

STORY ENZO RAIMONDO

# What's an agent worth?

A real estate professional puts the case for using an agent to sell your home

**T**HE PROCESS OF SELLING your home involves a range of important choices. Which real estate agent? How much marketing? When to sell?

Selecting the right real estate agent to sell your home requires careful consideration. The Real Estate Institute of Victoria advises sellers that there are two aspects on which to focus when choosing an estate agent.

The most important factor is the local reputation of the agent. Research commissioned by the REIV shows that vendors prefer estate agents who are well regarded in the local area.

Discussions with family, friends and neighbours can provide you with information based on first-hand experience. Seeking advice from people you trust is an excellent way to glean important information and can be just as valuable as that contained in an agency's advertising material.

When interviewing real estate agents, sellers should ask questions, then compare the agents' responses. Vendors should ask about:

- The price the agent is quoting to sell the property.
- The agency's local track record.
- The agent's professionalism.

• The strategy behind the proposed advertising and marketing campaign.

The cost of engaging an agent to sell the home – the commission – is negotiated between the vendor and the real estate agent. There is no standard fee.

While it is important to compare commissions, cost should not be the only criterion. Your choice of agent should be based on their ability to gain the best possible price for your property, not their willingness to work for a low commission.

Also keep in mind that the agent who provides you with the highest estimated selling price for your property is not necessarily the best agent for you. You should ask about comparable sales in the local area and an analysis of the market trends the agent used to arrive at their estimated selling price.

The quality of an agent is directly linked to their education, training and access to market data. REIV members undertake ongoing professional development to maintain their membership and have access to Victoria's most comprehensive market data. This ensures REIV member agents keep up-to-date with changes to regulation, industry practices and market trends, and maintain ethical standards.



There are, of course, costs in addition to the agent's commission fee.

To attract the attention of the buying public, the agent needs to market your home. A marketing campaign, unlike a commission, incurs costs not dependent on the sale.

Marketing costs include advertisements on internet portals such as realestateVIEW.com.au, in the newspapers, in locally distributed magazines and printed flyers. Marketing campaigns vary considerably in cost, from as little as \$2000 to tens of thousands of dollars for mansions fetching seven figures.

Marketing campaigns can be enhanced with professional photos and expertly prepared floor plans. Given the large number of property searches conducted online, it pays to create a memorable first impression. Good-quality photos can be critical in get-

ting a buyer to visit the home at an open for inspection. Real estate agents will guide you through this process and also make available to you a range of other services such as stylists, furniture hire, gardeners and video production agencies.

Discuss all of these services with your real estate agent in the context of the most effective and efficient marketing campaign for your home.

As a vendor, you will also need to employ the services of a conveyancer or solicitor to prepare the Section 32 (vendor's statement). **M**

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## SELL IT YOURSELF

The REIV view on going DIY

A question often asked by vendors is "Can I sell my own home?" There will always be a small number of owners who will try to sell their property themselves. Awareness of this selling method is on the rise, thanks to the internet.

While selling your home yourself might seem a thrifty option on paper, it is, and has always been, an exercise in false economy – internet or no internet. In the first place, it actually may not be cheaper.

Many of the associated websites are simply conduits for a host of service providers hoping to sell you the same services often included in the professional fees charged by real estate agents.

Secondly, by not utilising the professional services of agents, consumers can be left exposed.

They are less likely to get the best sale price and face the likelihood of spending countless hours doing the work normally performed by an estate agent.

It may seem like a cheaper option at first but when you add up the cost of your time and a lower sale price, it's anything but.

So, if you are looking to sell your home, it pays to research all the costs and assess a number of Real Estate Institute members in your area. Obtain quotes for their services and find out what is included in that quote.

By doing that you will find the right estate agent to sell your home and get you the best sale outcome.

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