



NEWS - May 2013

Moving house? Here's how to stay green and save cash!

Moving house can be a particularly expensive time, and when you consider the amount of packing supplies, boxes and removalist trucks required for big moves, it's easy to see how it can result in a shameful carbon footprint! We are keen to help families save money and stay green, so we thought we'd help those preparing to move house by sharing these few handy tips:

- Prepare early. You'll cut down on packing and boxes by getting rid of your unused or unwanted items prior to moving day. Gumtree and eBay are always popular online sites for selling things. You may also wish to donate items to charity or hand-over furniture or clothing to your friends. The more you discard, the more money you'll save on removalist fees, and the less petrol you'll burn in your move.
- Rather than spending big bucks on loads of cardboard boxes that may never be used again, or will probably only be able to be used a handful of times, why not rent plastic boxes. These can be used hundreds of times before being recycled, and generally cost less to hire than the cardboard version.
- Rather than forking out huge dollars on packing materials, which will often end up as landfill, you can save money and create far less waste by using your own clothing, blankets and towels to wrap around delicate and valuable items. As a bonus, this will also minimise packing time. If you're in need

of some bubble wrap and other materials, try to recycle them by handing them over to others who may be moving soon, or list them up on the Freecycle website - with so many people moving around the state every weekend, your materials are bound to generate loads of interest.

- When it comes to professional removalists, time is money, and this can add up very quickly! Make sure you have everything clearly labelled in boxes. This is vital if you're on a budget, as every trip to the truck with a loose item is costing you money.
- Once you've filled the truck and cleared out your house, you'll no doubt have some serious cleaning to do. Prepare for this by purchasing non-toxic, biodegradable cleaning products.

Remember to use websites such as eBay, Gumtree and Freecycle whenever possible to help recycle unwanted items and reduce waste, whether you're looking for new furniture

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What's more important, the house or its location?

"I wish I could have THAT house but in THIS location!" Unfortunately this - or the reverse- are remarks heard all too often by real estate agents in every street, neighbourhood, and country all over the world. It's something typically heard when buyers are shown a stunning house in a very ordinary street, or very ordinary house in a fantastic street. Buyers will plead, "Can we please just pick that house up and put it here?" In short, no we can't.

Believe me, we'd love nothing more than to be the heroes who magically conjure up your fantasy dream home in your favourite neighbourhood, and in fact you may even find that this house already exists - but the truth of the matter is, if such a house exists, it's way outside of your budget otherwise we'd be showing it to you!

Which brings us to the million dollar question... What's more important, the house or its location?

We've all heard agents spruiking "location, location, location". But why do we do this, and what does it mean? Does this mean we think everybody should purchase any old house in the most fabulous street in the neighbourhood? And what makes a location so great - is it being close to shops, transport, parks, schools, or is it a quieter more private area? The answer is simple, and it depends entirely on you. When we talk about buying for location, we're generally talking about a location that best fits your needs and lifestyle.

So what then of your dream house? Just what would you be willing to give up for the location of your dreams? This will usually depend on your budget, but it may mean anything from going without a second bathroom to downsizing from 4 bedrooms to 2. This is where you'll need to be clear on your basic needs. Consider what you need, and begin to separate what you'd like to have from what you absolutely can't live without. Once you're clear about what's really important to you, your search will become a whole lot easier.



How safe is your home?

When you're renting a house and want to add your own personal flair there are certain restrictions on what you can legally do. Here are our top tips for making your rental house a home – without losing your bond:

It seems that accidents in the home are now causing far more people to head into hospital than road accidents. We all know how much media attention and policing is focused on the road toll each year, and even more so during holiday seasons - and rightly so. But just how much attention do we pay to ensuring our safety behind our own closed doors?

Here are a few simply safety tip to keep your home, and your family, as safe as possible while indoors:

- Move all beds away from the windows.
- Move mirrors and heavy pictures away from couches or places where people sit.
- Store heavy items on the lowest shelves.
- Keep pool fences locked with child-proof locks, and keep items secured away from the fence that small children could potentially use as a ladder.
- Install smoke detectors on each level of your home and change their batteries every 6 months.
- Clear all hallways and doors for easy evacuation.
- When having repairs or home maintenance completed at your house, make sure you use a reputable and fully qualified tradesperson.
- Be sure your home number is visible from the street so emergency vehicles can find you without delay.

When buying real estate, be sure to have an independent building inspection completed of the home first. Whether you decide to go ahead with the purchase or not, this will at least ensure that you don't uncover hidden dangers after you've moved in.



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