

# Sell it Yourself

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## Contents

### Chapter 1: Should I or Shouldn't I?

Ever since Noah sold some poor unsuspecting sod his “soon to be waterfront” property, people have been selling their own home.

And the great news is that you can undertake you own sale just like hundreds of others do every year in Australia.

In fact with the advent of the internet you now have an unprecedented ability to reach thousands of potential buyers on any given day.

But it wasn't always this way. Selling your home used to be much more difficult before the Internet. It wasn't just more difficult, but because you had access to fewer prospects, your eventual sale price was also limited.

The good news is that marketing your home on the same scale as the agents is now possible for anyone. At a pinch you could just get your own sign made up with a local sign maker and even your own website... but as you'll see later there's an even better way to do it yourself.

Now back to the theme of this chapter... 'Should you or shouldn't you sell your own home?' Well before I answer that (or before you answer it for me) let me admit that I am heavily biased towards people selling their own home. In fact I've always felt that way, even though I'm a licensed real estate agent.

It's important you know that I run a business called PropertyNow that's specifically geared towards helping people sell their own homes. So of course that means that I have considerable bias to people choosing the DIY route in selling their home.

Now that we've cleared the air of my potential motives, I want you to know that I truly believe that absolutely anyone can sell their own home. That doesn't mean however that everyone should do so.

But let's talk about you for a moment. Do you fit the criteria to sell you own property or should you go the old fashioned way and use the services of an agent?

First let's look at what you DON'T NEED to be or to do to sell your own home.

First you categorically don't need to be a salesperson... in fact generally speaking it can be a hindrance not a help, to be in a sales mindset, when people come through your home. I'll explain exactly why that is in a little while... but for now simply know that being yourself with prospects is absolutely the best way to get any buyer across the line.

You also need little knowledge of contract law and just a minimal knowledge of conveyancing... some of which is contained within this book.

The reason you need little knowledge of contract law and conveyancing is that these are areas that even the agents leave to their respective professions... and we advise you to do the same.

Now this doesn't mean that you shouldn't have a working knowledge of cooling off periods and what constitutes an exchange etc... Rather it means that when you're selling your home you should still use the services of a respected and proficient solicitor or conveyance.

There are just some things you don't mess with and a contract is one of them. Besides you'll be enlisting the aid of a professional to draw up your initial contract, so it makes sense to further utilise their services to ensure everything is legal, watertight and most important in your best interests.

So the point I am trying to make is, you don't need to be a salesperson and you don't need to be a legal eagle either. Another thing you don't need to be is a marketer, although it's a decided advantage if you can pen some words that have the power to emotionally move people to want to see your home.

Most people can create good copy by just following a few simple guidelines and with most advertising less is more, at least when it comes to the message, if not the delivery.

Basically if you remember to paint a word picture, rather than simply listing a feature you'll do just fine. In later chapter we'll cover advertising in more detail.

Ok, so you don't need to be a Lawyer, a Salesperson or John Singleton to successfully sell your own home. What then do you need? What if any, skills or attributes make a sale more likely?

Well we already touched on the need to be you and please, please, answer your prospects questions with honesty

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and frankness.

You'll also want to keep low key about both the positives and any negatives your home may have. And let's face it, every home no matter how grand, has its negatives. Even Buckingham Palace has its drawbacks – the cleaning and heating bills alone....

The point is by being low key; you'll have the high ground in discussions and later on in negotiations. This is because once you start getting emotional you may get defensive about an innocent comment from a prospect and blow your chances. I don't mean to say that you shouldn't be excited about your home... after all it's the best home in the world right?

Just don't overdo it. I've seen many agents go into raptures over a home and that's fine so long as it's sincere.

A genuine and heartfelt story about your street, your neighbourhood or the home itself, will work wonders, but the minute you start to embellish you'll be caught out.

It's a neat trick but if you can aim for a combination of enthusiasm for your home and a "couldn't care less" attitude to the sale you'll do better than 90% of the agents out there.

The greatest attribute you'll need to possess when selling your own home is the very same one you'll need when you use an agent and that is... PATIENCE!

Have a game plan and follow it. Your home may sell first week on the market or it may take a year. You just need to consider both possibilities and how you'll feel in either eventuality. That way you won't have any surprises on the way and you'll make better decisions.

It's funny how often I see people who say to me that they're just testing the market... and after a month suddenly become absolutely obsessed with the need to sell. Conversely there are others who put a property on the market and grab a buyer immediately only to then have doubts about 'whether we're selling it too cheap'.

Spend a little time thinking about how you will feel in the event of a quick sale and how you'll feel and act if it takes longer.

Remember that in any given week or month, the vast majority of homes aren't selling. As a vendor, all you'll notice are the 3 SOLD signs in your suburb and you'll be oblivious to the other 20 that are still for sale.

You also generally won't be aware of the final sales prices of those homes and all you'll remember was the last price you saw advertised even though some may have sold well below the advertised price.

The bottom line is that whether you use an agent or do it yourself you need to be in for the long haul. Of course the reality is that most people want a sale yesterday and it's amazing how the pressure can build to sell for either financial reasons or emotional ones. We'll cover the approach to take if you get to that point where you need a sale yesterday.

For now I hope you realise that honesty, being natural, a degree of patience and a game plan are the most important ingredients you require to succeed.

If you follow the tips and tactics we give you in the following chapters and you still can't sell your home for the price you want (notice we said the price you want) then rest assured that you probably wouldn't had the same outcome using an agent.

You'll see what we mean in subsequent chapters.

## **Chapter 2: What do I need?**

There's a difference between what you need and what you should have, so let's begin with what you absolutely need to sell your own property in NSW. There isn't much that you require.

The only physical thing you must have is a contract and it's formally known as a 'Contract for Sale of Land'

Silly name I know, particularly if you're selling a house but nevertheless that's the jargon your Solicitor or Conveyancer may use, generally it's just called The Contract.

There are even times when a Contract isn't immediately required such as when your property is above 5 acres. Of course it's a moot point anyway, as sooner or later you have to have something for the buyer to sign.

That's it; there is nothing else you categorically have to have to sell your own home in NSW. Other states have slightly different contracts but the basic premise is still that you must have a contract.

Now there are of course several things you don't strictly need but almost certainly will require and chiefly among

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those is a marketing medium.

