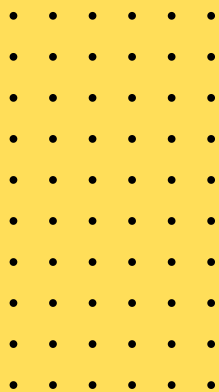


Guide To Navigate The Journey

**FROM
TENANT
TO
PROUD
HOMEOWNER**



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Abstract

Transitioning from a tenant to a proud homeowner in Melbourne is an exciting journey. Start by assessing your finances and determining your budget for a home. Research the Melbourne property market to identify suitable suburbs that match your lifestyle and budget. Save for a deposit while exploring loan options and securing pre-approval from a lender. Work with a reliable real estate agent to find your ideal property. Consider additional costs like stamp duty and legal fees. Once you've found the perfect home, finalize the purchase and plan your move. Owning a home in Melbourne provides stability and a sense of accomplishment.

1. Introduction

Becoming a homeowner in Melbourne is a significant milestone, especially in a vibrant and diverse city like Melbourne. Transitioning from being a tenant to owning your own home can seem overwhelming, but with the right guidance, it's an achievable dream. This guide will walk you through the essential steps, from financial planning and exploring Melbourne's property market to securing the best mortgage and understanding legal processes. Whether you're looking for a cozy suburban retreat or a modern city apartment, this journey is about turning your aspirations into reality and embracing the freedom, stability, and pride that comes with owning your own home.

2. Why Renters Should Get Serious About Owning Their Homes

Buying a home in Melbourne is a major financial step and long-term commitment. Owning a home is the quintessential Melbourne Dream, but aside from the feeling of pride it brings, there are plenty of practical reasons to purchase a home.

Consistent Housing Payment

The biggest cost to budget for in your personal life is likely your housing payment. Being a renter means you are at the mercy of your landlord's lease agreement, and rents tend to rise annually.

With a fixed-rate loan, your monthly mortgage payment will be the same amount every month. Knowing the monthly bill is going to stay the same every month for years to come is a huge relief and makes budgeting for the future much easier.

Staying in the home you bought for a few years can mean walking away with a lot of money if and when you do decide to leave. You may even stay in the home long enough to eventually pay it off completely and not have a mortgage payment anymore!

By comparison, renting can feel unpredictable and like a waste of money, since it doesn't result in any equity in your home.

Customize Your Space

When you own your home, you're able to decorate and personalize the space as much as you want. Owning the space you live in means having the freedom to personalize it without the risk of losing your security deposit.



You can finally paint the walls any color of your choosing, and even invest in bigger renovations like replacing the carpet with wood flooring or beautiful tiles without having to get anyone else's approval. Being able to customize your home is one of the most fun parts of homeownership.

Tax Benefits

As a homeowner in Melbourne, you can enjoy major tax deductions from mortgage interest and property taxes when filing your annual tax returns. The savings from tax benefits are significant and in some cases make homeownership less expensive than paying rent.

Be Your Own Landlord

Renters move more often than homeowners, and you can save the time and stress of having to pack up and leave. If the landlord decides to up and sell the house or building you are living in, you may have no choice but to relocate, forcing you to face an unexpected financial burden that could have been avoided.

Build Credit

Owning a home in Melbourne and making your monthly mortgage payments on time will help build up your credit score. Having a good credit score means you will easily be able to take out loans to borrow money when you want to, like for purchasing a new car or even buying a second home.

Build Wealth

As wealth management advisor and author David Bach explains, renters may throw away over half a million dollars over their lifetimes — \$1,500 per month for 30 years totals \$540,000 — and own nothing to show for their trouble in the end. When you own a home, every payment brings you closer to paying off the mortgage. Homeowners will accumulate equity over time, which means if the home value goes up, you can capitalize on the higher value when you sell your home for a profit. Paying the mortgage every month is going toward paying off the big loan used to buy the home. Owning a home could mean you are saving money for your future, and it may even enable you to leave an asset for future generations to inherit.

