing and Communications Coordinator at Laing+Simmons Corporation, said using a professional printer is usually, but not always, their preferred approach.

"A premium look is important for glossy monthly magazines that act as a value-add to the service we offer. But this is unnecessary for documents like weekly stock lists," she explained.

With printing, the trick is to get quantities right.

"It's important to accurately forecast how much is needed to avoid wastage for environmental and cost reasons.



“It’s worth identifying economies of scale for bigger print runs. They may be so great it ends up cheaper outsourcing than printing in-house.”

Doing the maths rather than 'guesstimating' an order will save money," she advised.

"It's worth identifying economies of scale for bigger print runs. They may be so great it ends up cheaper outsourcing than printing in-house. What this means is it's important to know the running costs of your printer," she said.

### Outsourcing print

Raymond Cavicchia, NSW State Manager at Printforce Australia, said there are many benefits of using an external printer.

"Marketing plays a big part in selling a property. When you use professional digital media

## IN-HOUSE

### PLUS

- **Flexibility:** it gives you the flexibility to print according to your own timetable.
- **Control:** you gain control of the volumes.
- **Uniformity:** it is possible to monitor the job in real time.
- **Waste:** you only print what you need, reducing waste.

### MINUS

- **Volumes:** can't print larger volumes or formats.
- **Time:** it can be time consuming to print large volume jobs.
- **Investment:** investing in equipment can be expensive, especially as more than one printer may be required.
- **Down time:** could be problematic and costly if the printer breaks down.

and printing, it helps position the property in the best light." Raymond said outsourcing printing makes it easier to charge the cost of marketing to vendors.

"When you're printing in-house, it's harder to quantify cost because you don't have a bill to present," he said.

"In-house photocopiers and printers also tend to break down and run out of toner when you need them most!"

Michael Lowdon, Director at Ray White Residential Sydney CBD, said it's worth using a professional printer to produce marketing materials.

"If you're selling your biggest asset, why would you produce brochures on A4 paper done in-house?" said Michael.

"I use a printing house for economies of scale as they do a lot of work for Ray White and our systems are completely interlinked. I can set up a job in 10 minutes."

### Printing in-house

But Marketing and Channel Operations Manager at Fuji Xerox Printers Anthony Toope said 'insourcing' or printing in-house has become more popular as the cost of printers has dropped.

"It's now affordable to have multiple printers," he explained. For instance, basic networked machines that only print black and white start at \$150. A 'multi-function centre', which is a scanner, printer, copier and fax combined, starts at approximately \$799. Anthony said the Phaser 7800 model is appropriate for real estate agents as it has the ability to produce high quality, saddle-stitched (stapled) brochures in short print runs. A managed print service for this machine will cost roughly \$10,000. Another option is a printer called a ColorQube.

"We have a number of real estate agencies that have purchased a multifunction centre on a contract, but only pay for what they use. The machine is covered by a service contract and you order supplies on an as-needed basis. It gives them flexibility, especially if a real estate agency is looking at insourcing, but is worried about the machine breaking down," Anthony explained.

There are a number of factors to consider when investing in your own printing machine. Speed and quality are obvious factors. However, it is also important

## OUTSOURCING

### PLUS

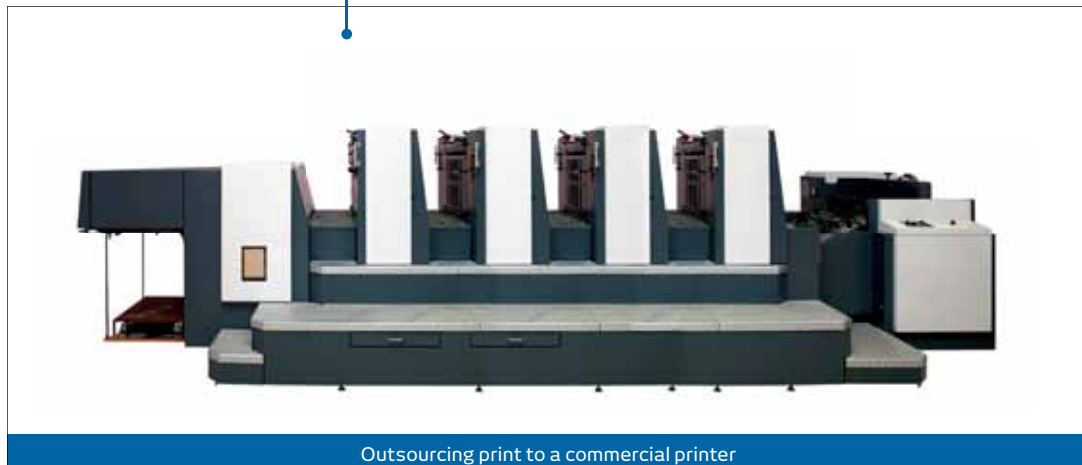
- **Quality:** commercial print houses can ensure the quality and uniformity of your print job.
- **Finishing options:** whether you want a perfect bound magazine, a flyer or even personalisation, the finishing options are vast.
- **Volumes:** high volumes are not a problem.

### MINUS

- **Time:** jobs have to be scheduled around the printer's existing schedule.
- **Cost:** it can be expensive to print small volumes.
- **Volume:** it requires that you know the volume to ensure there isn't expensive wastage as a result of over-ordering.



The system will also check that high-resolution photos are supplied for printed material and will warn us if a shot is not print quality.