This marketing medium might include all or some of the following

- Physical for Sale Signs
- Newspaper Ads
- Magazine Ads
- Internet Presence
- General Flyers
- Open House Flyers
- Open House Boards
- Arrow Boards – for hard to find properties or low traffic roads
- Brochures
- Radio and Television – for very high value property
- Billboards
- Networking – community, business, social, word of mouth

Now the more avenues you use to promote your home the better but what you should know is that most Real Estate agencies now report that the Internet is the most cost effective medium. It has been expressed by many agents that the Internet accounts for up to 70% of their enquiry followed by signs as the most effective medium.

When a good agents lists a home he will drop flyers throughout the neighbouring streets on the basic that you can use your neighbours as allies in selling i.e. They will tell their friends that a home has come up for sale in an area that they know and love. Well that's the theory and sometimes it does work exactly like that.

But what you as a private seller need to know is that the vast majority of your enquiry will be via sign and Internet. So try not to be one of those people who sell without a sign because it seems clever or classy to do so or because you are worried that the sign will make the property go stale after a while.

This is a common theme of many sellers who don't really understand the basic principles of selling. I can perhaps fathom an emotional reason for not having a sign but I don't agree that in general it's smart to have no sign. Selling without a sign is like putting your home up for sale and then going 'Sssh, don't tell anyone I'm selling' or as I once heard it described 'like winking at a pretty girl in a completely darkened room'

Have a sign even if you have that super exclusive position that all the Doctors and Lawyers will be fighting over.

Just like a sign, the Internet is an absolutely integral part of selling real estate nowadays and there's only one thing that matters in terms of Internet Marketing (or any marketing for that matter) and that is reach.

By reach I mean to say how far and to how many people will your ad reach. Theoretically any website can be seen by anyone anywhere in the world but traffic is king. Traffic is simply the name coined to indicate how many people go to a given website. Now there are a number of companies who have sprung up lately that will put your property on a very slick looking website for just a few hundred dollars or less. You could be forgiven for thinking you would be getting great value... I mean all you do is put your home on their pretty looking website and start to pack for your move. If only it was that easy.

The reality is of course very different. Ask yourself – where would you look if you were buying house? For more people the starting point is the net and in particular the 2 biggest real estate sites i.e. realestate.com.au and domain.com.au. There is little chance of your home being spotted on any minor sites outside the big players, with one obvious exception... and that is... any real estate website who's address is on your 'For Sale sign'

Put simply the visitor to the major websites each month number in the multiple millions... and your home must be on those sites, as opposed to a beautifully designed but lonely web site that ranks on page 10 of the Google search results for real estate.

The purpose of this chapter was to define what you need to sell and what it's recommended you have to sell. Those essentials in my view are internet plus quality signage with a website and a phone number that answered immediately or at worst within 24 hours.

It's incredible to think that at the time of writing this chapter I happened to ring four private for sale ads that appeared in the local paper. Of the four numbers I phoned – 3 didn't answer at all over the course of 48 hours. I even tried one number for 72 hours.

None of the sellers even had a message bank for a buyer to leave a contact number... and to think people were spending \$30+ dollars per ad to advertise a number that wasn't even manned.

Either use a service like PropertyNow to field all your calls so you never miss an enquiry or strap your mobile to your waist and don't even take it off to shower.

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So now you can appreciate that as a minimum, you should have great net presence when selling, plug a great sign and someone to pickup the phone 24/7.

That call you missed may just have been your buyer... and whilst you may think they can always phone you back... what's more likely to happen, is that they'll spot something else and never phone you again. They may also be so miffed at no response to their phone call that the same will apply. They move on to the next house and forget yours.

Remember that when buyers are in buy mode they're mostly in a hurry and you don't want to lose one that was about to reach for the chequebook.

Another thing I recommend is to keep a log of your enquiry in case you want to tell them about a price change later on.... it's simple but believe me even agents often neglect this one simple task.

It's also prudent to make up a cheat sheet that details the basics of the property... the address, the website where it can be viewed later buy the buyer, bedroom number and/or sizes, heating, c cooling, size of the land, rates, bus routes, kitchen facilities, local schools and hospitals etc. Again I estimate that 50% of agents either have no such sheet or if they have created one they seldom bring it to the inspection. My apologies to the good agents that do so.

Your cheat sheet needn't be an exhaustive list of features, but just something the prospect can take back home to review, so that after they've seen 20 homes they mostly remember yours and your contact details.

Basically you just want to make your house easy to buy.

Depending on how you go about selling you will want to take some photos and so will need a digital camera or a friend who has one that you can borrow for about half an hour.

Most cameras produce images suited immediately to the net but if you are advertising with a company they may have certain requirements for your images, such as size and type e.g. JPG. Don't worry though as there are dozens of freely available software programs on the Internet to resize or convert your images if needed.

The other option is to pay a Professional Photographer by the hour to come out and take your photos. Depending on where you live that might be in the order of \$100.

Good quality photos are essential even though some properties will stubbornly resist any attempt at a great shot... i.e. trees in the road etc. Sometimes you need to get creative and even a little athletic to gain a good photo. I've stood on fences and in trees to secure a good image, of a difficult to shoot home.

In the next chapter we'll take a look at how you're going to set and monitor your price.

### **Chapter 3: Setting your price**

Ok, so you've decided to sell and what's more you're going to do it yourself and potentially save many thousands of dollars.

What price are you going to list the property at and are you prepared to negotiate on that price?

Will you have a plan of built-in price adjustments if they are needed?

Are you going to be firm on the price?

Let's look at setting the price first. Most owners believe they know what their property is worth based on what else is for sale and believe me I've seen many owners who know more than the agent (in their particular price band)

This isn't surprising when you realise that agents sell property from \$100,000 to several millions and may struggle to know all the relative values and market segments. You however will only be studying the competition in your own price bracket and will sometimes be able to tell the agent a thing or two.

On the other hand it's human nature to think your home is better than its competitors and it's easy to overprice. Overpricing can be a huge Achilles heel... if it's vastly over the odds.

Consider this scenario.

Just suppose your house is actually and measurably worth \$300,000 but let's further imagine that for whatever reason (error or design) you list your \$300,000 home at \$350,000. Let's take a look at how this might affect things.

The first problem you will face is that now your buyers will be comparing your \$300,000 home that's priced at \$350,000 with other homes in the \$350-\$400,000 bracket (depending on their finance capacity)

Suddenly instead of competing in your easier league you're up against the higher calibre homes and struggling to make an impact on the buyer.

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The next problem you face is that at the higher price there are fewer and fewer buyers simply on finance grounds. Remember for every extra \$100,000 borrowed the buyer needs greater borrowing capacity and even more importantly another \$5000 - \$10,000 to \$20,000 deposit.

Higher price = Fewer buyers, plain and simple.

Still you have to set some price don't you, so you have about 4 basic choices.

