

Sell your home in a quiet market

Joanna Tovia finds out how you can sell your house for top dollar

THE housing market may have cooled but if you are keen to sell your house there is no reason why you can't do so for a good price. All it takes is a little knowhow.

According to Patrick Bright, buyers agent and author of *The Insiders Guide to Buying Real Estate*, auction clearance rates are low in a quiet market so it's better to put a price tag on your home instead.

To work out a realistic price for your property, either get an independent valuation or ask three agents how much they think your house will sell for. Deduct 5-10 per cent from the average prediction and you'll have a figure close to its true worth.

When it comes time for your house to be inspected, it should be tidy but not too tidy.

"A home should look a little lived in," Mr Bright says. "People don't live in a display suite or a sterile environment, they live in a home so keep it neutral and simple."

As a buyers agent, Mr Bright's job is to find people the right property for them. A common request is for low-care gardens.

"People are busy and don't have time to take care of them these days," he says.

Another common request is for a home that's light and bright. Mr Bright advises sellers to trim any trees that block natural light coming in the windows. Skylights are another option.

Mr Bright advises having on display pest, building and strata reports so potential buyers can see them.

Although people seriously considering a house may get their own inspections done, spending \$400 or \$500 on getting the reports done for them can be worthwhile.

"It shows you respect the potential purchaser's time and money and most importantly that you have nothing to hide."

Mr Bright says vendors should be flexible with inspection times.

"Do structured open inspections at least twice a week and be very accommodating with private inspections after hours."

Savvy buyers will want to view the property at different times of day or may not be able to make the open-for-inspection times.



Savvy vendors can sell a property for a hot price no matter how cool the market

Mr Bright says he has inspected properties as early as 6am and as late as 10.30pm.

If his clients like two or three properties, as is often the case, he says the home owners that are more accommodating are more likely to sell their home.

"We will often make a decision on another home that is suitable rather than wait around and run the risk of missing out on both."

Providing floor plans for potential buyers makes it easy for them to remember your home because the average person will inspect dozens of properties every week.

Photographs on brochures and floor plans also make it easy for buyers to remember your home and for them to

work out how they could adapt the home to suit their needs.

Mr Bright advises vendors to be clear on what they are prepared to accept before the first inspection.

"If a good offer comes in early don't make the mistake of being greedy," he says.

Saying to yourself: 'wow if we are getting offers this high in the first week, what will we get next week' can be a mistake.

Mr Bright says he has bought many properties well below what the selling agents told him they had offers for from other buyers in the first couple of weeks.

"If the offer is what you wanted to be able to move on, take it," he says. "You may not see an offer like that again."