Outsourcing print to a commercial printer

to consider what types of marketing collateral you will be printing.

What paper sizes will you require the machine to be able to print and what are the finishing capabilities of the machine? Stacking, stapling and hole-punching are standard features, but does the machine offer booklet making, and v-folding.

There are equally as many issues to consider when choosing a commercial printer. Word of mouth is a good place to start. Can any of your industry colleagues recommend a local printer? There are many different

types of print houses and their capabilities range from wide-format for extremely large signage to digital printing for shorter jobs.

It is worth asking the printer for examples of their work. Not only will this give you an idea of the quality of their work, but it could spark creative ideas for how print could be used to enhance your own marketing collateral.

There's no right or wrong when it comes to choosing between printing your marketing material in-house or outsourcing. Certainly, there are an increasing number of options for agents to work with an external printer whose systems make it easy to

proof material and check the status of jobs.

It's also probably a good idea to print key documents such as brochures through a professional printer. But there's no reason why agents can't invest in their own printer for the purpose of producing fliers and other non-essential documents.

Print collateral is a core component of real estate's marketing arsenal.

The key is to crunch the numbers and work out which path will give you the best results, be it an in-house or external print house. ♦



# 2013 REINSW Awards



IT COULD  
BE YOU

## Entries are now open

Each year, REINSW shines the spotlight on excellence and gives official recognition to our industry's top performers. In 2013, it could be you!

This is your opportunity to highlight your biggest successes and most creative achievements over the last 12 months. Whether you're part of a large franchise group or work in a small independent agency, you're in with a chance.

Finalists will be announced in August 2013, and the winners will be revealed at the 2013 REINSW Awards for Excellence Gala Dinner on Thursday, 10 October 2013.

## To enter

For details about how to enter and to view the entry criteria, go to [www.reinsw.com.au/2013Awards](http://www.reinsw.com.au/2013Awards)

Entries close on **Thursday, 13 June 2013**

## More information

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

# ards for Excellence



# OULD BE YOU

## Agency categories

- Commercial Agency
- Holiday & Short-Term Rentals Agency
- Innovation
- Online Presence
- Real Estate Agency – Small
- Real Estate Agency – Large

## Individual categories

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

# The Block All Stars alumni 2013

BY JILL PARK

The *Journal* quizzes REINSW members about their starring roles on the show.

This year four couples from past series of *The Block* came together to star in the first ever *The Block All Stars*. You would think the stars of the show were the couples themselves, but the

unsung heroes were the many REINSW agency members and auctioneers whose hard work contributed to the massive profits achieved at the recent show finale.

The *Journal* talks to all the agents and auctioneers involved to find out what went on behind the scenes of the show and what they really thought of the properties they had to sell.



**CONTESTANTS:**  
MARK & DUNCAN

**House:**  
10 Tasman St, Bondi

**Reserve price:**  
\$1,345,000

**Sold for:** \$1,370,000

**Profit:** \$25,000

**Agent:** Seaton Jones, BresicWhitney

**Auctioneer:**  
Ed Riley, BresicWhitney Estate



**AUCTIONEER: ED RILEY, BRESICWHITNEY**

I met Mark and Duncan on the night of the auction. I had viewed the property about a week before.

The whole place was well done. Their style was very eccentric and a bit quirky, if you like. It all presented very well, but it was probably a bit disjointed. I think the general standard was very high.



**AGENT: SEATON JONES, BRESICWHITNEY**

I was introduced to Mark and Duncan by someone from Channel 9. They had just completed the bathroom and were up to the third bedroom. They were fantastic guys to work with, I gave them some advice on the addition of the third bedroom and thought converting the old pot belly stove into a fish tank was a great idea.

It was the most unusual house out of the four. I think from the viewers' perspective, it was definitely the one that they got the most excited about as it was very quirky and different in relation to the others which were along the same lines in style.

I had hoped the house would have performed stronger at auction. There were four registered bidders on the night.

I had a short chat prior to the auction and they were happy to let me run it as I saw fit. They gave me a few bits and pieces of information about the property that they thought I could use in my introduction.

It was my first time on the show, but I was previously involved in another show called *The Renovators* as an auctioneer.



**CONTESTANTS:  
PHIL & AMITY**

**House:**  
12 Tasman St, Bondi

**Reserve price:**  
\$1,375,000

**Sold for:** \$1,670,000

**Profit:** \$295,000

**Agents:** Julian Hasemer  
and Brad Caldwell-  
Eyles, 1st City Hasemer  
+Caldwell.Eyles

**Auctioneer:** Damien  
Cooley, Cooley Auctions



**AUCTIONEER:  
DAMIEN COOLEY,  
COOLEY AUCTIONS**

I've been on three of the series. I won *The Block* series when it was held in Manly and I auctioned one of the apartments in Vaucluse. I've also done personal auctions for a producer of the show.

The first time I met Phil and Amity was on the night of the auction. I thought the proposition was great. The property was north facing and the third bedroom and the loft were winners.

Josh and Jenna were definitely the biggest competition because theirs was the only other north facing property.

If they had said to us you can choose where you want to be in the order of sales, I would have gone first as you get a greater opportunity for maximum number of bidders. In hindsight, it didn't matter hugely.

I think the unsung heroes in this were the agents. They worked tirelessly to get the right bidders there.



