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NEWSLETTER

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5 reasons to review your home loan

Like most people with a home loan, chances are you set it up some time ago. You've not had any major hassles, you're happy *enough* with the service from your lender and just quietly making your repayments each month. Everything is ticking along nicely... or is it? Are you paying for home loan features you don't even use?

Lenders announce special offers all the time and it's important to regularly review your situation to ensure you're getting the most benefit from your loan structure.

Here are some reasons why you should review your existing home loans, NOW!

1. Pay off your loan faster

If you're working towards being 'mortgage free', there may be a more suitable loan to help you get there. Some loans are designed to help borrowers repay their loans quicker – is yours?

2. Save on interest and/ or lower your repayments

If you have been a long term borrower with a particular lender, the rate may have crept up without you really noticing. Often lenders will provide great interest rate discounts to new clients, but not extend the same offer to their existing ones. We can show you what to do about this.

You could also utilise an offset facility or

make additional repayments into your home loan to reduce interest paid.

3. Consolidate personal debt

Consolidating personal debts like credit cards or personal loans into your home loan can save you thousands of dollars in interest charges. Rolling your debts into one monthly or fortnightly repayment can also help make managing your finances a little easier and help to improve your cash flow.

4. Reduce fees

Are you currently paying a monthly service fee on your home loan? By looking around at the other options available, you may be able to reduce the costs associated with mortgage. It's always better in your pocket than someone else's, right?

It's really important to look at what your fees cover. If you're paying an annual fee on your home loan, but not using any of the features that the fees cover then its time to reassess things.

5. Release equity

As you pay more off your mortgage (and/or your home increases in value), you'll accumulate equity in your home. As long as you are capable of meeting the loan repayments, refinancing your mortgage can help you tap into the value that you've built up, using it for other purposes such as purchasing an investment property or home improvements.

A NOTE FROM TRACIE

As 2020 comes to a close I just want to wish you a wonderful rest of the year and beyond. Stay safe & well. Reach out if I can be of any help at any stage. All the best, Tracie

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7 Home renovation ideas that add major value, according to real estate experts.

sourced from Better Homes & Gardens

Increase your home's value with these remodeling ideas guaranteed to be worth the time and money.

Whether you're preparing for a move or looking to update your home, remodeling can be a huge undertaking, so it's important to know if the reward is worth it. Knowing what renovations will yield the highest return for the money is key so that when it comes time to sell, you can demand a higher price. So what renovations offer the biggest impact on a home's value? Six Better Homes & Gardens Real Estate experts weigh in on what projects are actually worth taking on. Here are the best home renovations for resale that will raise the value of your home.

1. Create an Addition

As your family grows, why shouldn't your home? Consider building an addition to add major value to your home plus increase square footage. Maximize your investment by selecting the perfect materials and details to enhance your home's value and character. Any kind of physical expansion—whether it's a new bedroom, an extension of a living room, or whatever space you desire—has a huge impact. If you can add square meterage to a house, you always add value. Size matters!

2. Redo Your Kitchen

The kitchen is the hub of the home, so functionality is a top priority. Remodelling a kitchen can be exciting and satisfying, especially when it's designed to meet your needs and desires. According to the National Association of the Remodelling Industry's 2019 remodeling impact report, realtors estimate that homeowners can recover 52% of the cost of a kitchen upgrade if they sell their home.

3. Renovate a Bathroom

An updated bathroom is a major selling point for any home. When renovating, incorporate sleek surfaces for a sparkling space that makes cleaning a cinch. According to the same report by the National Association of the Remodelling Industry, real estate agents estimate that homeowners can recover 57% of the cost of a bathroom renovation if they sell their home.

4. Update Your Home's HVAC

Your home's heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) are the components that keep your home operating. These are some of the most critical items in your home to maintain. Plus, real

estate agents estimate that homeowners can recover 85% of the cost of a HVAC replacement if they sell their home.

5. Amplify Outdoor Living Space

Nothing beats the option of entertaining outdoors. An outdoor living space will make your home a relaxing destination for get-togethers and add major value. No matter your budget, there are plenty of ways to update your backyard, porch, or patio.