**1. Ask a friend who is an agent on in housing finance or valuations etc to assist you in determining a price.**

**2. Set your own price based on your own perception of the market and based on your needs out of the sale. Of course never forget that the market couldn't care less about your needs.**

**3. Pay a registered Valuer to do a valuation on the property.** This is a great idea even if you are selling with an agent. Here's why it's so valuable. First the valuer isn't trying to sell you something and has no vested interest in gilding the price lily.

You see even the most professional agents are only human and let's face it; they want and possibly desperately need your business. It's common knowledge that many agents will 'buy the listing' and then work you down on price over time, once they have you stitched up with an exclusive agency agreement.

The third reason why a professional Valuation is so powerful is that eventually some buyers will probably require finance and if you have a written valuation you will have that knowledge that the house will Val Up.... in other words you and the buyer will both have a fair knowledge of what amount of borrowing the house will stand. Why is that a good thing? Simply because many buyers with the best intentions fall at the last hurdle when the house doesn't value as high as the asking price and the banks won't lend the money needed.

The fourth reason is simply that you will have the comfort of knowing that you aren't giving the house away or at least be armed with the knowledge and make a better decision in any negotiations.

**4. The other way you can set your price is to invite one or more agents to appraise the home.**

The rationale here would be that, since the agent has gotten to know the home, if he feels he has a strong candidate he can phone you for an agency agreement and contract to show the buyer through. Remember he can't speak about your property to a client without you authorising him to do so, via an agency agreement.

A few words of caution here however. If you get 3 agents out on appraisals as most people do, then be prepared to be hounded by some of them to list the home. And be careful about signing an exclusive agency... because if you do so and then find a buyer yourself, you will be very likely to still be charged the full commission.

This would apply even if your next door neighbour or tenant or even your son or daughter bought the home! Again it pays to remember that the 3 agents will all want the listing and it's expecting a long of self discipline for the agents not to 'buy the listing'

As a footnote to all of this talk of Valuations I would like to see a time when Valuations were the norm when selling (even though the actual asking or sale price could exceed the valuation)

After all, there is no necessity for you to disclose any valuation you've had done unless it's in your interests... and it would stop the rampant over pricing by agents (in a strong or moderate market) that kills the market eventually.

As I stated earlier, I think it's a sound idea to get a Valuation when you are selling privately and even more so when you employ an agent to act on your behalf, because after all you are going to need to get a higher price with an agent to cover the big commission so you need to be very sure of the sale outcome and likely final price.

Now there is a small downside to this idea of getting a paid valuation (agents appraisals are not the same thing) and that is that they cost anywhere from \$150-\$800 for an average property. But considering that you are probably saving \$5000 - \$10,000 on agent's fees this could be worthwhile... and again you will be safe in the knowledge that you have a reasonable idea of what your home is worth.

Now it's worth mentioning that most Valuers are very accurate and are required to be so. But I have seen the odd occasion where the valuer is way out of whack, so choose a good one who knows you area.

In my experience the Val is generally on the conservative side so in all likelihood you would list a little higher but that is determined by your individual circumstance, your personality and the market.

The alternative again, is to buy a mini market report for your exact area or suburb.

A good rule of thumb to keep in mind is that you don't want to be any more than 5-10% above the true value of your property or you may have a hard time attracting interest. With the recent proliferation of real estate and investing shown on radio and television buyers are better educated about property prices than ever before.

## Chapter 4: The Procedure

This chapter is short and sweet. We want to give you a simple nuts and bolts overview of the listing and selling process from the moment the property goes on the market until final settlement.

1. Prepare the property for sale aesthetically
2. Prepare contract with solicitor or conveyance
3. Market property
4. Conduct inspections with prospective buyers
5. Field an offer from a buyer
6. Negotiate a sale price and conditions of sale. Price Agreement
7. Once price is agreed to verbally buyer puts down a deposit. Deposit is initially 0.25% of purchase price for the duration of the cooling off period e.g. 5 or 10 working days. Full deposit (after cooling off period) is often 10% but can be 5% or any figure both parties deem acceptable
8. Buyer and seller sign Contracts at the time of laying down a deposit or as soon as practicable after the deposit is given. Contracts are generally signed in the presence of a Solicitor or witness, but increasingly many agents are exchanging contracts themselves. The contracts are not deemed to be exchanged until the contracts are signed by both parties and consideration has been paid i.e. a monetary or equivalent deposit has been placed.
9. After exchange of contracts the owner is obliged to sell to the buyer and cannot offer the property to another whilst under contract. The buyer however may rescind (pull out of) the contract within the cooling off period (nominally 5-10 working days) but if that occurs the seller is entitled to keep the initial deposit i.e. 0.25%. The reasoning behind the seller keeping the 0.15% in the event of the buyer not proceeding is that this is the cost compensation to the seller in taking the property off the market for a week or two.

10. During cooling off period the buyer can continue to do building and pest inspections as may be required and attend to Valuations if needed and in obtaining finalisation of finance.

11. After the exchange of contracts has cooled off (5-10 working days) then the contract is binding on both parties and were the buyer to change his mind he may lose his full deposit (a substantial amount of money) Also should the buyer fail to settle in full on the due date he can be forced to pay hefty penalties by way of interest on the balance. In the far less likely event of a seller changing his mind after contracts become binding... the buyer may have remedies through the courts.

12. Settlement is usually around 4-6 weeks after exchange though there is no set timeframe. That is to say that most contracts will stipulate 42 days but this can be varied on the contract e.g. delayed settlement of 3 months, 6 months etc. It is even possible to have delayed settlements of a year or more.

13. On the day of settlement, cheques are drawn by your solicitor/conveyance and the bank, to reflect the sale disbursements including pro rata of rates tec. Title deeds are transferred.

Be sure that you carry building insurance of your own (during the settlement period) whether you are the buyer or the seller.

Don't rely on the other party to have a policy. We are talking about maybe \$20-\$40 in pro rata fees on a building insurance policy for the period up to settlement. If the house were to burn down in the settlement period and you found out that the owner's insurance had lapsed.... hmmm?

The parts of the sales and settlement process that you as a Private Seller should be most interested in, are those between offer and acceptance of price... and to unconditional exchange.

The first thing is to get a verbal agreement on price. Very soon after that you should be giving the buyers details of your solicitor (and you should get his solicitors details) so that his representative and yours can attend to the exchange.

After price agreement, you will want to be securing the 0.25% part deposit. This is crucial to you and you want to know that the buyer has signed the contract a.s.a.p.