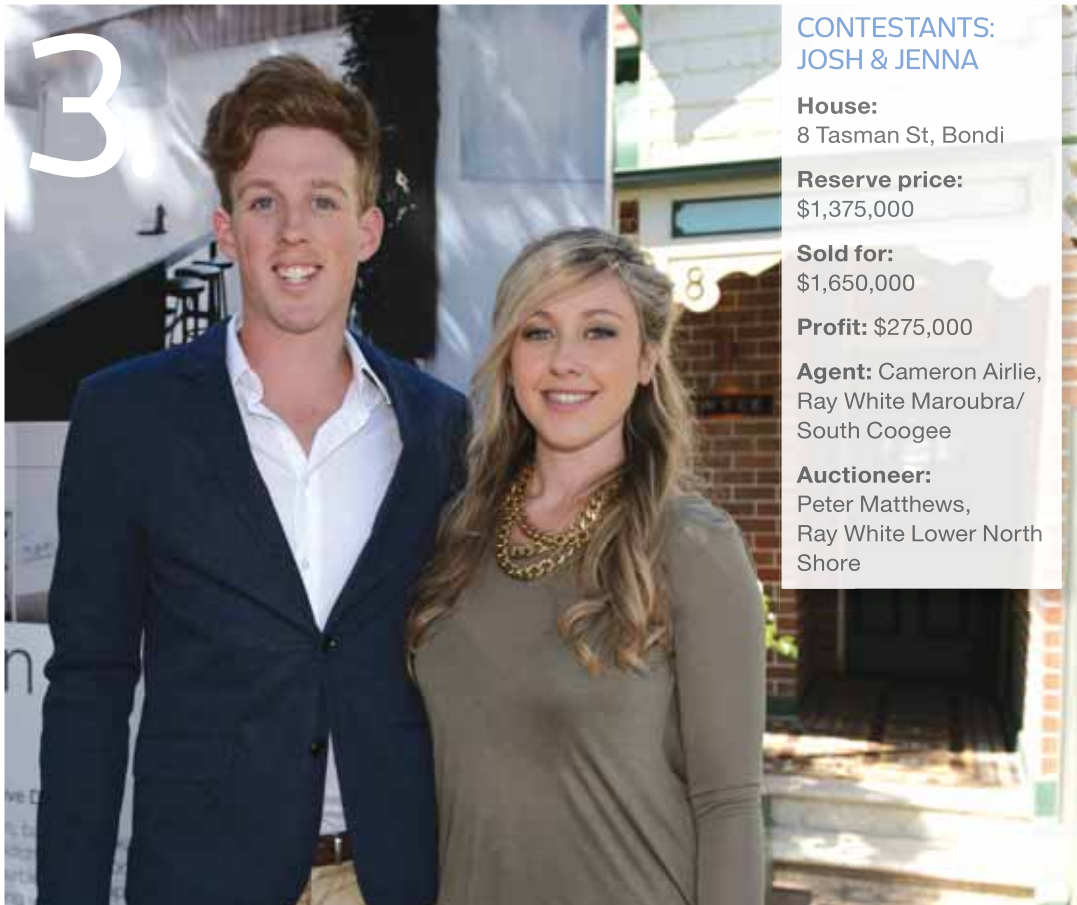
**AGENT: JULIAN HASEMER, 1ST CITY  
HASEMER +CALDWELL.EYLES**

They were a bit unsure of the overall theme for the home as the first room didn't get marked very well by the judges. So Brad (left) and I (right) sat down with them and went through the DA application.

When Phil and Amity started, Sportsbet had them at \$5.50 to \$1, but as we got to the final days the odds changed in their favour.

Given the first home they did on the show made \$60,000, the profit on this property was quite significant. Everyone couldn't be happier.





**CONTESTANTS:  
JOSH & JENNA**

**House:**  
8 Tasman St, Bondi

**Reserve price:**  
\$1,375,000

**Sold for:**  
\$1,650,000

**Profit:** \$275,000

**Agent:** Cameron Airlie,  
Ray White Maroubra/  
South Coogee

**Auctioneer:**  
Peter Matthews,  
Ray White Lower North  
Shore



**AUCTIONEER: PETER  
MATTHEWS, RAY WHITE  
LOWER NORTH SHORE**

Cameron gave me a call and said that he was going to an interview with Josh and Jenna and that they wanted me to be the auctioneer. Their builder had referred both of us and we all got on really well. I advised them I had experience with televised and high-profile auctions, particularly *The Block* in Manly, and that made them feel comfortable. That was around early December 2012.

When I met Josh and Jenna, I confessed that when I first went to the property, I wasn't overly excited because of what they had done with their property in the last series of *The Block*, as it was a very personal renovation and catered to a minor market. What they produced this time around was something that catered to a broad market. I think people thought it was simple, but classy.

I had \$1.6m as a target figure. I thought that would be a really good price. Cameron did a superb job getting the buyers interested. We had the pressure being number one, but we chose to turn that pressure on the other contestants by setting the benchmark price.



**AGENT: CAMERON AIRLIE,  
RAY WHITE MAROUBRA/SOUTH COOGEE**

The first time I went to see Josh and Jenna, the property was pretty close to completion.

Ultimately it's a piece of real estate and, minus the show, the challenge is to find a buyer. From an agent's point of view, it was a matter of deciding who is a fan and who is a buyer. I asked people, 'Are you just here to have a look? Are you a fan?' We had 10 registered bidders at auction and five or six bid.

I think the key selling points were the kitchen and bathroom and kitchenette with running water outside. Inside it didn't have too much clutter. It is a lovely house.