"Tap the outdoors for extra living space. A screened-in porch or backyard patio—especially one that includes an outdoor kitchen with a built-in grill and small fridge—makes a wonderful additional entertaining area."

6. Make Your Home More Accessible

Home renovations should be made with universal design principles in mind. That means creating a space for people of all ages, sizes, and physical abilities. Take careful inventory early in the planning process of all intended users' capabilities, preferences, and tastes.



If it is possible to make your home more accessible, your home will be more welcoming to guests, more marketable to the largest audience, and best of all, you will be able to age in place. Do this by widening doorways, changing a main-level tub to a shower, and clearing a path to a stepless entrance (or by adding a door to the back or side of your house).

7. Update Your Light Fixtures

One of the simplest home upgrades that provide added value to your home is lighting. You'll be amazed by how well-placed pools of warm light can make your home inviting and user-friendly. Consider the design, as well as function, when choosing the right light fixtures for your rooms.

**ARE YOU IN NEED OF A
HOME LOAN HEALTH CHECK**

**GET YOUR COMPLIMENTARY
ANNUAL REVIEW**

**REVIEW YOUR RATES, LOAN PRODUCT &
PROPERTY GOALS &
POTENTIALLY SAVE \$1000'S**

Covid-19 and the impact on Australia's property market

The RBA's September announcement that the interest rate remains unchanged comes as no surprise. After all, RBA Governor Philip Lowe told parliament last month that he expects the current record low 0.25% interest rate to stay in place for three years.

Low rates have long-term implications, but in the meantime, let's go 'around the grounds' and look at how low interest rates and a global pandemic have impacted property markets so far this year.

As we enter what is traditionally one of the strongest selling seasons of the year, the NAB Residential Property Survey for Q2 of 2020 – from April through until the end of June – suggests that Australian sentiment about the housing market has dropped – and dropped big time. The report also predicts that property prices across Australia are set to fall, but perhaps not for as long as some are worried they will.

Feeling the pressure

According to NAB's Residential Property Index, housing market sentiment – a key metric used when predicting people's likelihood to buy, sell or rent property – has slipped significantly. And the reason is the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on our economy, job market, business community and confidence as consumers.

Across Australia, housing market sentiment has fallen to record lows but this has been felt more severely in some states than others. In Victoria, where sentiment was highest among states during the first quarter of 2020, it is down 95 points to a record low of negative 50.

Large falls in sentiment were also recorded in New South Wales (down 84 points) and Queensland (down 45 points). South Australia and the Northern Territory, grouped together in the report, saw sentiment fall more moderately

(down 33 points).

And while there was a significant 48 point drop in Western Australia, that's the place in Australia where housing market sentiment is currently highest (although still in negative territory).

But there are positive signs to be found, too.

Signs that seem to suggest a market recovery might happen sooner rather than later. According to the report, longer-term confidence levels are higher than during the previous housing market downturn.

Prices are predicted to drop

At the beginning of 2020, Australian housing markets across the board were on the up. When surveyed during the first quarter of 2020, property professionals predicted a 1.5% rise in prices across the country in the coming year.

But after the 'shock to the system' that COVID-19 has provided, those same professionals are now predicting that national housing prices will instead fall by 2% over the next 12 months.

What will have the biggest impact moving forward?

In compiling the report, NAB asked property experts across the country about which impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic would continue to place the most pressure on property markets.

And while rising unemployment and falling consumer confidence were the major factors highlighted across Australia, there were some issues predicted to have a significantly higher impact in some states compared to others.

