

# BEST YEARS

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NUMBER NINETEEN

## FACT OF LIFE . . .



## Domestic violence: Plan to get even with men

By Tanya Plibersek  
Minister for Housing

Violence against women is an old problem, with us still every day. That doesn't mean it's an insoluble problem.

With a sustained and methodical approach, that uses all of the evidence available to us, we can substantially reduce the number of women who suffer from domestic violence, family violence or sexual assault.

The Government's National Plan will be designed to have a radical, long-term effect on the rates of violence against women. We need to discover what works, not just raise awareness, but to change behaviour.

And we have to take those keys to behaviour change into every lounge room and kitchen, into every school and workplace, into every pub and sporting club: wherever violence occurs and wherever it is condoned.

## Which method: Auction or private treaty

By A Property Valuer

Sellers, understanding which method of marketing can make all the difference in the sale of your home and the final outcome of the price.

It must be said that there are great advantages and disadvantages to each method of marketing and each home should be looked at on its own merits.

Private treaty simply means you set an asking price, market the house accordingly, and negotiate a price that both the seller and buyer are willing to accept.

With auction, you set a reserve price, the minimum you are willing to accept, and buyers bid against one another at a set time and place.

Once the bidding exceeds your reserve you know you have an unconditional sale with a full deposit paid and exchange of contracts taking place on the day.

Your agent will advise the best time of day and whether the auction should take place on or off-site.



Generally, auctions work best for properties that are unique within themselves, waterfronts, development sites or a home and location that may be in high demand.

Whether it be auction or private

treaty each method requires different forms of marketing, it's best to speak to your local alliance real estate agent, as they can advise you accordingly.

Should you decide to sell your home via private treaty, then there are some important factors to consider, they include the size, location, features and condition of the home, a good indicator of how to price the home is looking at buyer demand and the sale prices of similar properties in the local area.

Remember setting a realistic price will help you attract more buyers, negotiate with confidence and ultimately achieve a premium sale price.

▲ WHERE TO FIND VALUE P4



# MOVING HOUSE: MAKE IT EASY!



Real Estate  
By **FRANK  
MORRIS**

Moving house from something smaller to something larger and vice versa is one aspect of buying and selling that can be a pain in the neck. But, really, it is more manageable than you think.

And it doesn't matter how far you're moving it can be accomplished without any hitches at all.

So next time you move make it, well, painless!

The move needs to be planned, nothing left to chance.

"It pays to 'shop' carefully for a removal," says an officer from the Australian Furniture Removers Association (AFRA), the peak industry body. "Buying a removal is like buying anything else - you get what you pay for."

AFRA members are backed by an industry code of practice in which "quality service" is one of the key elements.

Says the AFRA officer: "These days to be an efficient removalist entails dedication and training. It also requires considerable capital investment to provide the specially tailor-made equipment and vehicles to handle the varying demands of our customers."

The following checklist gives some idea of what to look for, and the traps to avoid:

Firstly, it is important to get a quote from each company's assessor, who will explain



It pays to shop carefully for a removalist.

## HOUSE FOR SALE

how to make the move easier. If you decide to accept an 'hourly rate' instead of a written quote the move could end up costing much more.

Any delays encountered through poor access, excess volume or even inclement weather will be entirely at the customers' expense.

Secondly, ask the assessor about the various additional costs relating to the removal - such as, the costs for cartons, packaging, insurance and storage.

Thirdly, for your peace of mind, ask each assessor how long their company has been trading; to what standard the company's vans are equipped; what standard and type of packing material is used to protect furniture and other valuables; the experience of the persons handling the move; and does the company hold current workers' compensation and public liability insurances.

Fourthly, also for your protection, it is to your advantage if the company you elect to move you use the Australian Standards Association contract.

# Be in control

Selling a house is a logical process. And there are various reasons why the property is being sold.

But if the price is right there is somebody 'out there' who will buy it.

These days, more and more people are selling privately. In fact, people who do self-sell are reporting that potential buyers feel "more comfortable", knowing that they're negotiating directly with the vendor and NOT a real estate agent.

Agents DO NOT sell property. They CANNOT sell your property without your permission. Their role is to find the best buyer at the highest price possible.

With self-sale, you have complete CONTROL of the whole selling procedure.

By utilising our services, for a minimal cost, you will be able to:

**ACCESS** potential, suitable buyers who are in the market for a property like yours.

**PROCEED** to negotiate the best price, when the time comes.

**MAKE** the final decision, without feeling under pressure.

The fact that you are in complete control of the sale every step of the way is to your advantage.