Josh and Jenna had a clear picture of what they wanted. It was just a matter of buying into it. Because they were in Melbourne, we did not get a lot of face time with them so we checked in with them daily over the phone.

We organised a private view and Josh and Jenna turned up for it. They explained to buyers why they did what they did, why they used marble, for example, and gave the buyers an insight into the house. In my opinion, I thought Josh and Jenna's house was the best quality.



“

Their overall floor plan was superior. They spent money in the right areas.

”



**AGENT: CHRIS VOLPATTI, MCGRATH ESTATE AGENTS**

One of the neighbours in the street called me about it because she was concerned. She told me that there was going to be a series of *The Block All Stars* filmed there and she was worried about the disruption to the street. I discussed it with her and explained that the show would put her street on the map.

I pursued being involved in the show after that. Dan and Dani had previously had a bad experience with their auctioneer in Melbourne and they had approached Scott Kennedy-Green, our chief auctioneer.

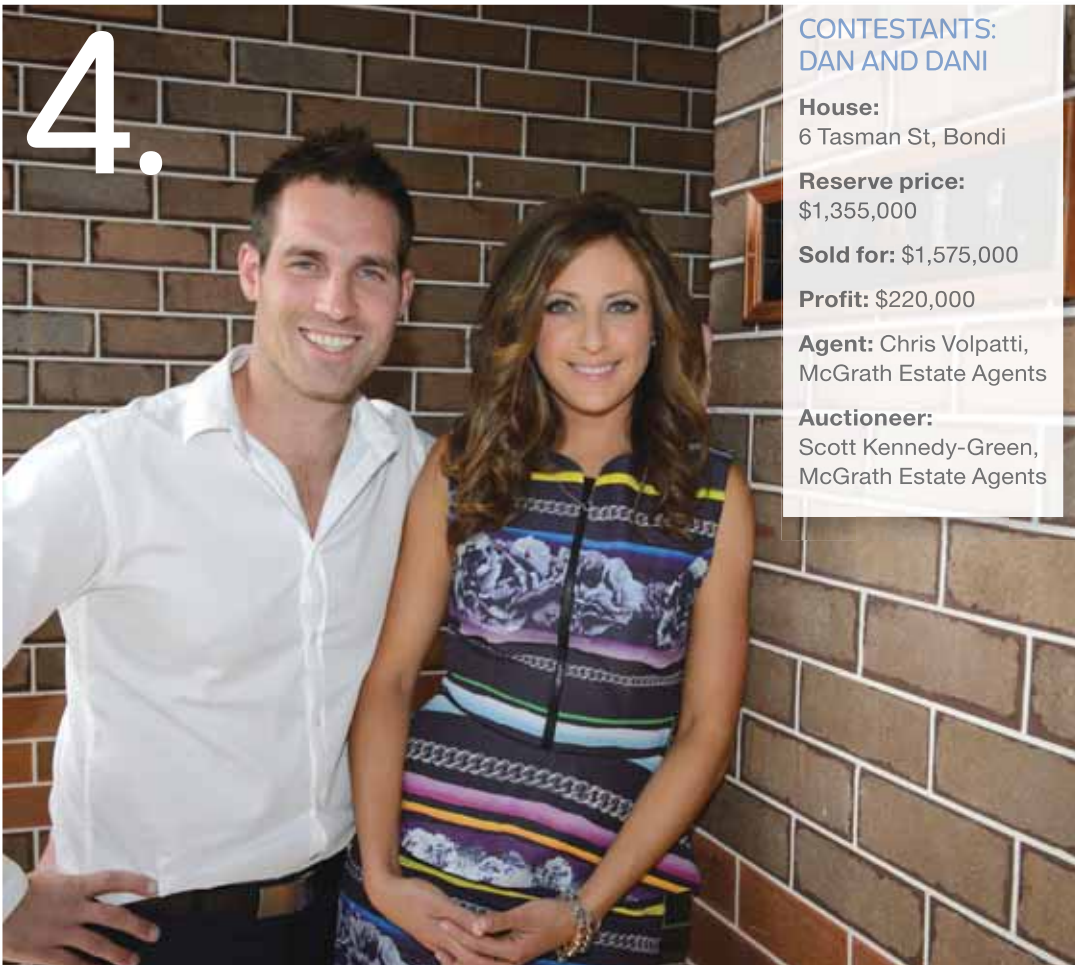
They had already done one bedroom when we came on board. They asked us a couple of questions when they weren't 100 per cent sure, like how to present the back garden or whether to change the living room into a bedroom. But, by the same token, they had some very clear direction on what they wanted to achieve. We certainly cannot take credit.

Their overall floor plan was superior. They spent money in the right areas such as the bathroom and kitchen and they did a lot of small things like electric blinds, ceiling speakers and underfloor heating. They really went above what most people would do.



**AUCTIONEER: SCOTT KENNEDY-GREEN, MCGRATH ESTATE AGENTS**

I've been involved in four NSW series of *The Block*, from the very first one in Bondi over 10 years ago. I'm the only auctioneer to have done all of them.



**CONTESTANTS: DAN AND DANI**

**House:** 6 Tasman St, Bondi  
**Reserve price:** \$1,355,000  
**Sold for:** \$1,575,000  
**Profit:** \$220,000  
**Agent:** Chris Volpatti, McGrath Estate Agents  
**Auctioneer:** Scott Kennedy-Green, McGrath Estate Agents

I was contacted for the 2011 series by Dan and Dani to go and conduct their auction in Victoria, but given that McGrath doesn't have a presence in Victoria we just thought it was not appropriate that I represent them from an auction-only perspective. They kept in contact and when it came to the *All Stars* they were keen to have us involved.

