
SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY WITH AN EMPTY HOME

REIWA: Real Estate Matters 27/06/2015

In the excitement to move into a new home, many homebuyers overlook the great opportunity they have to do some important work on the premises while it's unoccupied.

Some homebuyers might consider major tasks in older homes such as electrical or plumbing work before moving in, but there are also a range of smaller jobs that are so much easier to complete when the house is empty.

Once the home is busy with people and stocked with furniture and fragile belongings, it can be difficult and frustrating to move or remove them to undertake even basic improvements.

For example, repainting internal walls and ceilings. This can be a messy job if you are doing it yourself and it's tricky negotiating paint pots, wet brushes and ladders around precious items and large furniture. Professional painters are likely to assist you with removing furniture, but where this requires extra labour the painter will add this to the bill.

Redoing floors can be difficult or impossible if your home is full of furniture. If the job involves the sanding, sealing and polishing wood floors or the laying of tiles and carpet then you need complete access to the relevant areas and plenty of time for drying before floors can be walked on. This can take several days with wood floors.

Moving into a new house is also a much smoother process when the storage areas of the home are established and ready for the many boxes you'll have. Consider new shelving for the storage room, shed or garage before you move. If built-in robes or new kitchen cupboards suit your budget, now's the best time to get it done.

Some older properties, in particular, might need a thorough pest inspection as part of the buying process. If there is a cockroach or termite problem this can usually be addressed during the purchasing process and if the inspection results in the need for spray or fumigation this is best done with an empty home during the settlement period or prior to occupancy. Not only is this easier for the pest controllers but it's better for you, your pets and any children if you can avoid unpleasant fumes for a few days.

While you have time before moving in, it helps to notify all your business and government contacts of your new address. This might include libraries, Medicare, the bank, insurance companies, motor vehicle licensing, gas, water and electricity utilities and the Electoral Commission to ensure you're enrolled to vote in your area for state and federal elections. If you have companion animals be sure they are properly registered with the relevant local council.
