

Tap your creativity

If you think you're not the creative type, think again. There are more kinds of creativity than the kind that results in painting a masterpiece or writing a best seller. Creativity can be expressed in any number of different ways including the way you approach challenges, relate to people and find solutions to everyday problems.

Everyone has the ability to be creative; it is simply a matter of knowing how to identify and understand your own creative strengths. Once you apply your creative thinking to the challenges you face you will see that every problem has a solution, and most aren't even as difficult as you thought.

The essence of creativity is finding your own path in all forms of work, love, art and life – and accepting the fact that your path will be different from those around you.

Keep an open mind

Creativity relies on listening and interpreting many different ideas, views and opinions including those which are not necessarily your own. Coming up with a range of 'what if' scenarios

will increase your pool of creative options for every problem and encourage you to accept ideas that you may not, at first, agree with.

Brainstorm ideas

One of the most effective ways to bring creativity into problem solving is to 'brainstorm' ideas with other people. Sharing ideas can help you gain new insights into a problem and may prompt you to find solutions you would otherwise never have thought of.

Stay informed

Creativity springs from processing all types of information. You never know where the next idea will come from, so read widely, listen to music, cut out images from magazines, practice poetry and keep your eyes and ears open.

Make time

Find a period of your day that you can allocate to 'creative thinking' – it might be while lying in bed at night, going for a walk, driving your car or having a bath.

Stay well

Focus on your wellbeing – it is easier being creative when you are feeling relaxed, happy and healthy.



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DOMINIONfinance mortgage brokers

We are excited to announce that Dominion Finance has received an Australian Credit Licence from ASIC under the new National Consumer Credit Protection legislation.

Having a conversation about weather is no longer something you do when you have nothing else to say. This year's devastating floods, cyclone and bushfires have got us all talking about weather and the implications it can have on our lives, our happiness, our economy, business, property and even interest rates – see article below.

For those without insurance cover, the damaging effects of these weather events will be long felt. Turn to the page three article - 'are you insured?' – to find out what type of insurance cover you might want to consider for your assets.

Our page two article provides tips for achieving success as a landlord and our page four article looks at the topic of creativity.

Enjoy this newsletter and feel free to pass it on to family and friends. Contact us if you wish to know more about any of the topics covered or to enquire about taking out a loan.



A POSITIVE OUTLOOK



SUCCESS AS A LANDLORD



ARE YOU INSURED?



TAP YOUR CREATIVITY

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With compliments

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Profile

Dominion Finance is owned and operated by Melita Beilicz and Suzanne O'Connor. In 2008 Rachael Hunter joined our team as a mortgage broker. Melita and Suzanne have over 15 years lending experience servicing the Canberra region.

We have access to over 20 lending institutions (including all the major banks) and our aim is to save you time and money by doing the shopping around for you and using our experience and knowledge to find you the most competitive loan that not only suits you now but also in the years to come.

We organise everything from the loan application through to settlement and home loans and investment loans are not all we do. We can arrange leasing, Chattel Mortgages, commercial loans, deposit bonds, refinancing, debt consolidation and a full array of insurances.

A Positive Outlook

2011 is shaping up as a positive year for the property market.

According to this year's Australian Property Outlook Report by First National Real Estate, even though growth rates won't be as spectacular as they have been in previous years, property is still offering substantial returns and will lure investors back in large numbers.

The report states that throughout 2011 the property market will continue to be supported by strong economic fundamentals such as strong population growth, low levels of unemployment and buoyant consumer and business confidence.

"Some markets may still be flat, but growth will occur, although at more moderate rates than in 2009 and 2010."

"In general, the market is anticipated to gather strength in metropolitan markets in the first half of the year, with improved confidence spilling over to regional markets in the second half."

A First National poll of its 450 agents showed 63 percent expect an increase in investor activity throughout the year as a result of improved returns and increased confidence.

Contributing to the positive outlook are the predictions by many economists of interest rate stability during the first half of 2011. It is expected that the RBA will take a cautious approach as it examines the impact of the floods on the economy as Australia struggles to get its fresh fruit and vegetable industry back on track.



We're a member of the Mortgage & Finance Association of Australia (MFAA), the peak industry body. As a member, we adhere to the industry Code of Practice which requires high standards, fair business practices, ethical behavior and compliance with the letter and spirit of relevant laws and regulations.

Success as a Landlord

Earn money while someone pays off your mortgage – that's the life of a landlord! Owning a rental property can be a 'dream come true' if you follow these tips for successfully managing your investment.

1. Wear your business hat

Treat the management of your property as a business not a hobby. Start with a business plan and organise your operations professionally, with separate bank accounts and a bookkeeping system. Surround yourself with people that can help you make the right decisions like a good accountant and property manager.