Dan and Dani were great and were very open. They were very keen to use our services and to discuss our ideas from a real estate point of view, particularly in regards to how they wanted to pitch the property.

We took the campaign very seriously. We try not to get too wrapped up in the show itself. From a results point of view, they were very happy. We brought a lot of buyers to the auction. That wasn't just testament to Dan and Dani, but also testament to the McGrath team. ♦



# Strengthening the ties that bind

BY DEIRDRE SMITH

Returning to the top is the goal for member agents and agencies in the Parramatta & Hills Division.

REINSW Divisions represent 25 geographical areas in NSW. Divisions exist to encourage member agents in the relevant area to come together for communication, networking, professional development, raising the standing of real estate agents in the local community and to contribute to policy development. This month's article focuses on the Parramatta & Hills Division.



Parramatta & Hills Division held its first wine tasting event in April which brought together young agents in the area.

In a Division that has historically been among the strongest in NSW, Parramatta & Hills Division Chair Lorraine Young and dedicated Committee members Edwin Almeida and Grant Beaumont are working harder than ever to engage the interest of agents and agencies in their area.

Following the NSW Government's restriction of the First Home Owner Grant to new builds, many agents in the area are finding the market a little slower than it has historically been.

"There aren't that many new builds available for sale in our area," Lorraine said, "so we have to be a bit more creative about the way we do business."

In the same way, Lorraine, Edwin and Grant are exercising their creative minds to find new and exciting events and activities to bring agents in the area together.

Their aim is to secure the Division's reputation as one of the strongest, involving existing members and local businesses more in Divisional activities, publicising the benefits of REINSW membership to non-members, and strengthening social and community awareness and involvement throughout the industry.

The Committee meets every month to discuss how to encourage members in their area to get involved.

They organised a wine tasting evening on Tuesday, 23 April 2013 to get more young agents in the area interested in attending. The event was a success, with plenty of agents turning up for a glass or two of good wine and networking. Several other activities are currently in the pipeline, including this year's Novice Auctioneers Competition, which is to be held on Tuesday, 30 July 2013.

The Division's charity of choice supported by these events will be the Westmead Medical Research Foundation, which supports the medical research and clinical care that saves thousands of lives in Sydney's West and beyond, every year.

The Committee hopes that supporting such a worthwhile cause will encourage more agents in the local community to become involved in Divisional activities, strengthening the ties that bind them together as an industry. This is the first half of a two-part plan to unify local agents and to lift the quality of service offered by the industry to an even higher level.

The second part of the Division's plan involves encouraging agents to engage in industry education and training through REINSW, and to lift ethical standards across the board.

"There is a widespread hunger to lift the standard," Edwin said of real estate agents in general and of those in his Division particularly.

"People need to have a common goal, because without that we are without direction. By unifying the industry we can achieve our goal and improve the standard of service offered by real estate agents everywhere." ♦

## INTERESTED IN MAKING A CONTRIBUTION?

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

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



Subject to flooding/bushfire



Health or safety risk



Scene of violent crime



Council waste services



Parking or shared land

# Fact finding mission

Did you know that disclosure of material facts applies to residential tenancies?

So often when the words 'material fact' are uttered it is in relation to the disclosure of information to prospective buyers of a property. It is easy to forget that the issue of material fact also arises in connection with residential tenancies. But it definitely does.

In the April edition of the *Journal*, material fact as it applies to sale of residential property was discussed (see "Material or not. That is the question." page 20). In this edition of the *Journal* we look at material fact in relation to the disclosure of information to tenants.

It is important to remember that material fact under the *Property, Stock and Business Agents Act 2002* and material fact under the *Residential Tenancies Act 2010* is not the same thing. Whereas the identification and disclosure of material facts to prospective buyers can be potentially difficult and confusing, the position is much clearer when it comes to residential tenancies.

**Prescribed material facts**  
Section 26 of the *Residential*

*Tenancies Act* sets out that a landlord or a landlord's agent must not knowingly conceal a material fact prescribed by the Residential Tenancies Regulation 2010. Clause 7 of the Regulation prescribes the following as material facts:

- The residential premises have been subject to flooding or bushfire in the preceding five years.
- The residential premises are subject to significant health or safety risks that are not apparent to a reasonable person on inspection of the premises. (NSW Fair Trading has advised that the presence of asbestos or lead paint in the premises are two examples of when they consider disclosure will be required.)
- The residential premises have been the scene of a serious violent crime within the preceding five years.
- Council waste services will be provided to the tenant on a different basis than is generally applicable to residential

premises within the area of the council. (This relates to whether the tenant will be required to pay for council waste bins or domestic waste services.)

“  
**Material fact also arises in residential tenancies.**  
”

- That because of the zoning of the land, or other laws applying to development on the land, the tenant will not be able to obtain a residential parking permit in an area where only paid parking is available. (For example, where a condition of development consent provides that a residential parking permit will not be available for a particular strata apartment.)
- The existence of a driveway or walkway on the residential premises which other persons are legally entitled to share with the tenant.

## Other disclosure requirements

In addition to the above prescribed material facts, section 26 also requires the disclosure of certain other information that you need to ensure prospective tenants are made aware of.

