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TOP TIPS TO ENSURE YOUR RENTAL PROPERTY IS ALWAYS OCCUPIED

Even in the midst of a property boom, there are Australian homes that are struggling to sell or find tenants who will pay a good rate.

An unoccupied rental property can significantly impact your return on investment, but by making informed decisions, you can ensure your property is the number one preference for tenants in the area.

From choosing the right location to keeping the property in good condition, here are some key strategies to ensure your rental property is always occupied.

Be selective about location

As reported recently by [CoreLogic](#), there are markets in Australia where nobody wants to buy and where investors are selling at a loss. In these spots, there is an oversupply of apartments that resulted from an 'approval boom' around ten years ago.

To avoid becoming a frustrated property owner who doesn't achieve return on investment, one of the most critical factors is location. When you decide where to buy, it's essential to research the area to ensure it isn't at risk of over-development, which will result in your unit existing in a sea of 'same same'.

In terms of location, you also have to think like a tenant. For example, properties close to universities and hospitals appeal to students or healthcare professionals, while homes near schools, parks and shopping centres will be more appealing to families.

Accessibility to public transport is another important factor. Many tenants, especially in urban areas, want to be close to bus, train or tram stops. Think about what will work for their lifestyle when you're making an investing decision.

Study the competition

Before you buy an investment property or when preparing to list it for rent, take some time to research the competition in the area.

- What is already available on the rental market?
- How long are homes available for before they are leased?
- Are there many similar properties for rent?
- How do other properties compare to yours in terms of condition and size?
- Will you be able to charge the price you need?

Once you have checked out other places in your area, think about how you can offer that little bit extra or 'price it right' so your investment property isn't overlooked by prospective tenants.

Understand what your ideal tenant wants

Understanding your target tenant's needs can help you tailor your rental to their preferences. For example, if you're targeting young professionals, features like secure parking, air conditioning and high-speed internet access might be significant selling points. Families, on the other hand, will likely value things like extra storage space, a yard and proximity to good schools.

Regularly update your property

Once you have chosen an investment property and made a purchase, you can ensure it is attractive to tenants by keeping it in good condition. When tenants vacate (or every few years if they don't), take the time to freshen up the home with minor upgrades and repairs. Freshly painted walls, new carpets and well-maintained kitchens and bathrooms can make a difference to the appeal and value of your place.

Be prepared to replace items like ovens, dishwashers, and air conditioners over time. Set aside budget for these upgrades as well as regular maintenance and you will be rewarded with better-quality tenants.

Work with a reliable property manager

Managing a rental property requires time and expertise. If you're nervous about your investment's occupancy rate, connect with a Professionals property manager. This expert will have access to a pipeline of qualified tenants and knowledge of the local rental market so they can confirm you have set the right price.

Your property manager will also handle tenant screenings, maintenance requests and lease renewals so you can focus on other investment opportunities, or just get on with your life! Their ability to foster positive relationships with tenants can also reduce the turnover rate so your property spends less time sitting empty.

Need help to choose or manage your investment property?
Reach out to your local [Professionals](#) representative today.



MODERN HOME FEATURES AUSTRALIAN BUYERS ARE LOOKING FOR IN 2024

As the way we live continues to evolve, so do the expectations of Australian home buyers.

In 2024, buyers are placing increasing emphasis on convenience, sustainability, space and technology, while still valuing comfort and good looks.

Here's a look at the modern features Australian buyers have on their priority lists this year.

What Australian home buyers want

1. Energy efficiency and sustainability

Sustainability has become a top priority for homeowners, with energy-efficient features increasingly seen as essential. Solar panels, energy-efficient appliances and double glazing are becoming the norm with new builds, which are expected to live up to [nationwide](#) energy rating and [National Construction Code](#) standards.

If you're selling an older property, look for ways to add energy-saving touches, such as water-saving shower heads, energy-efficient lighting and insulation improvements. If you can't invest in bigger ticket items like solar panels, you may want to have some quotes from providers ready to share with buyers.

2. Home offices and flexible spaces

A well-designed home office and strong internet connectivity are fantastic selling points now that so many Australians work from home one or two days per week.

You don't have to have an entire home office to appeal to buyers, but look for places where you can set up a desk to showcase your floorplan's flexibility and appeal to buyers on inspection day.

And say goodbye to the pool room or media room, which are trends from a now bygone era. The buzzword right now is a multipurpose room that can be adapted to become an office, gaming room, guest bedroom, playroom or workout space. Work with your stylist or real estate agent to present a spare bedroom or extra living area as multi-purpose.

