

A buyer's guide to keeping track of properties

While it may sound like a reasonably easy thing to do, finding the ideal home may take a little more time and effort than most expect, especially if the potential buyer doesn't follow any specific process.

Luckily much of the stress related to finding the perfect property can be reduced with the right methods in place, according to Adrian Goslett of RE/MAX.

He says that one of the biggest challenges that most buyers face when starting out on their property buying journey is knowing where to start when sifting through the vast volumes and ample variety of properties available to them.

"While not unheard of, it is very rare that buyers purchase the first home that they go and view, and looking at multiple properties with no real plan only adds to the confusion and makes the decision harder. Simply looking at as many show houses as possible can make it difficult for buyers to keep tabs on what they have seen, what they liked about each property and for what price they were selling. Buyers who have a clear plan set out will be able to simplify the process and ultimately make the buying decision easier," says Goslett.

Even if a buyer needs to find a property reasonably urgently, it is best for them to have a plan and not rush the decision, Goslett advises.

"Buyers who make a rushed decision could pay for it in the long run. It is best rather to work through the process systematically, viewing only a small number of properties at a time. Viewing a manageable number of properties will help buyers to retain as much information about each property as possible," says Goslett. "To shorten the process buyers may be tempted to utilise a lot of different estate agents and see as many listings as they can in a day. However, while this will provide them with a general overview of the homes available on the market, it will also make it impossible for them to track each of the home's standout attributes. The logistics of dealing with many different agents could also become an issue."

According to Goslett, buyers should ideally use one estate agent that they feel comfortable with and view no more than four properties on any given day. A reputable, real estate professional who specialises in the area will be able to narrow down the search and viewings based on the information and criteria that the buyer has provided. Doing this will save buyers a lot of time potentially spent on viewing properties that don't fit into their criteria.

Goslett says that there are some ways buyers can keep tabs on the various properties that have been viewed to compare them:

- Make notes on each and every property viewed. Records can be made using an iPad, smartphone or the traditional pen and notebook. The pros and cons of each property should be logged, listing likes and dislikes and standout features.
- Take photos - most cell phones will have a camera, so it is reasonably easy to document the homes. Takes photos of the interior and exterior of the property, paying attention to aspects of a home that are especially appealing.
- Only keep records of properties that you like.
- If uncertain of anything, talk to the agent who showed the property. They will have a record of the homes that they have shown and will have a list of each property's features. Agents will know their listings and will be able to provide guidance through the often complex process of finding the right house.

"Purchasing a new home is both exciting and stressful for buyers. However, handling the process in a calm and logical manner will mitigate much of the stress, allowing buyers to enjoy the process of finding their ideal home," Goslett concludes.

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