2. Screen your tenant

You might be anxious to get a paying tenant into your property but don't be tempted to race ahead without first checking their credentials. Follow up on referees, past property managers and all the details provided by the applicant. Be familiar with your state's laws regarding leases and ensure that you use an appropriate lease form for your state.

3. Prepare for repairs

Attempting to save money by skimping on repairs and maintenance will only end up costing you more and risking legal liability in the long run. Conducting repairs quickly and keeping the property in good condition will improve the value of your asset and keep your tenants happy (and paying!).

4. Rainy day funds

Although you hope your property will always be rented, you need to be financially prepared for a worst case scenario of months with no tenant paying rent. Before closing on a property ensure you have done a cash flow analysis to show you can cover mortgage repayments for this or other unforeseen problems like interest rate rises, the need for major repairs or an unexpected drop in your income. Whether it's 'cash in bank' or a line of credit on your home loan (contact your mortgage broker for more information), you need to know you have sufficient funds to manage these situations.

5. Know your tax

Find an accountant who understands property and can structure your business affairs to maximise your personal tax situation. Be familiar with what is tax-effective and what is not. A depreciation schedule for example can save you thousands of dollars in tax, by enabling you to depreciate items and claim a tax deduction against your taxable income.

6. Take immediate action

Don't delay taking action when tenants don't pay rent or continually slip behind - you want to send a strong message that you have a business to run. Make sure you follow the step-by-step eviction process required under Tenancy Law.

7. Manage your risk

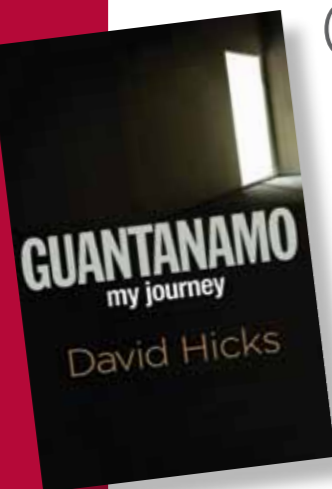
As outlined in the article opposite, landlord protection insurance is an important part of successfully managing your investment.

Guantanamo: My Journey

by David Hicks

In 1999 a young man from suburban Adelaide set out on an overseas trip that would change his life forever. Initially, he was after adventure and the experience of travelling the Silk Road. But events would set him on a different path. He would be deemed a terrorist, one of George W. Bush's 'worst of the worst'. He would be incarcerated in the world's most notorious prison, Guantanamo Bay. And in that place where, according to an interrogator in Abu Ghraib, 'even dogs won't live', he was to languish for five and a half years, suffering horror, torture and abuse, while Australians were told who he was - by politicians, the media and foreign governments. Everyone had an opinion on him. But only he knows the truth. And now, for the first time, David Hicks tells his story.

Book Review



Are you insured?



This year's string of floods, cyclone and bushfires has pushed the topic of insurance well into the spotlight. Thousands of home owners, landlords and business owners have lost valuable assets and without insurance cover are struggling to make ends meet.

The devastation sends a strong message about the importance of insurance, whether it's for your home, business, motor vehicle or investment property. Not only is it important for your assets to be insured, but also that they are insured at an adequate level and that you are familiar with the terms and conditions of your policy.

It has been estimated that around 70% of Australian homes are under-insured*, which means that the value home owners have insured their home for is too low to actually replace it if it is damaged or destroyed.

To avoid under-insuring your home it is important to understand your policy – is it for a fixed sum-insured, a sum-insured plus margins for increased costs, or a total replacement policy? Each year before you renew your policy, adjust your cover to take into account the household items and possessions you have purchased over the year or any renovations you have done. Here's an overview of some of the main types of insurance you might want to consider and what each can offer.

Building and contents insurance

The price and scope of these policies vary widely but their general purpose is to provide replacement of your property and its contents in the event of a threat like theft, fire, vandalism, storm or flood.

It is common practice to bundle the building and contents together but you can obtain separate policies for either.

Landlords insurance

This insurance covers for the specific risks of owning a rental property that are not usually included in a standard building and contents policy. Commonly this includes malicious damage by tenants, accidental damage, legal liability and loss of rental income.

Motor vehicle insurance

It's not only when you prang your car that you might need motor vehicle insurance, as many policies will also cover you for fire, storm, theft and malicious or accidental damage.

Life Insurance

Life insurance looks after your family financially if you're no longer there to provide for them, commonly in the form of a benefit to take care of everyday expenses.

Mortgage insurance

Should you suffer an illness, injury or involuntary redundancy, mortgage insurance will cover your mortgage repayments for a prolonged period. The amount of cover is determined by the amount of your loan and loan repayments.

*Australian Securities and Investment Commission, 2005

Did you know?

There's much speculation about the economic impact of the floods on property prices, but according to real estate data provider, Residex, the effect will be short term and the rebuilding process will result in a strong and stable property market.

History shows that following the 1974 Brisbane floods, property prices were back up to pre-flood levels within a year.