The fact that you will save \$000s in the process is the icing on the cake!

## NEXT MARCH:

### RELATIONSHIP

**E**stablishing a new relationship in later life is not as daunting as it sounds. All of us benefit from loving and expressing love, but there are many misleading myths about what happens to our sexuality as we grow older. The processes of retirement and ageing both require us to reassess ourselves and maybe to change some aspects of our life, especially after the impact of a bereavement or a divorce. Consider accepting invitations even if you find it hard to be sociable, trying to become more involved in friendships, broadening your social horizons, and becoming more active in any group you are involved with. There's every chance that the moment for making and sustaining a new relationship could come sooner than you expect it - Frank Morris.



## SELLING THE FAMILY HOME - PRIVATELY

"I'm hooked on private sale. It's the way to go if the property's right for it," says Carol.

### Buyers will not deal with private sellers? Wrong.

Says Carol: "There's no 'third party' pressure. Buyers seem to be more at ease, more relaxed when they discover it is a private sale.

In the end if the house is what they want and they get it at the right price that's all that matters. Vendor and buyer are happy.

### Selling privately has too many pitfalls for the buyer? Wrong.

It's as safe as houses, as they say, for both vendor and buyer. The vendor is required to have all transfer documents and contracts relating to the property prepared in compliance with the law, by a solicitor or paralegal conveyancer.

Says Carol: "Everyone thought it was a good idea. Several of my friends have done likewise."

## A practical step-by-step guide to selling your own home

### What will it cost?

Even though you will be making substantial savings when you do it yourself, there are standard costs you will have to meet as seller of the Property.

Realistically, these should be no more than \$1500-\$3000. This outlay will cover outdoor sign, conveyancing, photostating material for presentation folder and advertising for local and metropolitan newspapers.

### Getting your home ship-shape

Does it need an extensive or cosmetic makeover? Whatever you decide, don't go overboard on cost renovations.

An inviting exterior ensures inspection of the interior. Make sure the fence is in good order and the gates work without dragging or squeaking. Keep the lawns mowed, yard tidy, gardens weeded and edges trimmed.

The same goes for inside - repair as many of the defects as possible. Wash walls, steam-clean carpets, touch up any paint work. Also, fix those leaking taps or faulty plumbing.

Get rid of the clutter in kitchen, bathroom, stairs and doorways. Keep exposed utensils down to a minimum. It is important to create an impression of spaciousness in the living areas. Display the full value of any spare rooms, basement or attic.

### Preparing a 'walk through' folder

It's essential for potential buyers to take



Complexes like this go quickly.

some information away with them so that "they can remember some of the major features" of your property.

The folder should contain some colour photographs or colour reproductions; an overview of the house; each room, its size and what it contains; a floor plan if possible; something about rates, strata fees, sinking fund (whichever is applicable); and the fittings and chattels the vendor is leaving behind.

### Setting the price

You probably know what your house is worth, based on the current market. Realistically, the true value is the amount a person will part with.

## THINK LEGAL, PLAY IT SAFE

Like the no-nonsense Kate in Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew*, solicitors are hard to live with and, by the same token, hard to live without.

A familiar warning these days is "don't sign anything until you consult a solicitor!" That's good advice and it should be followed to the letter.

But there still are people who wittingly skirt round the legal system simply to save a few quid. It's not worth it.

Too many things can go wrong. If a contract is signed without involving a solicitor, it can be extremely dangerous for all concerned.

When a legal document is involved in a transaction let your solicitor examine it before you put pen to paper.

A solicitor's role is to impart informed and independent advice. It is the solicitor's task in any business situation to not only confirm any legal documentation but to ensure that the client's expectations are met.

Invariably, some contracts can be so complex they may need the input of other legal specialists.

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## PARKING ANYONE

The population of NSW has increased to 6.98 million people, a rise of 79,200 since June 2007. 609 moved to the Hurstville Council area, taking the population to 78,036. Kogarah grew by 1.4 per cent to 56,591 with 804 people moving in. Rockdale rose by 2 per cent to 100,007 with 2007 newcomers. Sutherland Shire's population grew by 0.8 per cent to 215,868 with 1707 people moving in.



Do you own your home?

Are you 65 years or over?

Would you like to free up some of the equity in your home for some worthwhile purpose such as a car, holiday, renovations?