Prior to entering into any Residential Tenancy Agreement, a landlord or a landlord's agent must disclose any proposal to sell the residential premises, where a Contract for Sale has been prepared.

Further, in circumstances where a mortgagee is taking action of possession of the premises, the landlord or landlord's agent must disclose this to the tenant before entering into a Residential Tenancy Agreement if the mortgagee has commenced proceedings in a court to enforce the mortgage over the premises. ♦

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

# How does your garden grow?

BY DEIRDRE SMITH

Whether you are selling a suburban home or inner city terrace, well-planned outdoor living spaces can help to increase the value of any property.



Landscaping firm Secret Gardens designed this Randwick garden for a young family, making use of every space with a pool, lawn and sunny entertaining deck.

In the warmer climates found throughout NSW, outdoor living spaces are highly valued commodities in a home. But what is the best way to add the most value to your clients' properties before sale?

The rule of green thumb according to Matthew Cantwell, Director of the landscaping firm Secret Gardens, is that 5–30 per cent of a property's value should go toward landscaping the garden, if a professional landscape design is the way that your clients want to go.

He provided these tips to keep in mind when advising vendors about designing a residential garden or outdoor space.

## Location

There is a considerable difference in the style of garden that works best in an urban space as compared to a rural property, but what particular elements work best in these locations?

- **Urban homes** – Buyers typically want a clean, modern look for their

gardens, a space that is an extension of their indoor living area.

- **Suburban homes** – Typically buyers are after entertaining areas, but designs also include swimming pools, expanses of lawn, layers of planting and play zones for children.
- **Rural properties** – These designs are about providing similar elements to suburban residential properties, but ensuring that the design

is not too overstated and the planting blends into the surrounds.

## Potential buyers

If your clients want to appeal to a particular demographic that is drawn to houses in their area, these hints may help them to determine the style of garden to choose for the best return.

- Young singles like outdoor entertaining areas and prefer an edgier, more current look. As they tend to be drawn more toward inner city





Outdoor decking can provide the perfect location for ceramic pots full of herbs as well as the essential barbecue area.

suburbs with smaller-sized properties, this style can be easily achieved in a paved courtyard with minimal low-maintenance planting and space for outdoor seating.

- Families like a softer looking space, generally with an established lawn. Planting is important to incorporate in line with the structural requirements of the house, and the style of the garden can be classic or contemporary depending on what the architecture dictates.
- Investors who will be letting out the property will be interested in appealing to the broadest range of buyers. The trend towards outdoor entertaining has been strong for at least 10 years now, so designing a space with this in mind could very well be a wise investment, but be careful not to overdo it.

There are many other less expensive ways to improve

the appeal and resultant sale price of a home, however, if expenditure is an issue for your clients.

**“73 per cent of homebuyers are more interested in properties that have a safe place for children to play.”**

A 2011 survey conducted by Turf Australia found that simply adding a lawn to a property can add up to \$83,000 to the sale price of a residential home. Studies have shown that 73 per cent of homebuyers are more interested in properties that have a safe place for their children to play, so adding a lawn is definitely a sound investment.

Patios and decks are another way to considerably increase the value of a home, especially when considering the trend for outdoor entertaining spaces. Structural integrity and durability of materials are the most important elements to consider, particularly if your clients intend doing the bulk of the work themselves.

Another common trend in urban and suburban environments is the cultivation of kitchen gardens for both homeowners and residential tenants.

Accommodating this desire can be as easy as setting aside an area of the garden that can be used to create raised beds for planting.

An important final touch is renovating an existing front yard to improve the kerb appeal of the property. While ensuring that the area is clean and well maintained is essential, adding a carefully designed garden path,

## COMMERCIAL

Although more commonly seen as an addition to residential properties, gardens and landscaped areas can also add a great deal of value to commercial properties such as industrial parks, office blocks and retail spaces.

Gunning Commercial Director Malcolm Gunning said, “If a business property is attractive and has well-designed gardens or landscaping that seems to be fresh and healthy, it will attract more interest and this drives up the sale or rental price.

“Landscaping for commercial properties should be low maintenance,” Malcolm explained.

“Planting should be organised and not scrappy, and complementary to the style of the building. Any building that has been purposely designed to incorporate user-friendly gardens or landscaped areas will draw people to it.”

planting selection or rockery could make a more significant difference when it comes to your clients getting a higher sale price for their property.

Whether for entertaining, relaxing or providing a safe place for play, gardens and outdoor living spaces are excellent selling points for all kinds of properties. Finding the right style to suit individual properties is vital to helping you achieve the best price for your clients, so do your research to ensure you provide the right advice. ♦