Any undue failure to do so should mean that you proceed with showing other prospects. The best thing is to leave it all up to the solicitors BUT stay right across the process and ensure it all happens in a timely fashion.

Your role is to push for the Unconditional Contract stage to be reached via your solicitor or conveyance.

## Chapter 5: Marketing

As a private seller easily your most cost effective marketing will be via the internet. An even more powerful use of the net would be to use very selective and cost efficient newspaper ads. Let me explain.

Private Sellers will typically save anywhere from a few thousand to \$10,000-\$20,000 so it makes sense to spend some of that booty on marketing so that you reach more people more often.

There are various companies that help people DIY their own sale and our business PropertyNow is one example of a business dedicated to private selling assistance. Whether or not you use such a business to assist your marketing you should set aside a small budget, perhaps \$500 - \$1000 to use over a period of time.

This money might be best used in placing snap classifieds in papers or magazines in your target market. The ads should be as small as practicable but bolded and including phone and website details and a gripping For Sale headline.

Over many years in real estate I noticed time and again that most newspaper and magazine advertising is wasted and is mainly for the edification and promotion of agents. Several high profile people in the real estate industry such as Neil Jenman have been saying this for years now and I agree wholeheartedly.

Conversely in my opinion, snap ads for real estate stand out since there are usually no more than three at any one time in most suburban or even capital city newspapers.

Bottom line is that classifieds are cost effective and you get the best of both worlds by promoting the property and sending people to the website where you can literally fill them with as much information as you wish.... for very little money.

Presumably you want to private sell because you want to save money (there are other reasons) and so you need to investigate other low cost or free options.

One of the simplest and best of these options is to place flyers in every location where you are permitted to do so. Many local businesses will help you out and allow you to put flyers on or around their premises. This is an area even

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agents normally fail to exploit and yet it can be quite powerful.

Get a little creative and adventuresome. Think... where would a potential buyer be?

The answer is anywhere in your local region and I would especially recommend leaving some simple A3 or A4 flyers with finance brokers, solicitors, conveyancers, coffee shops, service stations etc... basically anywhere where there's either foot traffic or warm prospects (those businesses dealing with real estate in general)

Most supermarkets have a community notice board where you are allowed to pin up your ads. These are a great free resource so why not take 5 minutes to use them next time you shop there.

Given that the net is so powerful do a Google search on your suburb and look for Directories and Portals that allow you to place free ads or else just comments, in local online forums. With forums you can be very subtle and offhand in mentioning your property and you can simply put your website address in your signature file.

All you need to do is type out 5 or so ads about your property in several different lengths. Type them out in any word processor and just copy and paste your ad in as many appropriate online places as you're able to. Again whatever place or medium you use, just be sure to send people to your website.

This is basically a form of preselling and is used commonly. By the time someone makes the effort to come to your site from a flyer or directory they are a warm prospect for your house.

And don't forget it may not be the person seeing your ad that ends up your buyer. It may be the friend or business associate of your buyer that spots your ad. This is known in real estate as seeking buyer advocates and it's a little like networking... but in this case, networking to prospects who may be complete strangers.

On the subject of networking.... are you telling absolutely everyone you know and come into contact with, that you are selling? You certainly should be and you don't need to be a pest or embarrassed about it. Be direct – 'did you know we're selling?' or be more subtle and just weave it into your conversation.

I'd certainly be telling every hairdresser I knew that I was selling as in my experience they are the best networkers ever. They see lots of people and guess what... the people they see are mostly locals... and they see dozens every day. Be sure to speak to them when you're getting your hair done and leave flyers on the premises if they allow you to.

The beauty of leaving flyers in places like hair salons and medical centres is that there are always people sitting

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around in these places and those people have some time on their hands, to pay attention to your flyers message.

Understand that if 10 people know you are selling, they may mention it to 10 of their friends. Suddenly you have 100 people aware of your sale with no greater effort on your behalf.

Here then is a non exhaustive list of great places to leave your flyer.

- Supermarket pin boards
- Solicitors
- Conveyancers
- Finance Brokers
- Coffee Shops
- Takeaways
- General businesses (especially where people have to wait)
- Accountants
- Hospital staff rooms
- Medical waiting rooms
- Beauticians
- Hairdressers
- Community Groups
- Club and sporting group noticeboards
- Online portals, directories
- Internet forums
- Free private selling websites

Plus

Use a classified ad that runs once a week at least which points to your online site. The cost will be around \$20-\$40 per week so a budget of \$500 could last you around 6 months, particularly if you buy in bulk with the paper.

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In my experience this is always money well spent and just about the best bang for your buck.

Notice that even though I own and operate PropertyNow I recommend you use any of the free websites that are available. Use them but just don't pin your hopes on getting many visitors from them because as we mentioned earlier, buyers are going to look on the big 2 websites en masse and never visit the little sites in the numbers you'll require.

That's why our system is so powerful in comparison with other Private Selling system. Few if any of those services list your home on the largest sites in the country. If they aren't an agent, they can't for example you on realestate.com.au

I recognise that the above is a biased comment on my behalf but it's also 100% factual. Have said that, why not post on the free services, if you have nothing to lose? Remember every so often the 50 to 1 shot gets up at the races and the more irons in your real estate fire... the better!

We simply contend that such sites should be adjuncts and not relied upon to make your sale... as the changes are just too slim... and your sale is just too important to leave to chance!

## Chapter 6: Pro's and Cons of Private Selling

I am such a huge fan of the right and ability of the average person to sell their own home that it's difficult for me to argue the cons. I fervently believe that you can do as good or a better job.... than most agents..... And I presume you agree or you wouldn't be reading this.

That being said, I will try to write this chapter from a Devil's Advocate point of view, when making the argument against Private Selling

So lets dive in and examine the "for and against" just like good ole Benjamin Franklin suggested.

Lets begin with the possible downside of going it alone.

### The Cons of Private Selling

**Confidence** - you are relying on yourself and have no scapegoat if the property doesn't sell. Agents are often

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scapegoats despite their very best efforts. Lack of confidence that you are doing the right thing might make you second guess your decision to sell by yourself and undermine your efforts.

**Sales Skill** - maybe a salesman knows what to say and when to say it better than you do? Do you think that's so?

**No office** - Maybe with no window display you'll be short of buyers?

**Answering service** - Are you really prepared to be contactable readily and prepared to speak with buyers even if you're having a bad day. After all agents have to do exactly that.

**Pricing** - You have to make some sort of effort to price your home or arrange someone to do it for you.

**Emotional Component** - Can you handle negative comments or even worse no feedback at all from prospects.

**Legal** - Can you manage to organise your buyer to get in and do the things he needs to do such as put down a deposit and sign the contract?