If you answered yes to any of the above a 'Reverse Mortgage' may be the answer for you. With a reverse mortgage you are able to access equity in your home now, with payment of the loan not due until you sell your home or once you have passed away.

For further information and advice on whether this type of loan is suitable for you, please contact our lending expert Neil Lewis on 9570 7844 or email [nlg@owenhodge.com.au](mailto:nlg@owenhodge.com.au)

Enjoy your retirement - after all you've earned it!

# PLAY IT SAFE

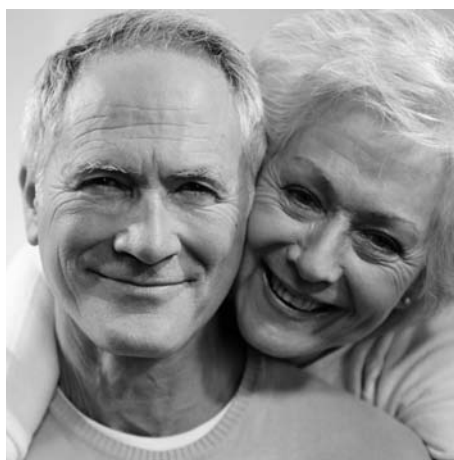
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While there are no hard and fast statistics on the subject, it is estimated that one in three families have a regular solicitor to act for them on matters legal.

Let's assume that you do not have a solicitor on tap, or have not had one for some time. How do you go about choosing a suitable legal firm?

Two key points:

**REPUTATION** leads to recommendations. Again, it pays to shop around, make some enquiries among friends and associates. The greater the numbers the better are your chances of selecting the lawyer most suited to your needs.



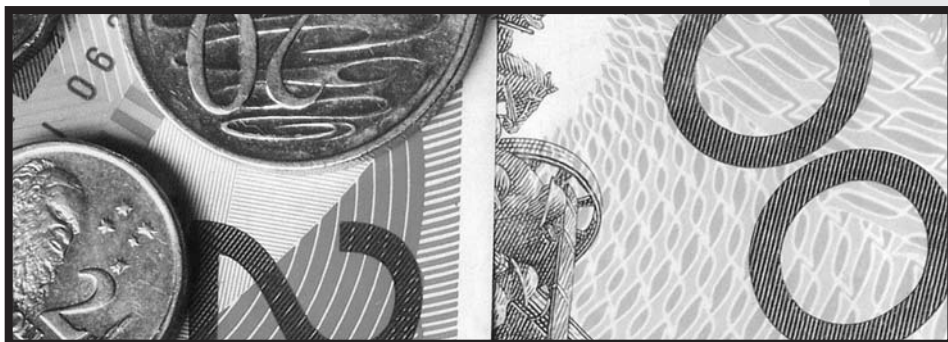
They did all the right things.

It doesn't really matter if they are part of a CBD firm, a larger metropolitan practice, or a two-man outfit in the suburbs. The fact that they can do the job is the core of the association.

**THE BEST WAY** for a lawyer to completely understand your requirements is to meet with you. Make certain he or she has the expertise that you require. The lawyer should explain the expected fee levels and methods of charging. It should be emphasised to the lawyer the importance of keeping you and your family informed at regular stages of the business in question.

## Where to find value

Look for structurally sound houses that don't need much renovation on level blocks of land in appealing streets close to schools and rail. **Sutherland** is one of the best value picks, with an express train linking it to the city and east, shopping in nearby Westfield Miranda and a median house price under \$500,000. **Kogarah Bay** is much cheaper than other nearby waterside suburbs. It is only small with fewer than 10 sales a year, but nearby **Kogarah** has plenty of postwar bungalows and houses that appeal to second- and third- home buyers. **Oatley** for its waterside tranquility and **Caringbah** for decent-size blocks and close proximity to Cronulla Beach and the Royal National Park.



# SO YOU DON'T HAVE A WILL

## Reform to the Intestacy law under the Succession Amendment (Intestacy) Bill 2009



By **JAMES KELLY**

When someone close to you dies somebody has to deal with their estate - the money, property and any possessions they had at the time of their death.

The process of Probate involves collecting any money that is owed, settling any debts due and dividing the estate amongst the respective beneficiaries.

If there is a Will the estate will pass to the people named in the Will. If there is no Will certain rules, known as the Rules of Intestacy will apply.

If you have not identified what you want done with your personal assets, you're setting up potential problems for the remaining family. There is currently a complex system of laws that apply to situations of intestacy.