Why Hopeful Homeowners Stay Renters

Though these benefits to homeownership are tempting, there's no doubt that the rental market is alive and well. The top three reasons I hear people say they opt to rent instead are because of they lack the savings for a down payment, have a low credit score or can't afford to buy within the area where they are currently renting.

Because rent increases at a faster rate than income, most renters find themselves eventually getting priced out of the homes they occupy. Here in Los Angeles, renters are being forced further east each year. Planning ahead and buying in an up-and-coming neighborhood could put you ahead of the trend and able to buy in a neighborhood before it gets too expensive. In cities with high rental rates, you should keep in mind that you could always rent out the home in the future to make an income from the home.

Even if homeownership seems out of reach right now because of debt or lack of savings, it is a goal renters can work aggressively toward. Lenders can provide options for loans that work for various situations and even offer incentives for first-time homebuyers to receive grants or loans with very low down payments. It may be the case that you can actually afford more than you think!

Stop making your landlord rich, and start investing in your future.

3. Mistakes to Avoid When Buying a New Home, According to Real Estate Pros

Prevent buyer's remorse and score the best deal possible on a new home with these expert tips.

The more experience you have buying real estate, the more you'll learn about this complicated process. Between confusing terminology and the logistics of buying a house, it's all too easy to make the wrong move or wind up with an unwise investment. If you're a first-time homebuyer, bypass buyer's remorse by knowing the most common pitfalls and how to avoid them with these tips from real estate experts.

Not Getting Pre-Approved Before You Shop

The last thing you want to do is fall in love with a house you can't afford. To prevent that, before you do anything, get pre-approved for a mortgage. "You need to know what you can afford and what the monthly payments look like," says Vicki Ihlefeld, vice president of sales at Al Filippone Associates/William Raveis Real Estate in Melbourne. "A good mortgage broker will figure this out for you. And while a bank will usually pre-approve you for a higher amount, you don't want to overextend yourself. Be realistic about what you can actually afford." You're a stronger buyer if you're already pre-approved when you make an offer on a house.

Not Seeking Advice From an Experienced Professional

Despite so much information available online, you should still seek the advice of an experienced professional early in the home-buying process. "Realtors educate people about the process, who they need to consult, if they need an attorney, [and] when they'll have to have their down payment ready," says Tracie Rigione, vice president of sales at Al Filippone Associates/William Raveis Real Estate. "And we can give valuable insights into the neighborhoods you're looking at." An added bonus: Sometimes real estate agents have access to a property before it goes on the market.



Finding a real estate agent to work with is important, so take your time to find one who's a good match for your personality and preferences. As Rigione points out: "You're going to be spending a lot of time together throughout the process!"

Not Making an Informed Offer

A common home-buying mistake is letting your emotions dictate the offer. Instead, only make an offer if you're really serious about buying a property, and make sure it's based on comparable sales rather than just how much you like the house. "Ultimately the price should reflect the market value of the home. The ideal negotiation is when the buyer and seller both feel like they've won," says Rigione. "The negotiations between your opening offer and your ideal number is where working with a real estate pro really comes in handy."

Not Being Able to See the House Beyond Its Current Condition

This is potentially a two-pronged issue, and both can be problematic. This first scenario is finding a house updated with beautiful finishes, fixtures, and décor. "We call it eye candy," explains Ihlefeld. "People get so busy looking at superficial details and forget about things that they can't change about the house like the location, the yard, or that it's on a busy road."

On the other hand, shoppers may overlook a home that needs paint and cosmetic updates, but has great bones and a good location. When shopping for a house, be cognizant of cosmetic details that can be altered easily, as well as issues that are expensive or impossible to fix.

Making an Emotional Decision

You never want to fall so in love with a house that you're emotionally invested in the purchase. "If you love it so much that you feel like you'll do anything to get a property, you can end up overpaying for the home," warns Rigione. "That can lead to buyer's remorse and feeling like you didn't get the best deal. The buying process is emotional enough, and that's why you want someone on your side that can keep your emotions in check through the close. We've seen deals fall apart from something as small as a missing light fixture!" Stay levelheaded and remember that this is a serious commitment that you'll have to live with for years to come.