3. Smart home technology

Buyers with healthy budgets are increasingly expecting smart home integrations. Features like automated lighting, security systems and smart doorbells that can be voice-activated with the help of home assistants from [Google](#) or [Amazon](#) are becoming more commonplace.

The ability to control key aspects of the home from a smartphone or tablet is particularly attractive to younger buyers who want efficient and seamless living experiences.

Anything you can do to have a tech-enabled home will add to its appeal. If you already have a connected home, make sure to mention this to your agent so it can be included in the marketing materials.

4. Outdoor living spaces

Once the domain of the dog and the children, outdoor areas have evolved to become a key lifestyle addition.

Buyers love homes with balconies or gardens that have room to sit down, eat and unwind. It's all about being outside but feeling like you're inside, with a table, shade cover and place to cook.

The ultimate outdoor area includes ceiling fans, lights and a full kitchen but if you don't have the time or money for this kind of upgrade, at least look at presenting your outside areas so a buyer can see what's possible. A home stylist can lend you some outdoor furniture to make the space look functional.

5. Light and fresh air

Speaking of the outdoors, large windows, skylights and bifold doors are also trending. These features deliver natural light and airflow.

If your home is relatively dark and adding a skylight or new windows is out of the question, add some floor lamps and show the property at the time of day when natural light is at its peak.

6. Storage and functionality

Storage space, including walk-in pantries, built-in or walk-in wardrobes and functional kitchen layouts are high on buyer lists. Australians are looking for homes that maximise every inch of space with clever storage solutions, from hidden cabinets to garage shelving.

Functional laundry rooms, mudrooms and linen cupboards are covetable features. If your home doesn't have storage, at least take steps to minimise clutter so buyers aren't left wondering where things will go.

7. Low maintenance

The easier a home is to look after, the better, thanks to modern families' busy lives. This is where landscaping, fresh paint and quality appliances come in.

Before you have photos taken or advertise your open home, spend time tidying, cleaning and freshening the place up. This small amount of effort can make a big difference to your final outcome.

Need help to sell your home?

Every home will sell eventually but if you want your home to sell quickly and for the best possible price, you need it to include features that appeal to modern buyers. If they can instantly see how the place will match their lifestyle needs, they will be more excited to make an offer.

Taking a forward-thinking approach and working with an experienced agent can improve those all-important buyer first impressions and tick more of the boxes on their must-have list.

Ready to sell? Need some advice? Reach out to your local [Professionals](#) real estate agent today.



HOW TO MAKE FAMILY LIFE WORK IN AN APARTMENT OR SMALLER HOME

With urban living on the rise and housing prices continuing to disrupt the 'great Australian dream' of a three or four-bedroom home on a quarter-acre block, more families in Australia are choosing to live in apartments or smaller houses. According to the [2021 Census](#), 10.3 per cent of us now live in apartments and the number has probably risen since then.

While downsizing or choosing a smaller space for family life can come with challenges, it also offers several benefits, including proximity to amenities, less maintenance work and reduced upkeep costs.

The key to making family life work in a smaller home lies in smart planning, creative design and intentional living. Here's how to make it a success.

Optimise space with multifunctional furniture

One of the biggest challenges of living in an apartment or smaller home is maximising the use of space. However, with a little creativity, every square metre can be put to good use.

Multifunctional furniture is an excellent way to optimise your living area. For example, a sofa bed can turn your living room into a guest room, or a coffee table with built-in storage can keep clutter at bay.

Bunk beds or loft beds are perfect for children's rooms, freeing up floor space for play or study areas. You can also opt for beds with storage drawers in the bases or fold-away desks and dining tables that can be packed up when not in use. [IKEA](#) and [Pinterest](#) are a great place to start for inspiration.

Declutter and embrace minimalism

Living in a smaller home requires a more minimalist approach to possessions. Clutter can quickly take over when space is limited, so it's essential to keep only what you need. A good rule of thumb is to regularly declutter, getting rid of items that no longer serve a purpose or are not used frequently. Some families have a 'something in/something out' rule, where bringing home a new possession means something has to go.

Encouraging all family members to take part in decluttering can also foster good habits for children, teaching them the importance of valuing and maintaining their belongings. Having designated

storage for toys, clothing, backpacks and shoes will keep things organised, making your space feel more functional.

