

Domain ADDING VALUE

Five strategies to ensure the best price

Clean up and profit when you market a property, writes **David Adams.**

LOOKING to sell your house and wanting to get the most out of the property? While vendors should be careful about carrying out major renovations just before selling — you not only run the risk of overcapitalising but your changes might not appeal to buyers — taking a few steps involving relatively minimal expense and time can help maximise the return on your asset. Here are five ways to potentially add value to your house.

Declutter and clean up.

Property consultant Peter Rogozik says there's nothing worse than walking into a room "full of boxes, bric-a-brac and unwanted furniture". He advises a minimalist approach and notes that if you have items that you want to keep but that tend to make things crowded, consider putting them in storage during the marketing campaign. Clean up the outside of the property as well as the interior; ensure the lawns are trim and garden beds are neat; and get rid of any rubbish lying around, including in sheds. "I'm amazed, as a buyer's advocate, how many times you do see old tyres, engines and all sorts of rubbish lying around and it really detracts from the whole property," Mr Rogozik says.

Carry out maintenance.

Property consultant Peter Hay sees this an essential part of creating the right impression for buyers — that a house has been well maintained and much loved. "Make sure all the general maintenance has been done so doors swing freely and close properly, there are no cupboard doors that don't close [and] the windows open and close properly," he says. Mr Hay believes not only will a well-maintained property achieve a premium over a poorly maintained one, in a poor market, a property that hasn't been maintained can become unsaleable. Again, this also extends to the exterior — make sure fences



Reinstating period touches such as lacework on a verandah adds to a house's appeal, as does a lack of clutter and a neat garden.

are in good order and garden gates aren't hanging off the hinges.

Spruce up the kitchen and bathroom.

Usually a focus for buyers, it's important to make a good impression in these rooms. The general rule is to resurface and recoat rather than replace. In the kitchen, this can mean applying a coat of paint to the walls, changing the cupboard handles and resurfacing benchtops. In the bathroom, tubs

and other fittings such as vanity basins can be resurfaced if they're worn or in an undesirable colour. Neutral colours are a good idea. Valuer Peter Buchanan says paying attention to the bathroom and kitchen is worthwhile but suggests seeking expert advice. "I'm a big believer in using experts ... even for cosmetic updates," he says.

Pay attention to the facade.

First impressions count so it is wise to pay extra attention to the first

part of your property that a potential buyer sees. This might involve reinstating period features that have been removed, such as lacework on a verandah. "It puts back the character and it puts back the period charm," Mr Rogozik says. He recommends adding a nameplate, particularly to a period property, which can add as much as \$5000 to your returns. Other value-adding touches include brass numbers and door knockers, leadlight and a new coat of paint. But make sure any

additions are architecturally consistent with the period.

Create an outdoor entertainment area and undercover parking.

While some experts Domain spoke to shied away from these, Mr Hay says both items are in demand. While taking care not to overdo it, he says spending up to \$25,000 on a place for outdoor dining — a deck, verandah or pergola — will bring a return. As will spending money on a carport or garage.