**Conviction** - Do you believe your home is worth the money you are asking or that you can achieve the asking price or something similar?

Are you mentally prepared for a lack of enquiry and are you mentally ready for a flood of enquiry.....either could occur.

**Agents** - Are you able to handle the jibes, taunts and criticisms that will almost certainly come your way from agents and well meaning friends because you're willing to step outside your comfort zone? Seriously for some folks that could be a factor, so if you're not a determined sort of individual it might be best to take the agent option

**No Middleman** - It might seem strange to be seeing a middleman as an upside but it can be a good or a bad thing depending on your own mindset. The theory about an upside goes something like this

- A middleman allows the buyer to put an offer more easily and neither party will get their nose out of joint at the response. Or at least if they do then the agent (middleman) acts as a buffer. That's the theory so you be the judge.

Ok lets see if we can find any upside to selling by yourself

## The Pros of Private Selling

**Emotional** - A feeling of self satisfaction and being more in control of the sale.

Involvement - Because you've learnt more about the market and the true price of your home you may be more apt to get the best possible price without relying on advice from a person with a vested interest in you selling so that a commission is gained.

**Simplicity** - Don't have to involve a 3rd party and rely on someone to send the exact message that you want sent to your buyers. You can hear it and tell it like it is.

**Control** - This one is self explanatory but there is real value in knowing exactly what's going on. Not worrying whether an agent is using your house to sell another and so on.

Personal reasons - Maybe you've had a bad experience with an agent and have no desire for a repeat performance.

**Commission reason 1** - The grand poobah, big daddy, most commonly cited reason people seem to have for selling their own home is ( drum roll ) ..... the small matter of sufficient savings to send you on a nice overseas trip and in some cases purchase a new car. We're talking serious moolah of generally at least \$5,000 - \$10,000 and upwards.

**Commission reason 2** - Maybe the savings you make by not paying commissions don't go into the new car or overseas holiday. More importantly - maybe, just maybe, that \$10,000 saving ends up being the difference between you being able to sell at all. This is a very real scenario for many people particularly for those who bought at the top of the market and who then decide, or are forced to sell at the bottom of the market. The market may have dropped 10% and with agents fees, legal fees, stamp duty or capital gain, moving costs ...etc then the only way some people can sell at all, is through their own efforts.

**Investors** - Your primary role is to maximise profits and control risk therefore refer to commission reasons 1 and 2 above.

Selling your own home isn't rocket science and provided you adopt a positive attitude and above all price your home properly you can do just fine.

If your house doesn't sell that doesn't mean it's because you are doing it yourself. If that were the case then every agent in Australia would similarly be at fault ...because every agency in Australia has homes they struggle to sell. In the same way both you ( the public ) and they ( the agents ) will have homes that sell very easily.

You see the real factors that determine whether a home sells are Price, Price and PRICE. Price is set by you but the

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market determines whether it agrees with you in relation to position, size and amenities and the competition around at the time.

The market or more specifically your buyer really couldn't care less whether there's an agent involved. Some prefer dealing with an agent it's true and perhaps even more prefer not to. But regardless of any preference people will always buy or not buy based on whether the home is value and suited best to their needs

As an agent of many years experience I have sold hundreds of houses but you know what? I have never yet sold a house.....those hundreds of houses sold themselves and I managed to simply not get in the road of that process several hundred times.

I would love to take the credit but no one has yet convinced me that some slick words from a salesman make or break the decision to buy.

I mean lets be serious, for most people, buying a home is the biggest investment they will ever make.....do you actually think someone can be coerced to that extent by any salesman in the world.

Even if it were possible for an agent to magically weave such a spell temporarily.... the effect would wear off before the ink was dry on the contract and the cooling off was complete.

To borrow from a well known quote.....if you think you can - you're right and if you think you can't you're also right. So Private Selling is really more about your attitude than any imagined skill you may think you need.

The basics of any sale.....taking a deposit and securing a signature are precisely that, basic concepts easily carried out by you and your solicitor or conveyancer ....and if you want extra help you can enlist the services of a company that specializes in helping people sell privately. One business that does precisely that is PropertyNow.

## **Chapter 7: What If?**

This chapter is setup in a frequently asked questions format. It deals with general questions as well as those related to private selling.

### **Q - If I sell privately won't I get less exposure?**

With the internet you can now potentially reach every person in Australia via the giant real estate websites. Sure people still go into agent's offices but it's generally after they've narrowed things down on the net first. The agents have a window display and that's useful but they also have to spread their enquiry out across anywhere from 10 - 100 homes.

In my experience working at every major real estate franchise in Australia, I can't really recall ever having more than 10 people walk in off the street on any given week.... and off course we usually had about 30-50 homes to attract them.

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Of those 10, perhaps just 50% were ready to buy or serious.....so that's about 5 people per week spread over 30-50 homes.....not great odds for my clients. This was my experience working at the following agencies - Raine and Horne, LJHooker, Elders, StarrPartners, Ray White and a smaller agency known as Prime Riverina Real Estate. Furthermore these same results were consistent across the board.... as I was working at times in country NSW and also at other times in Sydney.

You might find yourself asking then , if so few people call into an agency how do agents make enough sales ? The answer is simple but not immediately obvious to anyone outside the industry and that is.....it's purely a numbers game. If an agent has let's say 50 homes, in a good market he may sell one per week. That sounds great doesn't it? That is until you do the math.

5 homes a month sold out of 50 listings is.....10%

Staggeringly that's 90% of homes that don't sell in any given month with an agent. These figures are an estimate but I believe they would be pretty close to the mark. It's unlikely we could get reliable figures as agents don't want you to know what they don't sell every month. Think about this – when was the last time you saw an agents newspaper ad saying ".....**unsold at Auction 80%**"

You don't notice of course, because Joe or Jolene Public just sees signs everywhere with the 5 -10 agents operating in their area. Of course spread across all those agencies are plenty of SOLD signs and they stand out to you. You pay far less attention to the other 90% unsold. If agents were ever audited over a year in an average market and their results were published....well....you get the picture.

Now am I saying agents are evil or lazy?.....absolutely not! Some of them work like crazy and put in ridiculous hours for a pittance. But....and here's the rub.....they can only do so much and at the end of the day everything gets back to price, the market and the competition for your home. These are things you can control as much or better than your agent can. The market is the one thing neither party can really do much about.