Prioritise storage solutions

In a small home, storage is key. Having enough storage options keeps your living space tidy and makes day-to-day life more manageable. In smaller homes, vertical storage is often the best solution. Tall shelving units, wall-mounted hooks and cupboards that reach the ceiling will help you make the most of every square inch of space.

If space really is at a premium inside, think about renting a garage or storage unit. This comes at a monthly cost but can still be cheaper than paying off a large mortgage. Your storage unit can house your sports equipment, camping gear and extra bedding (just make sure it's not going to get damp).

Love where you live

Families that thrive in apartments can often be found away from them. The library, beach, park and local cafe or community centre become locations for connection, socialising, play or quiet time.

If you are considering living in a smaller place, take your living preferences and priorities into account. This type of home can give you the advantage of a lock-up and leave lifestyle as well as a smaller mortgage but it has to suit your needs and habits.

Looking for the perfect apartment, townhouse or unit? Reach out to your local [Professionals](#) real estate agent today.



GET READY FOR SUMMER IN YOUR RENTAL PROPERTY

With the Australian summer approaching, keeping your rental property cool will be a priority. However, when you're renting, there are limits to what you can do.

Take a look at some simple, low-cost cooling methods and tips to negotiate with your landlord so you have a more comfortable place this summer.

Low-cost home cooling techniques

Passive cooling techniques can help keep your rental property comfortable without you making big changes.

- **Close blinds and curtains:** Direct sunlight can turn your home into an oven, especially during the hottest parts of the day. By closing blinds or curtains when it's hottest outside, you can block heat from entering and maintain cooler temperatures indoors.

In Australia, heat mostly streams in from the north during the day and the west in the afternoon. Look to cover windows that face in these directions when the sun is at its hottest.

- **Use fans:** Portable fans are a simple way to create airflow and keep rooms cool. To maximise their effectiveness, position portable fans near windows at night to draw in cooler air. If you have a ceiling fan with a reverse setting, make sure it's circulating air in the correct direction to cool your space.

New models of fans have timers so they can turn off automatically. They come with a remote control and have a low noise 'sleep' mode. The benefit when you're renting is that you can take your fan to your new place when you move.

- **Ventilate during cooler hours:** Open your windows during early mornings and late evenings to allow cool air to circulate through your home. Once the outdoor temperature rises, close them to trap the cooler air inside.
- **Limit appliance use:** Ovens, stovetops and clothes dryers can raise the temperature in your home. Opt for salads, outdoor barbecues or light stovetop cooking, and use a clothesline to dry your laundry.

If it's very hot remember to unplug your devices; they usually emit heat as they charge.

- **Invest in a portable air conditioner:** If you can't get approval to install a built-in air conditioner, consider buying a portable air conditioning unit or an evaporative cooler. Portable air conditioners don't require installation and can be moved from room to room so they are a great option for renters.

Talk to your landlord or property manager

If passive cooling isn't enough and your rental property feels unbearable in summer, consider asking your property manager if they can submit a request to the landlord to install an air conditioner or change the blinds or awnings around the property.

Although landlords in Australia are not legally obligated to provide air conditioning in rental properties, some may be open to the idea—particularly if they see it as a way to make their property more appealing to future tenants or buyers.

When making a request for an air conditioner:

1. **Provide a well-reasoned request:** Explain how an air conditioner would benefit both you and future tenants. Highlight that installing one would increase the property's value and make it more comfortable during the intense Australian summers. Take note of the indoor temperature at different times during the day and night (even with the fans on) and share this as part of your request.
2. **Get quotes:** Do some research and provide your property manager with a few quotes for air conditioning units and installation costs. This can make the process easier for the landlord.
3. **Negotiate a rent increase or contribution:** In some cases, you may offer to pay a slightly higher rent to cover the cost of the air conditioner or contribute to the installation expenses. This can make the idea more appealing to landlords who may be reluctant to cover the full cost. Before you make this offer, have a chat with your property manager as it may not be necessary to pay more money.

Finally, while it's not compulsory for rental properties to have air conditioning, landlords are required to provide a home with adequate ventilation. What's more, in most states, your landlord will be required to service and repair an existing air conditioning unit. You will most likely be required to clean the filters, but the landlord needs to keep it in good working order.

Take a look at what's included on your contract and review the rental laws in your state so you know your rights in relation to air conditioning.

Looking for a rental property with air conditioning? Reach out to your local [Professionals](#) office today.



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