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Will the property market heat up in February?

If you're looking to secure a new home at a reasonable price then you might be better off jumping into the property market sooner rather than later, with history telling us that February is the month that buying competition starts to ramp up.

Of course, if the year 2020 taught us anything it's that we should always expect the unexpected, but in year's past property transactions have been known to slow down over December and January as both buyers and sellers take some time out from the market to attend celebrations or go away on holidays.

Generally only the most serious buyers continue their search over December and they might have secured a great price due to the lack of competition. The rest tend to wait until after the New Year to start putting their buying plans into action.

There are plenty of good reasons why buyers will be eager to jump into the property market in 2021 too, such as record low interest rates and attractive government incentives like HomeBuilder and the First Home Loan Deposit Scheme, and they will keep buyer demand strong for some time.

Prices might go up, but so will choices

If you stayed away from the market over the festive season then don't be too dismayed, because while you may have been able to snare a relative bargain, there might not have been a lot of property choice around anyway.

Data from SQM Research showed that residential listings on the market were down 7.9 per cent in December compared to the previous month.

Although it should be noted that listings were up from the previous year in Sydney and Melbourne, where people may have been playing catch-up on the market after lockdown restrictions eased.

So if you have been looking for a property and haven't been able to find what you're looking for, you might actually have more luck from this month onwards.

To beat out the competition you'll want to have all your ducks in a row though. That means having finance ready to go, being ready to attend inspections and making a reasonable offer as soon as you get the chance – otherwise you could risk missing out!

5 ways to get into the property market for less

Many are expecting 2021 to be the year of the first-home buyer, with low interest rates and housing incentives making it one of the best times for new buyers to get their foot in the door.

But even though money is relatively cheap right now, many buyers will still be cautious of financially overreaching and will be on the hunt for a great property deal.



Finding a quality property at an affordable price can be challenging at the best of times, so here are some strategies that may help you with keeping prices down.

1. Be ready to pounce

If you find a good property for a great price, chances are that others will have their eyes on it too.

For this reason you'll want to ensure you're ready to make an offer on a property as soon as you find "the one", otherwise you might miss out to another buyer simply because they got in first and the seller didn't want to wait around.

Having your finances in order and knowing what you want to spend on a property will help give you the confidence you need to jump on a good property when you see it.

2. Don't just look at new listings

Try not to be deterred by a property that has been on the market for some time.

In some cases an older listing can get lost among the newer ones, with many buyers choosing to only check out properties that have recently come onto the market.

But if you do an online property search by "oldest first" you might find a property that other buyers have missed, and possibly a seller that's very anxious to get the property off their hands.

3. Consider a change of scenery

Widening your property search is going to open up a lot more options for you so you might want to consider different locations or neighbouring suburbs to what you initially had in mind.

Check out the "sister suburbs" of your favourite areas, i.e. suburbs that have a similar lifestyle on offer, but come with a smaller price tag.

In the age of people working from home, it may also be worth looking at a total lifestyle change and moving to a regional location where prices are likely to be cheaper than they are closer to the city.

4. Find the ugly ducklings you can turn into swans

You might be able to score a property bargain simply by being willing to take on repairs or renovations that others aren't.

There are often fantastic properties to be found at discounted prices, simply because they have a few cosmetic issues that need attention.

Of course, you need to know your limits when it comes to renovating and factor in the costs of anything that needs fixing. It's also a good idea to arrange a building and pest inspection to ensure you really know what you're getting in for.

5. Do lots of research

The best way to find fantastic property deals is to have a solid understanding of the markets you're dealing with. This will allow you to recognise a great property when it comes up.

Head to lots of different open homes and follow local sold prices to get a good feel for a neighbourhood.

You should also try to connect with local real estate agents who can not only give you advice, but may also be able to share off-market listings with you, or potentially even give you a heads up about properties that are due to hit the market soon.

The four things you should always do before selling

If you're planning on selling your property this year then undoubtedly you're also going to want to achieve the highest sale price you can.

To do this, you're going to need to do a little planning and think about what can be done to your property to make it more attractive to buyers.

Sometimes a simple tidy up is all that's required, but in other cases you'll want to roll up your sleeves and do some more serious touch-ups.



1. Fix it if it's broken

It may not be worth undertaking a full-scale renovation before selling, but you should definitely aim to fix anything that is in disrepair or looks out of place.

Pay particular attention to things like structural issues, rising damp or termite infestations. These will raise big alarm bells for potential buyers and so are best dealt with before a home hits the market.

But even small issues like dripping taps or broken lights should be rectified, as even if they don't cost much to fix, a potential buyer may think the property hasn't been well maintained.

2. Clean and de-personalise

A deep and thorough clean is an absolute must before selling, especially in a post-pandemic world.

On top of this it's worth de-cluttering and taking away any personal items such as photographs, because you'll want potential buyers to be able to easily imagine themselves living in the property.

3. Get into the garden

Garden spaces have gained an increased importance in the age of lockdowns and restrictions.

A lot of people are moving away from small urban areas and hoping to find something with a bit more room to move outdoors, so a beautiful garden or outdoor entertaining zone will definitely help win them over.

Don't forget to also focus on street appeal, which may be what brings a buyer to come knocking on your door in the first place.

4. Ask an agent for advice

If you want to squeeze every cent out of your property you can, it's best to arrange for a local agent to have a walk-through of it so they can offer up advice about exactly what they would recommend should or should not be changed.

Local agents will have a solid understanding of the kinds of buyers that will be interested in your property and the kinds of things that will help make your property more appealing.

If you're looking to find your closest Professionals real estate agent to have a chat about your home visit professionals.com.au.

How to go about purchasing the property you're renting

Are you a renter looking to jump on the property bandwagon, but already love the home you're in?

It's not uncommon for tenants to fall in love with their rental home and make an offer to their landlord through their property agent, even if the property isn't currently up for sale.

Purchasing your current rental home has a number of advantages, with the major one being that you already know all the ins and outs of the property so there's unlikely to be any nasty surprises later on.

There's also the added bonus of not needing to move out or trying to work out a good time to break the lease, which you would have to do if you purchased elsewhere.

Before you reach out

Before starting the conversation about purchasing your rental you're going to want to do some research.

Find out what similar properties in your area are selling for and try to come up with what you consider to be a fair market price for your rental property.

Don't forget to also make yourself aware of any fees or costs involved with purchasing a property, so you don't end up with unplanned expenses after you've already made an offer.



Be prepared to negotiate

Once you're armed with knowledge about your local property market and the buying process as a whole, it's time to reach out to your landlord.

The best way to do this is probably going to be through your property manager. You may just want to initially ask your landlord if they have any interest in selling, but if you offer up a price upfront as well they may be more willing to discuss further.

It's possible that your landlord was already looking to sell, but seeing as the property is an investment they are going to want a decent return on it and there's a good chance there will be some negotiation on price before both parties can come to an agreement.

If an informal agreement is reached then you will want to bring in a conveyancer or solicitor to draw up a formal offer for you. Your real estate agent will also be able to step in and assist you here on what steps need to be taken.

Keep in mind it's also still a good idea to get a building and pest inspection carried out before you make your purchase, because even though you are already living at the property there may be issues that you're unaware of.

The answer could be no...

There will be a lot of cases too where the landlord simply isn't interested in selling. It may be disheartening, but if you really like the property and don't want to leave then becoming a 'rentvestor' and staying at the property while purchasing elsewhere may be an option for you.

Plus, you never know, the property may come up for sale at some stage in the future so it's a good idea to stay on top of what's happening in your local market so you're ready to make a move if it does.

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