

## Checklist for preparing your property for photographs and open house:

Selling is a stressful time and sometimes its hard to know where to start, so here's a handy checklist of a few basic things you can do to get your home ready for photographs and open house inspections and create a space that buyers can see themselves in.

Now is a great time to have a clean out and make a couple of visits to the tip. An uncluttered house will give the illusion of more space and will seem easier to maintain. This will also give you a head start with your packing up.

1. First, take a walk through your house starting from outside the front door as if you were the buyer. Look for anything you would not want to see if you were thinking about buying this property – eg loose door knobs, stains on the carpet or floor coverings, peeling paint, windows and doors that don't open or close properly, lights that don't work, leaking taps, evidence of rising damp such as peeling or bubbling paint and or damp smell. Make a note to get those things fixed.
2. Then stand in each room and take an objective look around you. While your home is furnished according to your tastes, this look might not suit everyone. Your décor should enhance the room, not compete with it. Remember the buyer is trying to picture themselves here.
3. Now try to minimise the amount of personal material in each room – eg knick knacks, piles of books, papers or magazines, souvenirs, photographs and/or mementos such as children's artwork and projects. Pay particular attention to the kitchen and family rooms where most of our personal objects tend to accumulate. Don't be tempted to cram everything in cupboards as they will only fall out on unsuspecting buyers during inspection.

### Entry

Remove piles of shoes, umbrellas, sporting goods and other 'things' that tend to find a home in this area of the house.

Make sure doormat is clean and neat.

Ensure pathways are clean and free of leaf litter, weeds and toys.

### Lounge/Family room

Tidy away game consoles and stacks of CDs, videos, DVDs, books and/or magazines.

Put remote controls and tangles of cords out of sight.

Minimise knick knacks and personal items on sideboards, coffee tables and other surfaces.

Make sure curtains are pulled back neatly and/or raised blinds are even.

Consider a vase or two of fresh flowers for both your photo session and your open house.

### Kitchen

Remove postcards, photos and other bits and pieces stuck on the fridge and/or noticeboard.

Try to clear as much off your surfaces as possible, including benches and kitchen/dining table.

Make sure visible grocery items on open shelves look tidy.

Ensure sink is clear of washing up, and dish racks, drainers, plugs, cloths and brushes etc are stowed out of sight.

### Dining room

A nice table setting makes a photo come to life so either set the table with basic cutlery and crockery (as if you were about to have people to dinner) or leave the table as bare as possible.

### Bathroom/Ensuite

Tidy away children's bath toys, shampoo bottles, lotions soaps and washing accessories.

Fold clean towels (preferably plain or solid colours) over rails.

Put toothbrushes, toothbrush holders and personal grooming items away in drawers or cupboards.

Remove toilet brush and toilet paper canisters unless they are enclosed.

### Master bedroom

Make sure beds are made (preferably plain or solid colours).

Remove all personal effects from bedside tables.

Remove slippers and gowns etc from behind the door and make sure there are no clothes draped over chairs, rails etc.

Remove any unnecessary items (eg boxes, gym equipment etc) to the garage or a storage area.

Try to minimise anything visible under the bed (eg storage boxes etc).

Clear away items piled on top of wardrobes and shelving.

### Children's bedrooms

Try to minimise personal effects such as posters, toy collections and other items that take up a lot of space including items on top of wardrobes and shelving. If possible pack away out of sight.

Make sure beds are made.

Try to minimise anything visible under the bed (eg storage boxes, toys etc).

Remove slippers and gowns etc from behind the door and make sure there are no clothes draped over chairs, rails etc.

### Garden/Outdoors

If you have a garden, courtyard, deck or backyard make sure fences are not falling down, and handrails or gates are not loose or wobbly.

Check the driveway for stains or unsightly oil spills.

Make sure pavers are not loose or missing.

Ensure lawn is mowed, trees and shrubs are pruned and garden beds are neat. If your garden is looking a little tired it is worth buying some cheap potted colour (such as petunias, pansies, marigolds or whatever's in season) from the local nursery to dress things up a bit.

Make sure garden furniture is in a presentable state or stored out of sight.

If you don't have the time or energy or would just prefer to leave it up to the professionals, ask your agent to recommend a good cleaner, lawn service or garden maintenance person or call n-gauge on 0412 182 221. Professional expertise can make all the difference.