

MOVING

**As essential handbook
for moving home in Australia**

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1

THE HOUSEHUNTING BUG!



Photo by Hiveboxx on Unsplash

'Let's move.' It's said all over the country every day. There are many reasons:

- a windfall has made a new home a financial possibility;
- an old home is proving difficult to maintain;
- the family's accommodation needs have changed so that the home is no longer large enough or small enough;
- a change in job makes it necessary to move to another suburb, town or state;
- the burden of a mortgage has grown so heavy that the joy of owning the home is outweighed by the pain of paying for it;
- the cost of rent is greater than the cost of purchasing;
- falling interest rates have made an upgrade affordable;
- or, simply, it's time for a change.

Whatever the reason, 'Let's move!' can cause a lot of excitement, as well as a good deal of trauma in any family. The problems of selling, buying and moving are enough to cause normally rational people to fall to pieces.

Home selling and buying are the biggest financial transactions most Australians make in their lifetimes. But there's more than finance involved. Home is where we spend most of our relaxation time. It's a place we need to feel comfortable and at ease. Wrong decisions can affect our financial and personal well-being.

Most of us make the decision to move homes with nothing to help us but instinct. But there are steps to take, facts to know and questions to consider. With the right guidance, home buying and selling can be enjoyable. This book is designed to help ordinary families to buy, sell and move homes with the least possible trauma.

Although the word 'house' is sometimes used for convenience, we tend to talk about 'homes'. Most of the

information applies just as readily to houses, units, flats or any other form of permanent housing.

Although all real estate is an investment, this is not a book about investing in real estate. It is written for those of you wanting to buy or sell the family home.

Nor is it a legal textbook. The legal processes involved in home buying and selling are governed by State and Local Government laws and regulations, and these vary across the country. So, while every attempt has been made to ensure the information is accurate, you should always check the legal requirements of your own State and Municipal bodies.

Our information has been gathered from more than fifty years of renting, buying and selling almost twenty homes for a family of up to six plus sundry pets. In that time, we've sold homes through agents and on our own; moved houses professionally and on our own; decorated homes and made improvements with help and on our own. We've learnt a lot along the way! You can too.

2

I WONDER WHAT WE'D GET FOR THIS PLACE



Photo by Graham Meyer on Unsplash

Since you're reading this book, you're probably thinking seriously about moving. You'll need to decide what type of a home you're looking for, how much you can afford to spend, and see whether there's anything on the market you would want at the prices offering. If you are currently renting or living with family, you may wish to jump straight to Chapter 4. But if you're living in your own home, the next step is probably to find out what your present home is worth, and to set about selling it.

If you buy first and sell later:

- You don't have to worry about where to live between houses.
- You can move at your leisure.
- Any improvements you want to do to the new home can be done before you move in.

If you sell first and then look for a home:

- You are able to make an offer on your new house without having to keep the seller waiting until you sell your present home. That puts you in a better bargaining position.
- While you're looking for a new home, your money is earning interest. You may need to pay rent, although sometimes you can lease back from the new owner. You could even enjoy a caravan holiday for a few weeks at a local holiday park.
- You know exactly how much you have from the sale of your home, and don't have to rely on estimates of what you hope to get. Financially, you know exactly where you stand.
- You don't have to sell in haste, nor obtain expensive bridging finance, in order to settle on the home you want.

Whether you choose to buy or sell first, the time will come to sell your present house. You'll want to get a fair price and to sell quickly. Sales agents generally believe that there's a buyer

for every home. It's the agent's job to find them, and to make sure they don't move on without a commitment. Sometimes the price may prevent them considering the house seriously. That's up to you and your agent to sort out. But sometimes it's the presentation. That's something you can attend to.

Assess your home

Before you put your home on the market, give it a thorough assessment. Go out onto the street. Then approach and enter your home, looking all around the yard and the rooms, as though you were a prospective buyer. Ask a friend, or an agent, to look at it with you, if you can. They might help you to see your home more objectively. What are you looking for? Any features which you think are really appealing, and anything that would put you off the place if you were looking at it for the first time. List these in Tables 2.1. and 2.2.

Every home has its appealing features. These will be the selling points of your home. You may advertise them, or you may simply let them sell themselves. Either way, they'll attract buyers to your home and persuade them once they are there that this is the home for them. Of course, different things will appeal to different people, but the trick is to identify a range of interesting features so that there's something to appeal to everyone.

Most homes will also have some features that put people off. A particular feature may be so distracting that it will turn away a buyer. In other homes, no single feature is as bad as that, but all the poor features together send the buyer looking elsewhere.

If you have difficulty identifying the positive and negative features of your home, visit a few homes open for inspection. Make a note of the things that impress and repel you about them. This may help you look more critically at your own home.

Table 2.1
Great features of this home

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Table 2.2
Poor features of this home

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Dress it up

Having identified your home's key features, the next step is to dress it up so as to enhance the great features, and to correct or hide the poor features. Work from your list.

Enhance the selling points

How will you enhance the great features of your home? Here are some examples:

- There might be a beautiful tree in the backyard with a seat under it. You might never sit on it, but a prospective buyer who likes to read or meditate may find this very appealing. To dress it up, make sure the seat isn't broken. Paint or stain it. Cut any dead branches from the tree. Rake up any rubbish around the base, and move any distracting junk away.
- Your home might have a cosy lounge with a fireplace. Set a fire in the fireplace. If you show the home on a cold day, light the fire. Put some cushions on the sofa, a relaxing painting on the wall, some homely photos or mementos on the mantelpiece, and a few books on a coffee table.
- If the family room has a feature brick or timber wall, move the furniture and clutter away from it, so that it shows its full glory.
- Your bedroom window may look out onto a garden. Clear everything away from in front of the window. Clean the glass and wash the curtains. If the curtains are torn or clash with the decor, buy or make some cheap curtains to enhance the window. Tidy up the garden. If necessary, buy a couple of plants and put them in. Even a couple of pot plants can stand in the garden to make it look more appealing, and you can take them with you when you move.