Now we were talking about exposure and the reason I may have appeared to get sidetracked is that you need to fully comprehend that your house will sell if priced right and no amount of exposure will sell an overpriced home ( unless of course a buyer makes a big error of judgement but you don't want to rely on that )

At the same time just putting a cardboard sign up in front of your home isn't a smart move even when you have a really well priced home. In either case you want exposure to as many people as you can so you get not just a sale, but a sale at the highest possible price.

These days that exposure you need is readily available via the internet using the big companies like realestate.com.au, domain and so on. Base your marketing on the internet and then do as much complementary stuff as your time and budget allow

#### **Q - What if I need some advice when selling on my own?**

There's always people out there to help you. You have a Solicitor or conveyancer handling the contractual side of things so logically any questions about legal aspects or how the contract process works can be put to them. There are several good books on selling your own home with or without agents in most libraries and bookstores. We have listed some in our Useful links section. And dare we say...if you use our services you get to ask any questions around the clock without charge.

#### **Q - What if my house just won't sell?**

Ok assuming you've made a genuine effort to push things along as per our marketing chapter then either there's just no one out there at present or far , far more likely it's.....PRICE.

Now that may be cold comfort to hear as you may feel you just have no more room to move on price. So what else can you do? Well I suggest getting creative. You could try offering any of the following;

**Vendor terms** - offer a delayed settlement

**Vendor Finance** - wrap the home or offer help with deposit or allow a tenant's rent to go towards the deposit...etc.

**EBay** - why not?...remember get creative, what have you got to lose?

**Trading Post** - just be sure to publish your website link also.

**Relevant Media** - Advertise in publications relevant to your property e.g. horse magazines for suitable acreage properties. Got a home near a Hospital or Medical Centre.....write a short note to all the Doctors in your area or put a snap add in their trade periodicals and again get on the Hospital noticeboard or a flyer into a staff room.

**Talking House** - This thing is just brilliant for marketing. Imagine a 24 hour a day, tireless salesperson on your front lawn. It's possible, it's easy and it's inexpensive. See our Useful Links page.

**Accountants and Finance Brokers** - Redouble your efforts with these guys. They have databases of professional investors so if your home shows a good return they may be interested for their Pro clients. They also have generational mum and dad buyers on their books. People who just want to get a home for their son and daughter to get started in life. But don't just tell them about your home....if you are in a position to do so, offer an incentive to their buyers.... as in terms of some sort. I would be surprised if you got no response from such an approach.

#### **Q - Someone wants to buy my home. What do I do first?**

Ok be brave, stay calm. Ask for the deposit and ask for the signature. You can do this via your Solicitor **but you should get the ball rolling** and then let the Solicitor handle the fine detail. **Your job is to get the strong verbal commitment** and let your professional do the technical stuff. Don't be afraid to ask for the business. You aren't being pushy you just want to know. Don't be wishy washy about asking for a deposit and signature... because if they don't buy.... they were never going to anyway. You can most certainly accept a 0.25% initial deposit and receipt it, to help emotionally bind the buyer, to your property. Then send them off to your Solicitor and their own Solicitor as soon as they can. We've included a template of a Sales Advice in our **useful links and tools chapter** which you can deliver or fax/email to both parties solicitors when you get offer and acceptance on price.

#### **Q- Agents keep ringing me saying they have a buyer?**

Has the buyer even been through your house yet? Don't fall for this most basic of ruses. Test the agent by giving him an Open or better yet a **Sole Agency** on the property for a week..... Or even an exclusive agency for one week, if you imagine they are for real. The Sole agency will afford you the most protection...don't confuse Sole agency with Exclusive Agency...see our glossary for the difference. But **if you are Private Selling**, absolutely do not sign an exclusive agency and give away total control for up to 3 or 4 months. With [PropertyNow](#) because we don't bind you to us, you can sell with an agent at any time you wish. Just don't get suckered in by an agent telling you they have a buyer.....what they are really saying is *"I want your listing and I'll try to get you a buyer...and by the way I want \$5000 - 10,000 if I sell it"*

#### **Q - What security measures should I take?**

When you put your home on the market, normal prudence dictates that you get people's names and contact details before allowing them through. This is good for staying in touch with them in any case. Put wallets and jewellery etc away of course. I have never had anything stolen in 10 years of real estate but I guess it happens.

#### **Q - The buyer just put in a ridiculous offer and I was offended**

Getting offended is a complete waste of time and emotional energy. If you were truly bothered by a buyers remarks then the best strategy is to smile and don't react at all. Just say that you're sorry the house isn't for them ....and that you're sorry to have wasted their time.... and watch their bravado dissipate. Please realise that sometimes buyers are fishing to see if you are desperate. I have had a \$750,000 sale get past the post when the first offer was an unbelievable \$600,000. Hard to comprehend but it happened. It helped that a second buyer came on the scene.

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If you have a recent valuation or you know your price is reasonably accurate you'll be less affected by the game playing of these types of buyers.

In fact they are the exception rather than the rule. Most people have been trained (sometimes by agents, sometimes by lifestyle shows or their friends) to put an offer at least \$10,000 under the mark. It seems they will generally offer a figure they perceive they can get away with and use the rationale that *"we can always come up later"* "You might also respond with *"I'm sorry you can't afford our home as I am sure it would have been perfect for you."* There will be prospects who offer less because they actually can't get more finance and their desire for your property is greater than their capacity to buy it. At all times just be calm, be yourself and appear casually interested but not over excited.

#### **Q - What questions should I be asking prospects/buyers?**

One of the strongest questions you can ask either at an inspection or better yet before they come around is this..... **"Do you have finance approved?"** And if they say yes you can add **"Are you approved enough to be able to afford our property?"** Don't say this in any tone other than one that's helpful and genuinely interested. You have a complete right to know this and few people should object. If someone does have a problem with such questions they probably aren't serious and you just caught them out and saved you both some time. Or they may just be unduly touchy about discussing their finances, in which case you just gently explain that you don't want to know anything at all private or critical, you just want to help them, by understanding if they are truly in the market for your property.

#### **Q - Are there any other things I should say to a buyer?**

Don't laugh here... but why not try **"Would you like to buy the home?"** Or..... **"Would you like to live here?"** It's amazing how many agents and sales people in general don't ever ask for the business.

But now you that you know better you will ask, won't you? The beauty of those two obvious but seldom used questions is they are short and clear, can't be misconstrued and lead to the exact information you want i.e..... Do they like my house? They are also disarming in nature and easily asked without rehearsal or technique. In other words they can be asked naturally and without you needing to be in sales mode.