However, among the negative sentiment and downward trends, there are suggestions that some of the government stimulus for potential buyers has been paying off – with first home buyers snapping up places to live, rather than rent out. And ultimately increasing their representation in the current market

Best Ever Trifle

- 1 x 85 gram packet of raspberry jelly
- 420 grams (approximately 6 cups) store bought sponge rolls*
- 4 tablespoons cranberry juice*
- 500 grams (approximately 4 cups) fresh strawberries, raspberries and blueberries
- 480 ml (2 cups) store bought custard
- 360 ml (1 and 1/2 cup) whipped cream

1. Make your raspberry jelly in advance according to packet instructions. Pour it into a small rectangle or square baking tin, so it's roughly 1 inch high. Leave it in the fridge to set.
2. Begin by prepping everything. Chop your strawberries in half and then combine with raspberries and blueberries. Roughly chop your sponge cake into 1/2 inch slices. And chop your jelly into 1 inch squares.
3. To assemble, line the bottom of a **12-cup trifle bowl** with half (approximately 3 cups) of your cake slices. Press slices up along the sides of the bowl (see photo below). Drizzle cake slices with 2 tablespoons of cranberry juice.
4. Add one third of the fresh fruit on top of cake, along with half of the jelly squares. Then, pour over 1 cup of custard.
5. Repeat with the remaining cake slices. Add one third of fresh fruit and all the remaining jelly squares.
6. Pour over another 1 cup of custard. Scatter the remaining fruit over the top. Cover the top with plastic wrap and leave in the fridge for at least 4-6 hours. When you're ready to serve, add whipped cream on top



8 Ways To Avoid Overspending on the Holidays

The holiday season can be very expensive. And if you have something else you want to allocate your funds to it is a good idea to set a strategy in place to avoid overspending.

Here are 8 tips;

1. **Ditch physical gifts where possible and practice being present.** Request hangouts over gift swaps. "Let's catch up and make that our gift to each other." Another tip is to do a DIY gift; a special photo, homemade treats, a booklet of favours.
2. **When you "HAVE" to do gifts, opt for Secret Santa or group charity donations.** This can cut your gift budget dramatically - and can help with the pain of shopping.
3. **Slash your gift buying budget and stick to it.** Work out what the maximum you can allocate to your holiday gift budget and then keep a spending tally. Don't go over it!
4. **Shop online for savings.** Keep an eye out for online sales and shop as far in advance as possible. Prepare a list before browsing.
5. **Have posh potlucks over fancy meals out.** Tell everyone to bring a plate and do an "appetiser" style meal instead of full course dinners or a BBQ. Do a beer / wine sampler night where everyone brings something.
6. **Stop mailing holiday cards.** A few eco friendly free alternatives are, send an e-card, send a thoughtful, book a skype / zoom date with loved ones far away.
7. **Reuse gift wrapping accessories.** All of these little things can add up. Be careful when opening presents and keep.
8. **Stop using the holidays as an excuse for spending.** Ask yourself whether each purchase is necessary and avoid the "but it's the holidays" mentality.





Tracie's update...

Welcome to our latest newsletter. We hope that all our customers are continuing to manage the stress and challenges that 2020 has brought us. We have settled nicely into our new head office and enjoy the more casual life of working from home as many of

you would attest to.

Thank you for all the referrals this last few months. We have been absolutely inundated with new customers and really appreciate the trust you place in us to help your family and friends. Lots of new first home buyers too, which we really enjoy working with. It is always very exciting to help someone to realise their dream of home ownership.

Just an update on lender timeframes. As mentioned in our last newsletter, Covid has had a major affect on the banks. Not only from the stand point of helping their customers through Covid, by placing many thousands of loans on repayment hold, but also their timeframes have exceeded the normal expectations of home loan processing. I just want to say a very big thank you to all of our recent customers who have experienced significant delays in loan approvals and settlements due to lender time frames. It has been very challenging to say the least.

However, working with such understanding, loyal and grateful customers has really warmed our hearts. Our team work very long hours negotiating with banks to have positive customer outcomes as best we possibly can. We understand the enormous pressure this places on our customers at times and honestly appreciate you trusting us to get the job done, despite the difficulties we are facing with the lenders. So a big thank you to all. On this topic, if you are planning to sell or purchase a property in the immediate future, it would be good to negotiate longer timeframes on your contracts to avoid disappointment and added stress. Call us if you want to check how your bank is fairing with this. All our appointments are now being conducted via Zoom and this has been welcomed by our customers. If you need anything or if it has been a while since your last review, please just reach out to us and we will be here to support you.

Take care,
Tracie and the
team.



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