JUNE 2013

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="color: red;">■</span> CPD workshops – go to <a href="http://www.reinsw.com.au">www.reinsw.com.au</a> for course descriptions and prices</li> <li><span style="color: blue;">■</span> Certificate of Registration Course (Real Estate) (full and part time as indicated)</li> <li><span style="color: orange;">■</span> Webinar</li> <li><span style="color: purple;">■</span> Novice Auctioneers Competitions</li> <li><span style="color: darkblue;">■</span> Roadshow 2013 – go to <a href="http://www.reinsw.com.au">www.reinsw.com.au</a> for details about what's happening in your area</li> </ul>					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<b>SYDNEY CPD</b> Prepare for Selling Like Never Before (9.30am-1.30pm)	<b>GYMEA</b> Roadshow 2013 (9.00am-5.00pm)	<b>PARRAMATTA</b> Roadshow 2013 (9.00am-5.00pm)	<b>PENRITH</b> Roadshow 2013 (9.00am-5.00pm)			
<b>SYDNEY</b> Roadshow 2013 (9.00am-12.30pm)						
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY PUBLIC HOLIDAY	<b>SYDNEY</b> Certificate of Registration Course (full-time) – 4 days (9.00am-5.00pm)					
	<b>CHATSWOOD</b> Roadshow 2013 (9.00am-5.00pm)	<b>SEAFORTH</b> Roadshow 2013 (9.00am-5.00pm)	<b>SYDNEY CPD</b> Maximise Your New Management Success Rate (9.30am-1.30pm)	<b>BATEMANS BAY</b> Roadshow 2013 (9.00am-5.00pm)		
			<b>WOLLONGONG</b> Roadshow 2013 (9.00am-5.00pm)			
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
<b>NEWCASTLE</b> Roadshow 2013 (9.00am-5.00pm)	<b>SYDNEY CPD</b> An Agent's Guide to Tax and Property Investment (9.30am-1.30pm)	<b>SYDNEY CPD</b> WHS for Strata Managers – Legislation Overview (9.30am-1.30pm)				
<b>NEWCASTLE</b> Novice Auctioneers Competition	<b>GOSFORD</b> Roadshow 2013 (9.00am-5.00pm)					
	<b>CENTRAL COAST</b> Novice Auctioneers Competition					
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>SYDNEY</b> Certificate of Registration Course (full-time) – 4 days (9.00am-5.00pm)						
		<b>SYDNEY CPD</b> WHS for Property Managers – In Practice (9.30am-1.30pm)				

# JULY 2013

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>SYDNEY</b> Certificate of Registration Course (full-time) – 4 days (9.00am-5.00pm)				<b>SYDNEY</b> Certificate of Registration Course (part-time) commences (9.00am-5.00pm)		
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
<b>SYDNEY</b> Certificate of Registration Course (full-time) – 4 days (9.00am-5.00pm)				<b>SYDNEY</b> Certificate of Registration Course (part-time) continues (9.00am-5.00pm)		
	<b>SYDNEY CPD</b> The Nuts and Bolts of the Residential Tenancies Act (9.30am - 1.30pm)	<b>COFFS HARBOUR</b> Roadshow 2013 (9.00am-5.00pm)	<b>PORT MACQUARIE</b> Roadshow 2013 (9.00am-5.00pm)	<b>SYDNEY CPD</b> The ABC of Compliance (1.30am-1.30pm)		
	<b>LISMORE</b> Roadshow 2013 (9.00am-5.00pm)	<b>COFFS HARBOUR</b> Novice Auctioneers Competition				
		<b>WEBINAR</b> Creating a Standout Marketing Campaign (10.30am-11.30am)				
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
<b>SYDNEY</b> Certificate of Registration Course (full-time) – 4 days (9.00am-5.00pm)				<b>SYDNEY CPD</b> Managing Your Property Management Workplace (9.30am-1.30pm)	<b>SYDNEY</b> Certificate of Registration Course (part-time) continues (9.00am-5.00pm)	
<b>ORANGE</b> Roadshow 2013 (9.00am-5.00pm)	<b>DUBBO</b> Roadshow 2013 (9.00am-5.00pm)	<b>TAMWORTH</b> Roadshow 2013 (9.00am-5.00pm)				
		<b>NEW ENGLAND</b> Novice Auctioneers Competition				
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
<b>SYDNEY</b> Certificate of Registration Course (full-time) – 4 days (9.00am-5.00pm)				<b>SYDNEY</b> Certificate of Registration Course (part-time) concludes (9.00am-5.00pm)		
<b>DENILIQUIN</b> Roadshow 2013 (9.00am-5.00pm)	<b>WAGGA WAGGA</b> Roadshow 2013 (9.00am-5.00pm)	<b>SYDNEY CPD</b> An Agent's Guide to Tax and Property Investment (9.30am-11.30am)		<b>SYDNEY CPD</b> The DEF of Compliance (9.30am-1.30pm)		
<b>MURRUMBIDGEE</b> Novice Auctioneers Competition	<b>RIVERINA</b> Novice Auctioneers Competition	<b>ALBURY</b> Roadshow 2013 (9.00am-5.00pm)				
		<b>ALBURY</b> Novice Auctioneers Competition				
29	30	31	AUG 1	<p><b>WANT TO KNOW MORE?</b></p> <p>You can find out more about all of our courses by visiting <a href="http://www.reinsw.com.au">www.reinsw.com.au</a> Click on Course Schedule in the Training menu.</p>		
<b>SYDNEY</b> Certificate of Registration Course (full-time) – 4 days (9.00am-5.00pm)						
<b>SYDNEY CPD</b> Creating Impact and Influence (9.30am-1.30pm)						



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**www.reinsw.com.au/training**




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**www.twitter.com/REINSWnews**



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REINSW CEO Tim McKibbin with NSW Minister for Fair Trading Anthony Roberts.  
Top right: Tim McKibbin with NSW Premier Barry O'Farrell.

# Lobbying

**We're in your corner.**

As an organisation created by members for the benefit of members, REINSW lobbies on your behalf. Our close relationships with key government and industry stakeholders allow us to contribute to a better regulatory environment and to improve the standing of property professionals across NSW.