Only Looking at Mortgage Rates From One Lender

Ensure you do your due diligence when it comes to your mortgage. Speak to an experienced loan officer who'll find the best rates and mortgage products. "Talk to your loan officer about your personal needs so they can help steer you toward the best mortgage for you and your family," says Ihlefeld. "You can save a lot of money that way, especially if you're a first-time home buyer."

Applying for Lines of Credit or Making Large Credit Purchases

Buying a house is a big enough purchase, so just focus on that: You shouldn't simultaneously be shopping for a car, buying furniture, or opening a new credit card. "Your credit score gets dinged when you open a new line of credit. It can impact your pre-approval, mortgage approval, and create a big mess for the underwriter," says Rigione. "It can even delay your closing. Once you've closed on the house, then make your next buying decision."

4. Home-Buying Trends That Will Define 2025, According to Real Estate Experts

As the real estate market continues to evolve, experts are predicting key trends that will shape the home-buying landscape in 2025.

It's no secret that the housing market has experienced unprecedented highs and lows since the pandemic. To prepare for these constant changes, real estate experts monitor the industry to predict the next big trends for homebuyers in Melbourne.

"Given the anticipated economic trends—high interest rates, slower market activity, and price stabilization—buyers can take advantage of opportunities with a well-considered approach," says Jon Howard, mortgage loan originator at Lucid Lending. "With a patient approach, buyers can leverage the slower pace and increased inventory to find properties that align with their budgets and priorities."

In this article, we'll examine the emerging trends experts anticipate will affect homebuyers in 2025.

1. Longer Time on the Market

One of the biggest concerns for many buyers in recent years has been the rapid speed at which newly listed homes sell. Post-pandemic, the market favored buyers who could easily give cash offers or offers well over the asking price in the immediate days after listing. Now, real estate experts say homes will likely sit on the market a little longer because inventory is projected to increase.

"Over the past couple of years, inventory has been extremely tight, driving rapid sales. However, as the market adjusts, inventory is expected to rise slightly in 2025," Howard says. "More inventory provides buyers with more choices, which can reduce urgency and lengthen the time properties spend on the market."

2. Decrease in Home Prices

Home prices surged to record levels in recent years, but many real estate experts predict a correction for more reasonably priced properties.

"In 2025, we're likely to see a decrease in the percentage of homes selling above asking price compared to the past few years when bidding wars and limited inventory were common," Howard says. "The

trend of homes selling above asking is expected to moderate for many of the same reasons we believe homes will not be selling as quickly overall in 2025.”



Still, Howard believes that certain homes in high demand will get offers above asking, especially those that are move-in ready in prized neighborhoods.

3. High Demand for Move-In Ready Homes

First-time homebuyers who were able to enter the market in recent years despite record-high prices and interest rates found themselves buying a different type of home than past buyers. Many millennials, for example, hoped to buy affordable starter homes but paid top dollar for houses in need of lots of repairs and updates. A majority of buyers decided they'd rather tackle a few renovation projects in a less-than-ideal house to stay within their budget. These days, the trend is shifting.

“In 2025, we're likely to see the highest demand for move-in ready homes, though multifamily and affordable housing options will also gain traction,” Howard says. Multifamily homes will garner appeal given they're more affordable and offer the option of multigenerational living. They're also ideal as income properties, which could appeal to some buyers. High interest rates mean many buyers have less cash to make renovations with, meaning turnkey homes will be more popular overall.

A Desire for Low-Maintenance Homes

In addition, Howard points out that millennials will look for low-maintenance homes, especially with the continuation of remote work. He says that many buyers want houses that already have home offices set up.

“Many in the millennial generation, the largest cohort of homebuyers, are in their prime purchasing years,” he says. “Studies show they tend to prioritize convenience and lifestyle, leading them to prefer move-in ready homes that align with busy work schedules and family commitments.”

“Our data shows this preference is particularly strong among the 26% of 'anytime buyers' who aren't swayed by seasonality and are looking for homes that meet their needs year-round,” Taggart explains.²

“These buyers tend to favor homes that offer practicality, long-term value, and features like low-maintenance, energy-efficient upgrades, which will likely drive demand in 2025.”