#### **Q - The buyer knocked the plumbing, the wiring and paint scheme and I was insulted**

This may actually be good news and is often a buying signal. As with ridiculous offers the same applies here.....just be ridiculously calm. In fact you can have fun with it knowing your lack of reaction won't be expected. You might even try turning the comments to your advantage by asking. **"If it weren't for the leaking En/suite would you be interested?"** Next thing you know you might be in the middle of a negotiation.

#### **Q - The buyer wants to give me a holding deposit?**

You can take some money and receipt it for the buyer. Let the buyer know it doesn't guarantee they get the house until they have signed a contract. You can also tell them that it's a great show of faith and that you'll effectively take it off the market for them so long as they follow through on signing the contract as quickly as possible. Don't say you'll take it off the market unless you mean to honour that undertaking as the receipt of the money alone ( .25% ) is not binding on either party.

#### **Q - What are some of the costs of selling?**

Solicitors will generally charge somewhere between \$600 - \$1200 for an average sale and a Conveyancer generally around \$400 - \$800 If you are selling your actual primary residence or family home there is no capital gain.

Agents generally charge between 1% - 4%. You can negotiate but most agents won't go below 2% and the average is probably closer to 3 %...depending on the market share they have.

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On top of the selling fee, agents will usually ask you for marketing expenses as they don't want spend their own money on a house that they may not end up selling. I truly don't blame them.

Also they know that after the agency period many buyers are apt to switch agencies, leaving the first agent out of pocket. The public don't realise just how hard and costly running an agency can be.

When agents tell you they don't charge for advertising just ask them how many newspaper ads you'll be getting, what size and what paper and when..... and get it all in writing!

You should insist upon a written and signed schedule of advertising if you are using an agent. Then you will see how much advertising they are in fact prepared to do for free.... and you may be surprised.

Check your mortgage for early payout penalties as these can be surprisingly high at times. By that I mean in the thousands of dollars.

There will be bank costs involved in the discharge of the mortgage and rates will be pro rata at the point of settlement.

## Chapter 8: Want some help?

This chapter is an unashamed plug for our own service which helps private sellers to DIY their own sale.

**PropertyNow** is a Licensed Agency without a shop front and therefore the savings it makes on not needing to pay shop costs are given back to its clients in the form of 2 low cost selling options.

**PropertyNow** has an extremely low commission rate but since you need to be in our geographical region to use that service, we also offer a Private Seller Option. This For Sale By Owner system works by having PropertyNow promote your property via its substantial internet presence and our infrastructure, to allow us to market your home and take your enquiry seven days a week.

We send you out a Professional For Sale sign with our website address prominently displayed and also a 24/7 contact number. We also place you on our website as well as the major websites throughout the country and take your enquiry for you, including maintaining all records of buyer enquiry.

We can assist the public to sell their own property and we do so by charging no commission but instead charge only a moderate once only marketing and administration cost. People report to us that they are surprised by the amount of value compared to the cost of our unique service.

Importantly when you pay for our service you also receive free 24 hour advice and support.

We send out our sign and post your property strategically on the internet. As enquiries come in you are notified by email, text message or phone.

We will insist on a copy of your contract so that we comply with the Department of Fair Trading. We take the buyers full contact details and we also give out your contact details to the buyer ( with your permission. )

To learn exactly how our system works or contact us you can go here

<http://www.propertynow.com.au/>

## Chapter 9: Glossary

Please note that the following is not meant to be an exhaustive list but rather is useful as a primer or reference point for Private Sellers. You should not rely on this information but rather seek independent legal advice on all aspects of buying and selling. This guide is included herein solely for the convenience of users.

Furthermore this explanation of terms is not necessarily a legal definition. In any case of a dispute a court of law or arbitrator may determine an outcome. This might become evident during a disagreement over commission entitlements between two agents working for one vendor or in a contract dispute between buyer and seller. Therefore do not rely on the accuracy of any information contained herein but rather seek Independent legal advice at all times.

**AMENITY**

A characteristic or feature of a neighbourhood that adds value to lifestyle and thereby the property value, in general.

**ALLOTMENT**

When a larger area of land is subdivided into smaller pieces, these smaller parcels of land are known as allotments - often referred to as "lot", "building block" or "block of land".

**APPRECIATION**

The increase in the value of property caused by economic factors such as inflation, supply and demand, etc.

**AUCTION**

A public sale in which a property (or an article) is sold to the highest bidder. Contract is binding upon fall of the hammer and signing/deposit. There is no cooling off period.

**ARCHITRAVE**

A moulding surrounding a door or window opening.

**BEAM**

A horizontal load bearing structural member.

**BEARER**

A sub-floor timber supporting the floor joists.

**BOUNDARY**

A line separating adjoining properties.

**BREACH OF CONTRACT**

Breaking the conditions of a contract.

**BRICK VENEER CONSTRUCTION**

In housing, a system in which a structural timber frame is tied to a single brick external wall.

**BRIDGING FINANCE**

Finance obtained over a short period as a prelude to long term funding. Higher interest rates are usually charged for this form of finance.

**BUILDING REGULATIONS**

Rules of a legal or statutory nature by which local councils control the manner and quality of the building. They are designed to ensure public safety, health and minimum acceptable standards of construction.

**CAVEAT**

If a caveat is lodged upon a title to land, it indicates a person buying the property that a third person (the person who lodged the caveat) has some right or interest in the property.

**CAVEAT EMPTOR**

'Let the buyer beware'. This principle of law puts onus onto the buyer to be satisfied with the item before buying.

**CERTIFICATE OF TITLE**

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A document identifying the ownership of land; it shows who owns the land and whether there are any mortgages or other encumbrances on it, etc. This document is usually held by the lender as security for a loan. Details can be obtained through a search of records at the Land and Property Information NSW.

### **CHATELS**

Property other than real estate, movable possessions which may be included in a sale, i.e. furniture etc.

### **CLEAR TITLE**

A seller has a clear title when there are no restrictions (such as an outstanding mortgage) preventing a sale, and title of the seller is established.

### **CLUSTER HOUSING**

Detached group of houses that shares open space.

### **COMMISSION**

The fee or payment made to a real estate agent for services rendered, for example someone who engages an agent to sell their home pays the agent a commission. This can be a flat fee or based on the selling price

### **COMMON LAW TITLE**

Also known as Old System Title, consisting of a series of title documents called 'a chain of title'.

### **COMMON PROPERTY**

An area which is available for the use by more than one person (e.g. home units have common areas such as stairs, driveways, storerooms, etc).

### **COMMUNITY TITLE**

Community Title is a form of subdivision which allows common property areas to be incorporated into a land subdivision.

