

R *THE REAL ESTATE* **ROUNDABOUT**

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FAQs for RENOVATORS



Your home is likely to be the largest investment you make, so when it comes to renovating, you want to make sure you make the right decisions at each stage of the process. This avoids costly mistakes, protects the value of your investment and ensures your new home is everything you want it to be!

Here are the most frequently asked questions we've heard from renovators over the years:

What should I do first to organise my home renovation?

It all starts with research! Researching your project before you decide to go ahead will assist in the smooth running.

Next is know your budget. Once you have your budget in mind and your finance available then you can progress to the design stage. For any project of more than \$10,000 (including labour and materials), you may need an architect, designer and /or design draftsman. Your engaged architect, designer and /or design draftsman will then provide details of the approval process and arrange for your project to be submitted to your local council.

Can I DIY my home renovation?

Aside from budget and time, the most important factors to consider when deciding whether to DIY your renovation is your skillset and safety. Some work such as painting, bench-top resurfacing and minor demolition work (removing

floor coverings and changing flooring) are all safe and fairly simple to do yourself. However, when it comes to electrical or plumbing work, you could be legally bound to use a professional to avoid problems during the process and with the final product, which you and others have to live with.

What is the difference between a Registered Builder and Contractor Tradesmen?

A registered builder will project manage your home renovation or home extension project to ensure that the assigned team of tradesmen are licensed, skilled, punctual, work efficiently, produce high quality workmanship and provide a 6 year guarantee on that workmanship.

Your builder must:

* be registered in the relevant class and category for the proposed work and use a major domestic building contract if the cost of the work is more than \$10,000

* take out Domestic Building Insurance if the cost of the work is more than \$16,000

* complete your building project to the standard and quality of work required by the building regulations and your plans and specifications.

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BUYING AND SELLING

Your Property Over Christmas



While you may be used to hearing that buying and selling over Christmas isn't the best idea, it simply isn't true.

The holiday season may be a time for many people to relax and recharge, but not the real estate industry!

If you're thinking about buying or selling in the next few months, we have the pros & cons for you below...

Pros of buying or selling over Christmas

Deadlines.

Most buyers and sellers want to be able to relax on Christmas Day without the pressure of a pending property transaction weighing on their minds. This motivates them towards taking strong action in the weeks leading up to December 25th. For buyers, this means there are likely to be better value

purchases as vendors who have listed their properties will be keen to sell. They might have had a failed campaign in late November and the seller's motivation is quite high.

Less competition.

A lot of properties on the market over the Christmas period might be scheduled for February auctions, so as a buyer, if you like them, do your due diligence and make an early offer. If you're making a good offer, some of these sellers might take it so they can enjoy their holiday break. This same principle applies to sellers – there are less properties to compete against if you list just before Christmas.

Fewer sellers means greater negotiating power.

Fewer homes on the market can mean less competition and extra power in price negotiations that can see you add significant dollars to the end selling price.

Demand.

Some people may be moving as part of a New Year job relocation, other buyers may be looking for a home in the catchment area of a great school in time for the new year or there may even be people looking for a sea/tree change. Whatever the case, there are enthusiastic and willing buyers looking to purchase over the Christmas period.

Cons of buying or selling over Christmas

Office closure.

Over Christmas and New Year's, commerce shuts down for a period and for up to two weeks, you may find your accountant, solicitor, conveyancer, mortgage brokers and other property professionals are nowhere to be found. This can feed into settlement delays and potentially create issues. The same goes for trades people if you need anything fixed or done up in time for sale.

Buyer's impression.

Buyers may be slightly suspicious, wondering why you're so keen to sell your property during this time rather than spending time with your family. They may think you're desperate to sell because there's something wrong with the property, or to satisfy a financial debt. If they think you're desperate to sell quickly, this could lead to lower offers.

People are busy and/or away.

While there may be demand, people are undeniably busy at this time of year. While they're out and about already celebrating the season or away with their families, it may be a major effort for them to slot in a property viewing to an already bustling calendar.

No Lies, No Deceit, Just Honesty, Integrity and Results

FAQs for RENOVATORS

How do I appoint a building surveyor?

A builder who enters into a major domestic building contract, or a person who acts as a domestic builder for building work, must not appoint a private building surveyor on your behalf. Similarly, a private building surveyor cannot accept an appointment from a builder on your behalf. A builder may recommend a private building surveyor, but you're free to appoint a private building surveyor of your choice.

A building surveyor is professionally trained to understand the building permit process. Building surveyors are responsible for checking that the building documentation and work complies with the building regulations and standards

What kind of contract will I need with my builder?

Regardless of the cost of the work, we always recommend using a written contract. This ensures both parties are clear about the terms of the contract and their obligations. A contract should include:

- * the date the contract is effective (this is the date on which both parties have signed)
- * a start and finish date for the work, with allowances for delays
- * a plan and specifications (detailed description) of the work to be done, including references to any Australian standards that apply
- * the make and model number of any fittings such as ovens, tiles or tapware, and who is responsible for supplying these
- * details of how variations to the contract may be made
- * labour costs per hour; and per person if more than one person will be doing the work
- * any insurances or warranties that may apply
- * details of what happens if you cancel the contract, including any cancellation fees.

Look very closely at any long-term 'guarantees'. These can sound attractive, but may not be of any benefit if the business is later sold or closed. Check carefully what they cover.

What do I need to check before I sign a major domestic building contract?

