

Spring 2011

# Tenant Talk



## What is your dream home?

### – Tips to get there

If you are planning to make a move into your own home by Christmas, here is something to consider as you research the market.

Even if a home on a decent sized block of your own land is your ultimate goal, look at a 'stepping stone' purchase on your way to achieving this.

Give yourself short, medium and long-term acquisition options.

A townhouse or unit that you can call your own might be the first step.

If you have a suburb or a particular area in mind, look at townhouses and units as well as free-standing houses as they may present a more affordable entry point.

Look at all three options that come at the same price and consider what you are getting for your money, because sometimes the unit, for example, might come with a view that the house can't match.

Take into account what is in the local area that you can walk to, and whether this is a better lifestyle match in the short or medium term.

Yes, you will have such outgoings as body corporate costs and strata title fees but don't rule out a unit or townhouse without investigating these in relation to all the outgoings relevant to a free-standing home on a block of land.

As with any property purchase, if you buy well in the first place, you will be in a good position when it comes time to sell.

If your unit or townhouse ticks the boxes for tenants, it is likely there will be investment buyers interested when you are ready to move toward your next goal.

It's a good idea to have a chat with your property manager before you start looking for properties to buy, as they will be able to keep you in mind and contact you when your ideal property comes up to match your wish list.

Last but not least, it's important to honour your obligations as a tenant. A tenancy agreement is a legal and binding document.

Breaking a lease could end up costing you. For instance, you might be liable to pay rent until a new tenant is found, as well as advertising costs.

If you're planning to move out of your rental accommodation and purchasing your own property, make sure that you are at the end of your lease and sufficient notice has been given to your property manager.



“ It's all about



With industry research telling us that 85 per cent of property buyers now research real estate online and 55 per cent of enquiries to agents already come from the internet, myljhooker is tremendously exciting.

As with most matters, when it comes to property, knowledge is power.

It would be hard to go past the recently launched **myljhooker**, the first place to get information online. It is a great source of information on everything to do with renting, buying, investing and maintaining a property.

**Myljhooker** is Australia's first national real estate customer information centre.

It features new ideas, tips, and practical resources of interest to homeowners, tenants, buyers, sellers and investors.

The free site, launched in June, also features special offers, discounts and coupons.

New members receive a \$50 voucher as well as ongoing incentives and new articles that cover everything from 'how to invest after 40' to advice on styling your home.

There is also plenty of helpful advice aimed

specifically at tenants, such as tips on renting a property and ways that tenants can save money on their bills.

LJ Hooker CEO, L. Janusz Hooker said **myljhooker** enabled the company to be of service to Australians even when they did not require immediate property transaction services.

“With industry research telling us that 85 per cent of property buyers now research real estate online and 55 per cent of enquiries to agents already come from the internet, **myljhooker** is tremendously exciting to me.

“It costs nothing to join and the rewards will continue to grow so I urge people to become members and actively use **myljhooker**,” Mr Hooker said.

Log on to [ljhooker.com.au](http://ljhooker.com.au) and click the sign up button for **myljhooker**

# Out with the old – Spring de-cluttering tips

Spring has sprung, and there's no better excuse to do an uplifting de-cluttering of your rental accommodation. It's amazing how much can be accumulated – even when you are renting!

Here are some spring cleaning tips to ensure your rental property will be clutter free in no time.

**Be brutal** – You most likely won't ever use most of the junk that's accumulated. If you haven't used it in the last year, get rid of it. If it's only been used once or twice in the last year, but you know you won't use it in the next year, let it go!



**The 'just throw it' exercise** – Take a garbage bag and walk through your home and throw away 25 items. Do not stop until you have collected 25 items. Then close the garbage bag and throw it away.

**Be ruthless with paper** – Unless it's important – paper is a notoriously difficult enemy to tackle when it comes to de-cluttering. This is why it is important to be ruthless with old magazines, catalogues, junk mail, and bills more than a valid period old. This also includes notes to self, notes from others and old work stuff. Look out however, for important documents such as tax-related paperwork, which should be kept for seven years, and things like warranties, birth and death and marriage certificates, insurance and wills.

**Create a 'maybe' box** – If you can't bear to toss something because you might need it later, put it in a box; then close the box, label it, and put it in storage out of sight. Chances are that you'll never open that box again. If so, take it out after six months or a year, and toss it or give it away.



**Celebrate!** – Once you have done your de-cluttering, no matter how small the task, take some time to pat yourself on the back and bask in your un-cluttered glory or treat yourself to a little something special for your hard work. For the bigger clean outs, a bunch of flowers or a relaxing massage might be a just reward.

## First home buyers' grants from state-to-state

A First Home Owners Grant can provide a great boost for those buying their first home or investment property. Grant amounts vary from state to state and with the recent release of state budgets there have been some changes. Here is the run-down of the First Home Owners Grants available from state to state. Contact the authorities in your state for confirmation and the fine details.

### Queensland – \$10,000 + \$7,000

While the \$7,000 First Home Owner Grant remains in place in Queensland, from August 1, buyers of newly built homes purchased before the start of 2012 will also be able to access a short term \$10,000 building boost grant.

### Victoria – \$13,000 + \$6,500 + \$7,000



In addition to the existing \$7,000 First Home Owner Grant, some first home buyers may also be eligible for an additional payment known as the First Home Bonus of up to \$13,000. There is also a further \$6,500 bonus for those buying in a designated regional Victorian location. The two additional grants are available up until June 30, 2012.

### Northern Territory – \$10,000 + \$7,000



In addition to \$7,000 grant, NT government offers a 'BuildBonus' incentive for home buyers and investors that sign a contract to purchase or build a new home or unit or commence construction of a new home as an owner-builder. The grant is available up until December 31, 2011.

### New South Wales – \$7,000 + \$7,000



The Regional Relocation Home Buyers Grant in NSW will operate for four years June 30, 2015 and provides a one-off payment to help with the cost of relocating from a metropolitan home to a regional home up to a value of up to \$600,000.

### South Australia – \$8,000 + \$7,000



First home buyers who qualify for the \$7,000 First Home Owner Grant in South Australia may also be eligible for a first home bonus grant of up to \$8,000 before July 1, 2012.

### Western Australia – \$2,000 + \$7,000



As well as the \$7,000 First Home Owner Grant, the Home Buyers Assistance Account in Western Australia provides a grant of up to \$2,000 for incidental expenses first-home buyers incur for established or partially built homes bought through a licensed real estate agent for \$400,000 or less.

### Tasmania – \$7,000



The \$7,000 First Home Owner Grant is available in Tasmania.

### ACT – \$7,000



The \$7,000 First Home Owner Grant is available in the ACT.

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