4. More Economic Uncertainty

While the 2024 presidential election might be in the rearview, many experts are unsure what could unfold as the new administration begins.

“Concerns over inflation and economic uncertainty make buyers more cautious, leading to a more measured approach in the home-buying process,” Howard says. “Buyers may take longer to make decisions, leading to longer sale cycles.”

Yet even with uncertainty on the horizon, some buyers might feel spurred into action.

“Data shows nearly 70% of consumers are more likely to buy or sell in the next six months, showing that buyers still plan to act despite a fluctuating economy,” Taggart explains.² “Additionally, with nearly 60% of buyers and sellers expecting home prices to rise, it’s an important time for potential buyers to consider entering the market before prices climb further.”

5. Potential for Decreased Interest Rates

Danielle Hale, chief economist at Realtor.com, says as the market balances on several fronts, interest rates are also seeing a correction, which means buying a home might become a little more affordable.

“Despite their recent climb, interest rates are expected to trend gradually lower in 2025 as inflation continues to wane,” Hale says. “That said, rent prices are expected to drop slightly in 2025, which means that many households on the cusp of buying might choose to continue to rent. As a result, the Realtor.com forecast expects homeownership to drop slightly in 2025.”

Michael Gifford, CEO of Splitero, says dropping interest rates could mean some current homeowners enter the market again or continue waiting for an even bigger drop.

Advice for Buyers

If you plan to buy a home in the coming year, Hale suggests looking in the spring.

“Spring is usually the sweet spot for sellers as buyer interest is usually higher earlier in the new year and wanes as consumers find homes to buy or choose to continue renting,” she explains. “Fall usually offers buyers more market power, and as a result, flexible buyers can typically score a better deal later in the year. However, while this challenge will get easier as inventory climbs in 2025, a top concern will likely continue to be finding the home that is a good fit and also on budget.”

Because there are so many factors at play, Hale suggests making a list of must-haves and nice-to-haves to help narrow buyers' search and be prepared to jump on the right home no matter the season. She says that buyers shouldn't let market conditions dictate when or whether they decide to buy.

Each Buying Situation Is Unique

Gifford advises buyers to evaluate what makes sense financially before deciding if they should purchase a specific home or not.

“Buying a house depends on your financial situation and your wants and needs. Many people choose to buy a house because they're in a certain situation that warrants extra space, a relocation, or a better lifestyle,” Gifford says. “Timing in any market is difficult, and real estate is not easily replaced. If buyers

find a house that meets their needs and is in their desired location, waiting to purchase that property is a gamble.”

5. When Is the "Best" Time to Buy a House? We Asked a Real Estate Agent



It’s an understatement to say that the housing market has been tumultuous. Inventory remains low in many areas, driving prices through the proverbial roof. If you’re on the hunt and find a home you like, you’ll probably find yourself in a bidding war for it.

Is there a way to crack the real estate code and find out the best time to buy a home? Given the current sky-high mortgage rates, is that even a fair question? We asked real estate agents to share their thoughts.

The Best Time to Sell a Home

Since nothing much can happen in real estate until a property is listed for sale, let’s first consider when it’s a good time to sell a home. According to a 2023 report from ATTOM on real estate sales trends, sellers aiming for top dollar should list their homes in the spring or summer—notably the months of April, May, and June.

It’s not surprising that spring and summer have traditionally been good times for the real estate market, especially in cold-weather regions. Not only is springtime better for curb appeal, but as the days get warmer and longer—welcome back, Daylight Saving Time!—buyers are more motivated to venture out and explore open houses. Additionally, sellers with school-age children will be quite eager to get settled in their new homes before the start of the school year.

So are spring and summer the best times to buy a home? Not necessarily. Home buyers who want a larger, fresher inventory of homes will certainly get it during this time, but if the demand is still higher than what's available, buyers won't have much leverage with sellers.