Check:

- * the builder is registered with the Building Authority
- * the domestic building insurance policy, and that your builder is eligible to purchase domestic building insurance
- * the procedure for changing the plans and specifications
- * you've only agreed to pay progress payments for work already completed
- * you've had enough time to thoroughly review the contract
- * get a building lawyer to review your contract before you sign. The Law Institute of Qld has a referral service that can help you find a building lawyer

Check these costs are included in your contract price:

- * the building fee, which may or may not include the cost of mandatory inspections by the building surveyor and may vary between companies
- * planning permit fees (if your council requires a planning permit)
- * lodgement fee paid to the local council for recording purposes
- * crossing deposit or asset protection fee paid to the local council and refundable at the end of the project, if no damage has occurred to council property
- * inspection fee, a non-refundable fee paid to the council for the cost of their inspection of council assets

What are variations to the contract and when will they apply?

Variations occur when you change the specifications, plans or scope of works. If this results in project costs increasing or the project taking longer, then this is classed as a variation to the original contract. All variations should be detailed and priced in writing by your Registered Builder/Licensed Contractor and then signed by both of you before the work starts. It should then be attached to the original contract.

When does the contract start?

Builder's contracts usually commence the day you sign the contract. This is called the "Contract Date" but it may not be the starting date for your project or the date by which the

building time is calculated. The starting date (commencing date) is usually the first day work is performed on your site. The contract finishes once the premises are safe for occupation, a Certificate of Final Inspection has been issued by your local council or private certifier (and of course that you as the owner you are happy with the works that have been completed).

What are Prime Cost items?

A Prime Cost (PC's) is an agreed, reasonable estimate for materials (fixtures and fittings) which you may not have selected at the time of entering into the contract. Usually, PC's are one-off items, however they can relate to a large number of items when the labour cost remains constant. Examples may include kitchen and bathroom items.

What are Provisional Sum items?

A Provisional Sum (PS's) is a reasonable estimate for material and labour of a particular part of the home which the builder cannot give a definite price for. The reason being the owner had not decided what they want at the time of entering into the contract. Examples are pool and landscaping.

Does the builder need to provide evidence for increases in Prime Cost and Provisional Sum items?

The builder is required to quantify the extra claim if requested by the owner. That is, to give evidence of the cost of a prime cost item or a provisional sum item when claiming payment for that item.

What is Warranty Insurance and what does it cover?

In Queensland, the insurance covers the owner against major defects to the work for a period of six years and six months. Warranty insurance should not be confused with Contract Works and Public Liability Insurance, which is sometimes called Builders All Risk insurance. This insurance covers fire, damage, theft and injury during the construction period while the builder is in possession of the building site.



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Tips & Tricks for Moving House with Kids

Moving house is stressful; moving house with kids can ratchet up the stress levels. Your children may find the upheaval a little distressing, particularly if they have never moved before. That's why it's important that you put steps in place designed to keep your kids comfortable (and behaved) throughout your move.

Happy children will make your move far easier so here are some tips to help keep your kid-a-lids cheerful come moving day.

Make Sure Your Plans Revolve Around Them

The more effort you put into planning your move around your kids normal, everyday routine, the smoother the process is likely to be. There's no point trying to simply take them along for the ride, you have to make sure to keep their routine as normal as possible. This means ensuring they don't miss out on school, sports practice or any other extra curricular activities.

Remember, It Will Take Longer

It doesn't matter how good you are at keeping the kids on track, moving with kids will take longer. You need to double the amount of time that moving used to take you (in your pre-child days) for every child you have. Kids have a lot of stuff so make sure you follow this rule.

Be a Leader

Your kids will look to you to see how you respond to moving day. If you show that you're stressed, then they will be stressed too. So try to stay happy and calm. Make moving day into a game, if



needs be. Another part of being a good leader is knowing when and how to pick your battles. If they don't want to eat their lunch or they insist on wearing a purple tutu with their superwoman costume, just give in on moving day. Let the little things go and focus on the bigger picture. Moving day is not the time to be fighting little battles.

A Bit of Responsibility Goes A Long Way

Kids respond well to responsibility. It gets them involved and it makes them feel as though they are part of the process. Giving them a few small jobs to do will also keep them occupied so you can focus on getting things done.

Be a Little Sneaky

You'll probably need to get rid of some of the clothes and toys that your kids don't use anymore. The problem is, if you do this in front of them, you may be met with a tantrum. Tantrums most certainly aren't

conducive to a successful moving day so it may be best to have a clean out when they're not around.

Try To Find A Babysitter

All of these tips will help, but the best way to move with children is to organise someone to look after them. Even if it's just for a part of the day, it will be enormously helpful. So if a friend or family member offers to take them off your hands on moving day, jump at the opportunity.

Familiarise Your Kids with their New Home

If you're moving interstate or overseas (and you have the time and the means), it's always helpful to take your kids on a little trip to familiarise them with their new neighbourhood before moving day. Take them to the local playground, let them see their new school, and check out your new house. Even a quick trip will help ease them into their new home.

RECENT SALES

13 Elaroo Crescent, Ferny Hills	\$510,000
61/5 Quinnia Court, Ferny Hills	\$318,500
3 Glencloy Street, Ferny Grove	\$590,000
41 Fitzsimmons Street, Keperra	\$479,000
53 Winlock Circuit, Warner	\$470,000
9 Plateau Parade, Bray Park	\$380,000