Refinancers & upgraders

Your guide to taking the next big steps in your home ownership journey.

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What is refinancing?
Refinancing is replacing your existing mortgage with a new mortgage. You can refinance with your current lender or go to a new lender. It may be a good way to save you some money, but only if you take into consideration the actual cost of refinancing. You should always seek advice from a professional adviser before making major financial decisions like refinancing.

What are the benefits of refinancing?
The most common reason for people to refinance is in search of a lower interest rate on their mortgage, but there are also other reasons.

Interest rates may be lower
When you refinance the balance of your loan at a lower rate, you can reduce your monthly repayments and the total cost of your loan.

Seeking a fixed rate
If your current mortgage has a variable interest rate, or if your fixed rate term is ending, you may want to refinance. Doing so might allow you to get another fixed rate or partially fixed rate home loan.

Pay off your home loan faster
Changing from a 30-year loan to a 20-year loan will raise your monthly payment, but because interest is compounded, you could save thousands of dollars in interest. This could be a good option for you if you can afford the higher repayments.

Extra funds for something else
If you have equity in your home, you can leverage it to pay for home improvements, pay off other debt or accomplish other goals.

Improved financial situation
If your credit score has increased or your loan-to-value ratio (LVR) has decreased, you might find a more competitive home loan.

Consolidation of debt
If you are experiencing financial difficulty a consolidation of debt may relieve the pressure. It is important to seek professional advice on managing financial hardship.

Cash out for future investment
You may be looking to get a deposit ready to buy a new property or other investments to build your wealth.

Things to consider
Before you make a decision about taking out a new loan, there are some important factors to consider.

The total costs of refinancing
There are many upfront fees and charges to think about including establishment fees, legal fees, stamp duty and ongoing fees, which may apply. If your home loan is reasonably small, it may take some time before the savings of a lower interest rate actually make up for the cost of refinancing.

Remember that the interest rate is usually variable
Make sure you look at the ongoing interest rate, not just the honeymoon period if one applies.

Check the new loan has all the features you need
Which features do you want for your home loan? A range of features may be available to you, including offset accounts and redraw facilities. It's important to understand what these features are so you can make an informed decision.

Explore all your options
Make sure you shop around and take professional advice to find out which home loan is the best option for your individual circumstances before making a decision.

Upgrading
Things to consider

What is upgrading?
Upgrading simply means selling your current home and purchasing one that's a little further up the property ladder. There are many reasons why you might want to upgrade your home but it's important you have a full picture of what is involved before you upgrade. You should always seek professional advice before making major financial decisions like upgrading your home.

What are the benefits of upgrading?
There are benefits to upgrading at the right time.

More space to grow your family
As your family grows you may need some extra space. Maybe you're about to become parents for the first time and you need a nursery, or the kids are getting older and want their own bedrooms.

A better location
You might want to be closer to certain amenities, or you may want to move to a new location that has the primary school you prefer. There are many reasons you might like to upgrade to a better location for your circumstance.

Moving from an apartment to a house
Your first apartment might have been your dream home at the time, but now your financial situation has improved, you might be looking to moving into a house with more bedrooms and a backyard.

Relocating for work
If you are relocating for work, you will need to find a new home close to your new work location. You could be moving to the next town or to the other side of the country. This can be a great opportunity for you to find a home that's a little further up the property ladder.

Things to consider
It is important to think through the financial and lifestyle aspects of upgrading. There are some important things you should consider before upgrading.

Calculate the costs
Upgrading can involve some unexpected costs. You will likely need to pay the costs associated with buying a home as well as the costs of selling a home. You might also have larger monthly mortgage repayments or a longer loan term.

Get an accurate estimate
You can get an idea of what your house is worth through a local real estate agent or online from research groups. A valuation carried out by a certified practising valuer (CPV) or residential property valuer (RPV), which involves inspections of the property inside and out, can provide a more accurate figure.

Be sure you want to move to your new location
When moving to a new location you should do your research. It's important to know if the location has everything you need, like health facilities, schools and entertainment.

Explore all your options
When you are considering upgrading, explore the reasons why your current home is no longer the right fit for you. Would renovating be more cost-effective for you? Be sure to explore all your options before making a final decision.

Refinancing

Your step-by-step guide

Equipping yourself to make the right decisions.

Refinancing to a lower interest rate on your home loan can save thousands of dollars over the course of your loan. Sometimes, it might also be the easiest way to get money to renovate your home.

1 Current mortgage - understanding what you have

It's essential that you're aware of your current position. Take the time to find out what your current mortgage balance is, what interest rate you're paying and what other features and benefits are available to you. These may include a redraw facility or the ability to apply for a credit card with no fees. While looking at your current mortgage, talk to your lender and ask them for a payout figure. The figure will include any accumulated interest charges, discharge fees and any other fees that may apply.

2 Credit report - understanding your credit history

To better understand your full current position, request a copy of your credit report. Your credit report is an important piece of information that a lender will look at before deciding whether to approve your home loan. Once you have your credit history, look at what you can do to improve it, such as paying down or contesting any debts. This will help improve your chances of having your home loan application approved.

3 Current property value - understanding what your home is worth

Try working out approximately how much your home would be worth on the market. This is useful because it can mean a better rate if you have a lower loan-to-value ratio (LVR). Speak to your local real estate agent and look at similar properties in the area to see how much they are being advertised for.

4 Do your sums - understanding the amount of money you need

It's important to work out how much you want to borrow for your refinance and whether doing this will make financial sense for you after the costs involved. You will need to borrow enough to pay off your existing loan. If you're raising cash for renovations or consolidating other debt into your home loan, add this to your total. You may also like to add any fees or charges covered in the loan amount as well. Add up the amounts to reach a total loan figure that you are likely to require. Then divide this number by the approximate value of your house. This will give you the LVR.