The Best Time to Buy a Home

The ATTOM report also noted that while many sellers were still scoring above asking prices for their homes in October, November, and December, these months saw lower premiums for home sales. That's because traditionally, buyer competition simply isn't as fierce for homes as the holidays and wintertime approach. Any homes lingering on the market could now have motivated sellers looking to close by the new year.

"I think the best time to buy a home is when everyone else is not thinking about it," says Dawn David, a licensed associate real estate broker with Corcoran. That's why she encourages her buyers to at least start looking during the slower season.

"Even though you will have less inventory, you will have more buying power," she says.

Fall and winter are your time to shine, buyers. Look for price reductions during these slower months, and, barring those, keep an eye on the number of days homes have been on the market. Unless you're dealing with highly unmotivated sellers, the longer listings linger, the better chance you'll have to negotiate a lower offer.

This means that you'll also have to get motivated to venture outside and attend open houses when other people are hunkering down at home. It helps to be flexible with your timeline for moving, too.

David shared a buyer success story that started in spring but actually ended with a closing in December. Not only did her client's lower offer get accepted quickly, but the sellers even left items behind with the home that they probably could have been paid for when the market was hotter in the spring and summer.

The moral of this story: be patient and do not underestimate a seller's motivation to close a deal before the holidays.

When Should You Start Your Home Search?

Don't let any talk of timing the real estate market prevent you from at least starting your home search.

"Whether you're renting or buying, people don't know the market until they jump into the market," David says. Part of her job is to educate clients on the current market conditions and how to navigate their search accordingly—even if it means putting buying a home on pause until they are truly ready to buy.

Fran Lisner, real estate salesperson at Daniel Gale Sotheby's International Realty in Manhasset, NY, says that when inventory increases and sales start to slow, that's the sign that we're moving toward a buyer's market—a good sign to pick up the pace with your own property hunt.

But Lisner also recommends considering your personal and professional circumstances as well as any long-term goals, including what geographical area you'd like to stay in or end up in.

"Ultimately, the best time to buy a home is when you're financially ready, emotionally prepared, and have found the perfect place to call your own," Lisner says.

While mortgage interest rates are still high—experts say not to expect a drop until much later in 2024—Lisner urges first-time home buyers to be proactive and shop around for mortgages.

"Don't settle for the first offer that comes your way," she says, noting that buyers can explore different lenders, compare rates, and negotiate. "You might be surprised at the deals you can find."

6. The Grossest Places You Never Think To Clean During A Move-Out



Attention-to-detail cleaning adds excessive pressure when moving out of your rental property in Victoria. The entire process can be time-consuming and back-breaking, especially if you are doing it for the first time. Most tenants often forget to clean hard-to-reach spots laden with accumulated dust, gross, and grime. This can result in cleaning disputes or bond money deductions at the end of a tenancy.

If you are a responsible renter, pay attention to a well-defined cleaning checklist that covers every nook and cranny. You can also hire professionals for a budget end of lease cleaning Melbourne to get those areas cleaned that you might miss out due to stress and other potential factors.

Today, we are sharing a list of the grossest places you never think to clean when moving out of your leased property in Melbourne. Follow this guide and pay attention to all spots to increase the chances of full-bond money retrieval.

Let's Get Started!

1. Air Vents and Filters

Did you know that clogged air filters or vents in your HVAC system could be causing allergy and asthma symptoms? These are among the grossest spots tenants forget to clean at the end of a lease.

Over time, air vents accumulate dirt and dust particles, allergens, pollen, grime and harmful germs that can pollute the indoor air. So, it is good to clean your clogged air ducts and filters using the best methods.

First thing first! Wipe down the vent covers of your HVAC system using a damp microfiber cloth. Then, use a soft-bristled brush to remove excess dirt and grime

Next, use a vacuum cleaner with a brush attachment to collect dust and dirt from registers. Ensure that you have a long hose that can reach the area easily.

2. Ceiling Fan Blades and Light Fixtures

Dust, dirt, debris, and other harmful allergens collect on ceiling fans, blades, and inside light fixtures. It can ruin the overall look and feel of the property. The worst part is that tenants often neglect these spots when sprucing up the entire house.

