



ADVICE ON BUYING A PROPERTY

1. Pre-purchase building inspection report

Have a pre-purchase building inspection report carried out on the property.

Why?

This report will list all the major defects on a property that require rectification and make recommendations for further inspections to be carried out if necessary.

Once you are aware of the condition of the property and what repairs are necessary you will be in a better position to make an informed decision on the purchase of the property.

2. Pre-purchase timber pest inspection report

If a significant amount of timber has been used in the construction of buildings and structures on a property I recommend that you have a pre-purchase timber pest inspection report carried out.

Why?

This inspection accesses the property for evidence of timber pests and for evidence of damage caused by timber pests and provides recommendations on further investigations if necessary. Timber pests include subterranean and damp-wood termites, borers of seasoned timber and wood decay fungi.

The cost of treatment to eradicate timber pests and also the repair of damage caused by timber pests can cost thousands of dollars so it is important you are made aware of any evidence of this on a property prior to making a decision to purchase.

3. Insulation in ceiling areas

When insulation is present in the ceiling area of a building I recommend that you engage an electrician or builder to inspect the insulation to ensure it has been installed correctly.

Why?

Incorrectly installed insulation (i.e. insulation placed over lights and transformers) can present a substantial fire risk in a building.

4. Glass in old homes

If buying a home built before 1978 be aware that glazing used may not comply with current safety glass standards.

What can you do?

If your property is being used as a school, early childhood centre, aged care building or nursing home compliance with current safety glass standards is required.

Glazing in old homes does not need to comply with current safety glass standards in place today if the home is being used for normal residential purposes; however, due to safety reasons I recommend that glass used in balustrades and around swimming pool and spa enclosures, in doors and windows especially in trafficable areas should be replaced by a glazier with the correct type of safety glass as specified in the current Australian standard AS 1288 – 2006, unless it already complies with this standard.

5. Fresh paintwork

Be aware fresh paintwork can conceal defects such as, mould issues, wood decay (rot), termite damage, water stains caused from leaks, corrosion and general weathering damage. It can be difficult to detect defects behind a fresh coat of paint.

What can you do?

Where possible look closely at freshly painted surfaces to see if you can notice any mould, dampness, rot damage, termite damage, water staining, corrosion and general weathering damage. You should pay special attention to ceilings, floors and floor boards, walls (especially near wet areas), skirting boards, architraves, door frames, window frames, cladding, posts, pergolas, decking, stairs and balustrades.

Use your detective skills. If you notice things such as a patched ceiling, one new floor board or a new piece of skirting board used in a house ask questions and try to find out why these repairs were carried out and if any problems still exist.

6. Look at properties in different weather conditions

Be aware that looking at properties in periods of dry weather certain issues including rising damp and leaks may not be visible. Any surface water issues such as ponding of water will also not be apparent in periods of dry weather. Any issues with the stormwater dispersal system on the property, i.e. gutters, downpipes, stormwater pipe-work and drains will not be apparent in periods of dry weather.

What can you do?

If possible try to look at a property in different weather conditions especially during and after periods of rainfall and see if any problems become noticeable such as leaks, ponding of water, blocked stormwater pipes and drains and flooding, etc.

7. Visit the property at different times throughout the week

Be aware that situations change in many neighbourhoods due to many different factors. Issues such as busy traffic noise, air craft noise, railway noise and neighbourhood problems may not be apparent when you initially visit the property.

What can you do?

Visit the property at different times throughout the week and see what the conditions are like.

8. Warranties for appliances

Ask the vendor if they have warranties for the appliances included in the sale of the property and if so, can these be transferred to you.

Why?

The repair of appliances can be expensive so if an appliance in your new home becomes faulty or breaks down in the future and the issues are covered under the warranty of the appliance you will not have to pay for these repairs.

9. Electrical installations

When looking at the property take note of the power points, light fittings and light switches currently in place.

Why?

If you require more power points, light fittings and light switches to be installed on the property you will need organise an electrician to carry out this work which can be expensive.

10. Have a chat with a neighbour

If possible have a chat with a neighbour adjacent to the property you are looking to buy.

Why?

They may be able to advise you on various issues relating to the property including neighbourhood issues and problems with services in the street such as sewerage and stormwater drainage issues and past experiences of flooding.