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## MEMBER PROFILE: JESSICA HOGAN



Bluebottle Property mother and daughter team, Jessica (left) and Jan Hogan, joined REINSW to bring increased credibility to their new Northern Beaches agency.

“Membership of REINSW is good for customers too as it provides them assurance that we are a reputable agency.”

“We want the advice and support structure REINSW provides as well as the training on offer, with an added bonus of having access to Forms Live,” said Jessica, who has had experience with REINSW from working with other major realtors. “Membership of REINSW is good for our clients too, as it provides them assurance that we are a reputable agency.”

Founder and Licensee-in-charge Jessica Hogan was brought up on the Northern Beaches participating in local sports teams, surf clubs and many community events. She also has personal experience

as an investor and renovator, so she knows what it’s like on the other side of the fence.

The independent boutique agency was established in 2012 to service the Northern Beaches area from its Manly office. Together Jessica and Jan have 30 years’ combined experience in real estate on the Northern Beaches. Bluebottle Property, however, gives them their first opportunity to work together as a team, “fulfilling a dream that will make us unstoppable,” they declared with enthusiasm.

## NEW MEMBERS

### FULL FIRM

**Boyd Realty**  
WINMALEE

**Bluebottle Property**  
FRESHWATER

**Myplace Estate Agents**  
ZETLAND

**Mr B Zheng**  
ZETLAND

**Ms K Smyth**  
BALMAIN



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

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- TRA has a 60 page document on every aspect of our business showing compliance to the new privacy principles, completed by our barrister and solicitors.
- TRA abides by “Property, Stock and Business Agents Amendments (Tenant Databases) Regulation 2004”.



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

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

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

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

Week ending	Total auctions	Total value \$M	Clearance rate	Sold prior to auction	Sold at auction	Sold after auction	Passed in total
07/04	484	\$231.03	67%	81	240	4	129
31/03	233	\$82.72	53%	45	68	10	92
24/03	710	\$354.00	70%	161	335	2	165
17/03	547	\$298.27	69%	117	256	5	128
10/03	427	\$241.92	73%	80	231	0	86
03/03	432	\$194.90	64%	87	189	1	116
24/02	327	\$155.45	69%	74	152	1	76
17/02	219	\$94.07	67%	57	90	0	67
10/02	142	\$49.10	63%	26	64	0	48
03/02	133	\$28.33	54%	17	54	1	54
27/01	8	\$4.09	100%	2	6	0	0
16/12	468	\$170.76	60%	97	182	2	153

# On the trail

## Brett Hunter follows in the footsteps of his grandfather on the Kokoda Trail.

In April 2013, seven real estate agents took on the gruelling 96km Kokoda Trail in Papua New Guinea to raise money for the Kokoda Angels and The Salvation Army.

The agents started from Popondetta, the capital of Oro Province, on 14 April and trekked on foot across the mountainous terrain to Bomana War Cemetery in Port Moresby, where they arrived on 25 April for the Anzac Day dawn service.

The challenge was the brainchild of Chris Hasson, Principal at Raine & Horne Nelson Bay, who has completed a series of extreme charity events over the years.

However, the trek has particular relevance for Brett Hunter, General Manager of Raine & Horne Terrigal – Avoca Beach. Brett's grandfather Mervyn Hunter was on the ship *Aquitania* with the 53rd and then 39th Australian Infantry Battalions, when they arrived in Port Moresby in 1942.

Mervyn survived defending 7 Mile Drome airfield and transporting supplies to Owen's Corner at the end of the Kokoda Track to return to NSW and start his own real estate business on the Central Coast.

Interestingly, Mervyn was in charge of censoring reports and documentation for his regiment, but he left his family a legacy of his own uncensored diaries from



Mervyn Hunter fought on the Kokoda Trail and left behind detailed diaries.

the war, which grandson Brett read in preparation for the challenge.

Before he set off, Brett said: "I'm not taking the diaries with me, but I might take a few excerpts to read at certain points along the way.

"Kokoda has always been on my bucket list so when I was given the opportunity to share the experience with industry colleagues and share stories around the campfire with other Principals, I was on board."

The agents raised money through sponsorship for the event and encouraged those who were not able to sponsor them in advance to go online and make a donation to their chosen causes: the Kokoda Angels (the charity that supports medical and ambulance services that

serve remote villages located between Kokoda in Southern Papua New Guinea and Popondetta) and The Salvation Army's Investa Treks initiative. ♦

**REINSW members Brett Hunter (Raine & Horne Terrigal – Avoca Beach), Jason Maxwell (Raine & Horne Newcastle) and Chris Hines of Unrealestate Coffs Coast, were joined by two non-members and Kokoda expert Dill Brill on their Kokoda expedition.**

**YOUR STORY**  
We want to hear your stories!

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

## Contact us

Reception: (02) 9264 2343  
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### Journal

Managing Editor: Martin Wanless  
Editor: Jill Park  
(02) 9556 9115  
Email: [jill@mahlabmedia.com.au](mailto:jill@mahlabmedia.com.au)  
Head of Client Services: Roslyn Atkinson  
Designer: Nina Christian  
Sales Manager: Nicole Dixon  
Advertising: Sara Lewis  
(02) 9556 9105  
Email: [sara@mahlabmedia.com.au](mailto:sara@mahlabmedia.com.au)  
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REINSW Managing Editor:  
Cathie Dickinson  
(02) 9264 2343  
Email: [cdickinson@reinsw.com.au](mailto:cdickinson@reinsw.com.au)

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