If you want to leave a great impression on your fussy landlord, eliminate accumulated dust and dirt from ceiling fan blades and light fixtures. Use a telescopic microfiber duster or an old pillowcase to wipe down the fan blades.

Tip: Use a step ladder or a stool to access the fan or light fixture.

3. Area Behind the Radiator

It is obvious to overlook radiators as they are hidden behind heavy furniture or other decorative pieces. The grooves behind the radiator collect dirt and dust circulated back into the air and release allergens. In fact, cleaning this particular spot can help you save electricity bills.

If preparing for the final inspection, clean it using a vacuum cleaner with a canister or hose attachment. Soft-bristled brushes can also help you get into nooks and crannies. After that, clean the surface using a wet sponge. You can use vinegar and warm, soapy water to tackle grime and gunk.

Tip: Remember to turn off the radiator before you get into the cleaning process.

4. Inside the Oven and Microwave

Burnt food particles, caked-on gunk, food splatters, and stubborn stains in your much-loved kitchen appliances can be gross. Filthy ovens and microwaves can be breeding grounds for disease-causing germs and bacteria.

Thus, it becomes imperative to deep clean these appliances inside and out. Use vinegar and warm, soapy water to dislodge gunk and grease. Baking soda can help banish unpleasant odours and greasy stains.

You can also hire professionals for an expert end of lease cleaning Melbourne because they leave no stone unturned to transform the entire premises for a hassle-free retrieval of bond amount.

5. Behind the Stove

Tenants may overlook the stove in their kitchen when cleaning their rental property. Over time, food crumbs, built-up grease, and grime accumulate behind the stove, making it difficult to clean.

The best strategy is to pull the stove out a few inches, if possible, and spray a white vinegar solution to break down the gunk. Use a soft-bristled brush or a sponge for effective scrubbing.



6. Behind and Underneath the Refrigerator

Pet hair, thick layer of dust, dirt, gunk and other debris can easily accumulate behind and under the bulky refrigerator. This can become the breeding ground for pests and germs. So, apart from keeping your appliances spotless, you should maintain these hard-to-reach areas clean for better results.

It is good to pull the refrigerator out with the help of your family members and remove the dust from the walls and floors. Do not forget to vacuum the coils to dislodge collected grime.

7. Grout Lines

There is no denying that tiles are a beautiful addition to your kitchen and bathroom. However, the dull and dingy grout lines between your tiles can look disgusting. Since grout lines are prone to staining, pay special attention to the spot using the best method.

Spray 3 per cent hydrogen peroxide solution and gently scrub the area with an old toothbrush to remove pink mould and stubborn stains. Rinse, wipe and dry the surface to prevent mould re-growth.

8. Garbage Disposal

Clogged garbage disposal in your kitchen can be gross. It can linger in unpleasant odour and harbour harmful mould, leading to various health hazards. This can be the most overlooked area if doing it without any professional assistance.

After cleaning your sink and faucets, pour baking soda, followed by vinegar and warm water, to flush out stuck food particles and grime. Then, grind up some ice cubes and lemon peels to freshen up the disposal.

9. Behind the Toilet

People often pay attention to the toilet bowl to remove brown stains and gunk, but they forget to clean the area behind it. The worst part is that the area behind the toilet can harbour lethal grime, mould, mildew, and dust that can be tricky to clean.

When preparing for a move-out journey, clean this gross area using a brush or a microfiber mop. Spray a vinegar solution and leave it for a few minutes. This will dislodge the stain and make your work much easier.

There is no denying that landlords thoroughly inspect the rental property before relieving the bond amount. Thus, it is imperative to clean the grossest places within the premises during a move-out and achieve a shiny and hygienic indoor environment.

7. Conclusion

Owning a home in Melbourne is a fulfilling achievement that offers stability, freedom, and financial growth. By planning strategically, exploring your options, and seeking expert guidance, you can confidently transition from tenant to proud homeowner. Embrace this rewarding journey and enjoy the pride of creating a space that truly reflects your lifestyle and aspirations in Melbourne's vibrant property market.

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