A system that is about to be made even more technical in the wake of new reforms with the introduction and passing of the Succession Amendment (Intestacy) Bill 2009.

### THE CURRENT LAW

The current scheme applies to persons who died on or after January 1, 1978 with no will.

It works to ensure that the person's closest parties are to the deceased have a higher chance of benefiting from the estate.

In these circumstances if the deceased is survived by a legal spouse, that spouse is entitled to the whole estate to the exclusion of all other relatives of the deceased.

This situation becomes more complex when the deceased is survived by both a spouse and a de facto partner but no children.

If this occurs the de facto partner will be entitled to the entire estate providing they were the de facto partner of the deceased, at the date of death, for a continuous period of at least two years.

When the deceased leaves a de facto partner, spouse and children, the spouse or partner is entitled to a statutory legacy, the deceased's personal effects and half of the residue of the estate.

The maximum value of the entitlement is \$200,000. The deceased's children are entitled to the remainder unless it is required to secure an interest in the shared home for the spouse or partner.

If the deceased leaves no spouse, the estate will be divided between their descendants in accordance with the concept of statutory trust, then to remoter blood relatives.

If the deceased does not leave any persons that may benefit then the estate passes to the Crown as property with no entitlement, enabling it to make limited provisions for dependants of the deceased.

### THE CHANGES

Under the Amendment Bill when an intestate dies leaving a spouse or partner and children the entire estate goes to the spouse or partner.

If the children of the intestate are not the children of the surviving spouse or partner, the amendments dictate that the estate is to be shared between the deceased's spouse, or partner, and surviving children.

The spouse or partner will only be able to select a portion of the estate equivalent in worth to their entitlement.

The amendments further increase the statutory entitlement for a surviving spouse or partner where they are not entitled to the whole estate from \$200,000 to \$350,000 to reflect CPI increases.

The final amendment is an extension of the categories of persons that may benefit from the deceased's estate to include cousins.

While special consideration is made in the case of Aboriginal persons who may have a broader concept of family relationships.

# \$57b debt: road to recovery



By **BEN GRAHAM**

What a \$57.6 billion deficit means for Australia and whether we are on the road to recovery.

## What does a \$57.6 billion deficit mean for Australia?

The deficit was created in part through increased government spending, increased Centrelink pension payments, reduced taxes and cash hand outs. These measures were aimed at helping our economy recover.

Without them, it is likely our economy would have experienced a harder and more prolonged recession (interestingly we are still not technically in recession).

## How do we compare against other economies around the globe?

The average net debt levels in major advanced economies around the globe are projected to increase to over 80% of GDP - compared to Australia's peak in 2014 of only 14%!

## What does this mean for government and corporate bonds?

The government will need to issue significant levels of Commonwealth government securities (i.e. bonds and Treasury notes). The levels will increase from around \$80 billion of securities on issue now; to a total of \$300 billion on issue by mid 2013.

## What will this mean for investment markets?

Some investors could trade in the potential for higher and more tax effective returns from the share market and accept the relative safety and low long term returns of government bonds.

## ROAD TO RECOVERY?

A number of leading economic indicators, otherwise referred to as green shoots can provide us with insights into how the economy is tracking and whether a potential recovery is on the way. Three of these green shoots are outlined below:

**1. Consumer confidence** With falling interest rates and the introduction of various government spending packages, consumer confidence has slowly improved in countries like Australia and the US. A confident consumer is more likely to spend money, fuelling consumption and economic growth.

**2. The housing market** Falling mortgage rates + rising home owners grant = increased housing affordability. This has led to increased construction activity and should eventually stimulate economic growth.

**3. Manufacturing orders** In 2008, global trade and manufacturing ground to a halt. Since April 2009, there has been a lift in new orders for machinery and other equipment across the globe. This lift in new orders is another positive sign of a potential recovery.

**What does this mean for you?** In the recent Investment Manager Outlook Survey conducted by Russell Investments, the 41 investment managers surveyed have become decidedly more confident on the outlook for Australian and International shares.

At the same time the respondents have had a negative view on the outlook for bonds and cash.

In fact, approximately 90% of the managers surveyed thought the Australian share market was either undervalued / fairly valued. This is after the market has risen around 30% since the lows reaches around March 9, 2009.

For those investors who still have cash to invest, there are still some good buying opportunities which you may wish to consider.