### **COMPANY TITLE**

Company Title is where unit owners are actually shareholders in a private company.

### **COMPULSORY ACQUISITION (resumption)**

The power of a government authority to purchase property from an owner who does not wish to sell.

### **CONTRACT OF SALE**

(referred to as the 'Contract'): A legal document which sets out the terms and conditions the seller and the buyer enter into when a sale is to take place – the contract contains a description of the property.

### **CONVEYANCE**

The transfer of ownership of property from the seller name to the buyer's name.

### **COOLING OFF**

The period of five business days allowed after exchange of contracts during which time the contract may be cancelled or rescinded.

### **COVENANT**

An agreement by one party to adhere to certain terms, conditions or restrictions regarding a property. A covenant is not usually valid unless noted on the title to the land. The nature of the covenant should always be established and the question asked: What effect will this covenant have upon the future plans for the property?

### **DELAYED SETTLEMENT**

The contract can be written up to allow for a longer than normal settlement period agreed to by both parties and with specific penalties and remedies if not honoured

**DEPOSIT**

A deposit is normally paid by the buyer at the time of exchanging contracts; normally 10% of the total purchase price. Any amount paid earlier as an initial or part deposit will usually form part of the 10%. In NSW this is often initially 0.25%

**DEPOSIT GUARANTEE BOND**

A written guarantee from an insurance company to the seller for payment of all or part of the deposit.

**DISBURSEMENTS**

Miscellaneous fees and charges incurred during the conveyancing process, including search fees charges by Government authorities.

**DUTY**

A state government tax on financial transactions. For the sale of real estate, it is calculated according to the sale value. It also applies to the mortgage.

**EXCLUSIVE AGENCY**

The Vendor uses one agent only and is contracted such that if another agent were to introduce a buyer or if the seller himself introduced a buyer , commission is still payable to the exclusive agent

**FITTINGS**

Goods or articles that can be removed from a property without causing damage to it.

**FIXTURES**

Items such as built-in cupboards, bath, stove, etc. That cannot be removed from a property without causing damage.

**FREE STANDING**

A dwelling which stands independently of others.

**HOME UNIT**

A residential dwelling grouped with others, sharing common property and registered under Strata Title or Company Title.

**INVENTORY**

A list of items included with a property, usually furniture, furnishings, movable items, etc.

**JOINT TENANTS**

Joint tenancy is the holding of property by two or more persons in equal shares. If one person dies, his/her share passes to the survivor.

**MORTGAGE**

A legal document which expresses the terms and conditions applying to the lending of money secured over real estate.

**MORTGAGE (fixed): or interest only loan:**

The amount borrowed is not repaid until the end of the term of the loan. Repayments made are only payments of interest.

**MORTGAGE (amortising or reducing):**

The principal and interest type loan which is the most common form of housing loan. The repayments through the term of the loan include both interest and principal.

**MORTGAGEE**

The person(s) who lends the money.

**MORTGAGOR**

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The person(s) who borrow the money.

**OLD SYSTEM TITLE**

See Common Law Title.

**OPEN AGENCY**

The seller retains the services of several agencies to sell the home. The basis for commission being that the agency that sells is paid the entire commission. It should be recognised that a Vendor may still pay a commission in the scenario that the vendor introduced the buyer to the home.

**OPTION TO BUY**

A legal document giving a person the right to buy. In the document the price and period are specified. A fee is paid and if the person proceeds to buy the property the amount comes off the purchase price. When the person does not proceed to buy the property the fee is forfeited.

**OWNERS CORPORATION**

All the owners collectively of a block of units. The executive committee of the owners corporation, which is elected by the members, meets regularly to discuss various matters relating to the administration of the building (e.g. common property).

**PRINCIPAL**

The amount of money owed to a lending authority.

**PRIVATE SALE**

The seller does not engage an estate agent but acts for himself or herself. The seller deals directly with the buyer.

**PRIVATE TREATY SALE**

Sale of property through an estate agent by private negotiation and contract.

**REAL ESTATE AGENT**

A person authorized to act on behalf of another person in the sale, purchase, letting or management of property. A real estate agent must be licensed by the Department of Fair Trading. There are many forms of agent such as Auctioneer, buyers agent, commercial agent or Business agent

**REAL PROPERTY**

Land with or without improvements thereon.

**RESERVE PRICE**

The minimum a seller has specified he/she will accept at auction.

**RIGHT OF WAY**

A right which gives a person access across certain land.

**SEARCH (TITLE)**

The process of investigating or examining title to land to ascertain if the vendor has the right to transfer ownership. A title search reveals the names of the owners and the other precise details of the property such as the existence of any restrictive covenant, mortgage or caveat on the title.

**SEMI-DETACHED**

Two houses joined together with a common wall or walls; usually registered under Torrens Title.

**SOLE AGENCY**

Not to be confused with either an Exclusive or Open Agency. The buyer retains the right to sell without commission if the Vendor introduces the buyer to the property. The Vendor generally has one agency in addition to his own efforts, **involved in the marketing**

**STRATA TITLE**

The subdivision of the airspace above the surface of the land, and the issue of a Certificate of Title to part of a building.

**TENANTS IN COMMON**

This is the holding of property by two or more persons in equal or unequal shares. If one person dies, his/her share passes to the person named in his/her will.

**TERRACE**

One row of houses joined together with common walls, usually registered under Torrens Title.

**TOWNHOUSE**

Two storey attached dwellings registered under Strata Title.

**TRANSFER**

A document registered in the Land and Property Information NSW acknowledging the change of ownership of a property, to be noted on the Certificate of Title.

**UNENCUMBERED**

Describes a property free of mortgages, covenants, restrictions, etc.

**VENDOR**

A person who offers a property for sale.

**VILLA**

Single storey attached dwelling.

**ZONING**

Statutory description of the allowable uses of land as set out by local councils or planning authorities

## **Chapter 10: Useful Links**

Tax Office - <http://www.ato.gov.au/>

Find Any Street - <http://www.whereis.com/>

BIS Shrapnel - <http://www.bis.com.au/>

Depreciation - <http://www.depreciator.com.au/>

Comm Bank Property Report -<http://www.commbank.com.au/propertyvalueguide/>

PropertyNow [www.propertynow.com.au](http://www.propertynow.com.au)

About the Author:

Andrew Blachut is a Licensed real estate agent living in Coffs Harbour on the NSW North Coast. He had sold over 300 homes as a real estate agent prior to launching PropertyNow in 2004. Since that time PropertyNow has marketed to sold , almost 500 properties across every state in Australia and saved Australians over 2 milliondollars in commissions.