## MUMS KEEP SMOKING

Many Australian women who smoke don't quit during pregnancy, a study shows, and when they cut back it's only by a couple of cigarettes a day. Queensland researchers studied a group of more than 260 pregnant women at an antenatal clinic and found 37 per cent of the women were smokers and 25 per cent remained smokers once they knew they were pregnant.

# Fire safety a must: Councillor

Fire brigades informed us that the majority of residential fires started through cooking.

It's amazing how fast and suddenly a fire can start - we might get distracted when cooking, but some simple tips will help us respond if ever a fire starts in the home.

Keep tea towels and flammable materials away from the stove. Keep a fire blanket or extinguisher in the kitchen.

Smoke alarms are a life saving tool to alert us of a fire, so long as they're in working order. We might be asleep when a fire starts, but a smoke alarm will alert us to the danger.

With the onset of winter, this is a good time to install a smoke alarm if you don't have one, as well as test them and replace the batteries.

For elderly and frail residents who are unable to climb ladders to check their smoke alarm, there is help available. With the assistance of NSW Fire Brigade smoke alarms have been installed in the homes of elderly and frail residents, since 2003.

Sadly, the risk of fire fatality to people 65 years and over is nearly three times greater than that of the general community.

Let us help you

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**Superannuation, Retirement, Investment, Insurance and Centrelink planning.**

We can work together to implement an effective financial and investment strategy to minimise tax, create and protect wealth and maximise your retirement savings. Importantly, we provide ongoing service and advice to our clients.



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Located at Owen Hodge Lawyers Hurstville Office  
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The irascible Cabbie in action. He could be downright nosy at times. Circle: The devil at work.

## CABBIE'S FAME

IS IN

CHARACTER



By Frank Morris

Sydney cartoonist John Neal is as knockabout as some of the characters that come off his drawing board.

And Cabbie, his latest protégé, is no exception. In the short time that Cabbie's weekly adventures have been played out on page four, his popularity has soared.

An RSL driver told *Front Lines* (a column I used to write for the newspaper) that Cabbie "was the spitting image" of his best mate.

"We're thinking of starting a fan club," another driver said.

Neal was amused but not surprised at Cabbie's new-found fame.

"I had an idea he'd make a name for himself someday."

Neal describes Cabbie as a "street-wise little bloke" who becomes the victim of situations, no matter what the circumstances.

"But Cabbie is a graduate from the school of hardknocks and he keeps bouncing back for another serve," Neal said.

Since leaving school at 14, Neal's occupa-

tions have been many and varied - printer, journalist, truckies' labourer and even part-time parrot shooter.

He started taking cartooning seriously during a stint in the Army. His work was soon in demand, and his interpretations of military life began to appear in Army publications throughout Australia and in Vietnam.

In 1970, he won the Bicentenary Award for a cartoon depicting the problems and aims of Australian Aborigines.

For many years he drew Bert the Boardman for *Surcharge*, a newspaper published by the NSW Water Board Salaried Officers Union.

Bert's antics actually averted several industrial disputes and he was finally nominated for a Walkley Award - Australian journalism's Oscar - before he punched the bundy clock in 1980 for the last time.

In the late 1970s Neal breathed new life into the famous comic duo Bluey and Curley, for the *Sydney Telegraph*, following in the footsteps of the late Alex Gurney and Les Dixon.

## My mate, John

My association with John Neal goes back 20 years.

We worked together as journalists and on freelance projects.

Neal was not only a colleague but a friend and good mate too. He was generous to a fault. But Neal preferred to be known as a "knockabout cartoonist" rather than a journalist.

In an interview before he died, he said: "The whole point of the exercise was to give people a good laugh and at least for a while forget their hassles".

John Neal died in June 1997. He was aged 54.

I wrote this piece in 1984, John Neal was working on his "new chum" Cabbie.

Cabbie was a typically knockabout Aussie. You can laugh at him. Laugh with him. It made no difference to the standover cabbie.

John drew the popular Bluey and Curly strip, so he knew what "having a laugh on us" really meant.

## The devil has his way

I recall a conversation where John experimented with the devil. He was going to sign his name 'O'NEAL' - using the devil's "6" to form the "O". He used "the devil's influence" right through the Cabbie series, but nothing much seemed to happen. "How's the devil going in your life," I asked. He looked at me. "Nothing's happened, so it must be working". We left it at that.



John Neal . . . collecting award.

## 'He was even a part-time parrot shooter'



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