5 Homework and research - understanding your needs

Do a little homework and think carefully about what type of mortgage you need, especially if your current home loan is not working the way you would like.

6 Comparison - understanding your options

Spend time using one of the many comparison sites online and look for the type of mortgage you would like. From the comparison tables, you'll get an idea of the types of products on the market and the types of features you can expect, along with fees and interest rates. See if you can narrow down your search to a few favourable lenders.

Save some time and hassle. Contact a specialist broker who will do all the hard leg work for you and come back to you with the most competitive options for your needs.

7 Broker assistance - understanding your broker's role

A mortgage broker puts in a lot of work behind the scenes and can save you time, effort and plenty of stress at a time that can push you to the limit. A broker will have access to hundreds of home loan product options with a wide range of lenders and credit providers across Australia. They'll be able to show you at a glance what rates and fees apply for the loan type you are interested in.

8 Paperwork - preparation is key

All lenders will require very similar documents to proceed with an application to refinance your home, so it pays to get this out of the way. A mortgage broker can help you to gather all the correct paperwork so the application process runs smoothly.

9 Application - begin the process

Once you've chosen your preferred lender and your paperwork is in order, it's time to begin the application process. If you're going to the lender directly, you'll need to complete their application form. If you've decided to get a mortgage broker's assistance, they'll ask you for the required documents and submit the application for you.

10 Valuation - knowing your value

When your application has been conditionally approved by the lender, the lender will arrange for your home to be valued. Lenders conduct their own valuation to ensure they are happy with the value of the property. Provided your loan amount is within the lender's allowable LVR compared to your home's value, your application will proceed to the next stage.

11 Mortgage documents - the formal approval

After the valuation is complete you'll be given formal loan approval. The lender will issue the loan contract that outlines the terms and conditions of your loan, this will include any fees and charges that may apply.

12 Certificate of currency - the cover

It's important that you make your current home building insurer aware that you are changing mortgage provider as the name of the interested party will need to be updated to your new lender. Ask them to send you a copy of the updated Certificate of Currency.

13 Settlement day - refinance success

On settlement day the funds will get drawn down for the new home loan, which means the funds for your new home loan will pay out your old home loan so that account can be closed. When this is complete, you have successfully refinanced your home loan.

Upgrading
the home you love

If you're thinking about upgrading your home, you may be overwhelmed by the idea of selling the home you love. The thought of looking at homes, the stress, process and cost associated with buying a new one, plus packing and moving can make transforming your existing home a better option.

Before starting any home upgrades, it's important to seek guidance from your local council and strata to make sure you have the right permissions to go ahead with your plans. It's also a good idea to speak to your neighbours so they're aware that you're about to start work on your home.

Now we can dream and take some time to envision the future of your home. Consider the big questions:

- What are your goals?
- Do you want to create a more open and spacious living area?
- What are your family's needs? (e.g. more space for a growing family, more workspace, or a revamp of outdated areas such as kitchens and bathrooms.)
- Are energy efficiency and sustainability important to you?

Having a clear vision will guide your decisions throughout the process.

Additions

If your family is growing, and you're looking for more space, you might be able to extend your current home or add another storey.

Extra bedrooms
Adding an extra bedroom can ensure your family has all the space and privacy you need as you grow.

Extra bathrooms
If you find you're always running late because you're waiting to use the shower, maybe it's time to add an extra bathroom or ensuite to ease morning congestion.

Extending living spaces
As your family grows, your needs grow too. What was once a cosy living room for two, might start to feel crowded. Extending your living spaces can make sure your family has enough space to grow, enjoy and play.

Renovating

If you are comfortable with the space you have but you want to add value to your home, you could consider a renovation. There are many areas of a home that can be updated to raise the value of the property and breathe new life into your home.

Bathrooms
Does your bathroom look like it was designed a few decades ago? A fresh set of tiles and some new fixtures can completely transform your bathroom, giving it an extra 'wow factor', which could increase the value of your home.

Kitchen
If you're constantly battling with your tiny pantry or drawers that just won't close properly, a kitchen remodel might be the answer. Upgrading your kitchen to be modern and functional can increase your enjoyment of the space while adding value to your home.

Flooring
Upgrading your flooring can make your home feel completely different. Opting for beautiful hardwood floorboards, waterproof laminate, stylish tiles or fresh carpet can completely change the feeling of your home.

Refinancers and upgraders

Energy efficiency
If you want to upgrade your home to increase its value, optimising its energy efficiency can help. Including double-glazed windows, better insulation, LED lighting and solar panels can help your home become more sustainable, which might save you money on your energy bills while you're enjoying your home, and also increase its value if you ever want to sell.

Smart technology integration
Upgrading your lighting, security systems and thermostats to be controlled using voice commands or a phone app can be an easy way to make your home more safe and accessible, while also potentially boosting its value. You can also install smart locks to tighten your home's security.

Furniture
Upgrades are an opportunity to infuse your personal style into your living spaces. Consider a mix of classic elements and current trends that will work with the new look from our home.

Outdoor enhancements

If you have a stand-alone property, you can also upgrade your outdoor spaces and improve curb appeal.

Exteriors
Updating the exterior of your home can give it an instant glow-up. If you want to boost your curb appeal, giving it a fresh coat of paint and repairing any damage can help.

Landscaping
Upgrading your outdoor areas to include a well-designed and maintained garden might help to boost the value of your property. Consider greenery along your fence to enhance privacy, a permaculture vegetable garden or a beautiful native flower patch to help your outdoor areas feel as comfortable as your indoor areas.

Swimming pool
As well as being a refreshing entertaining addition to your home, upgrading your backyard to include a swimming pool can also add a lot of value to your property, especially if you don't live close to a beach.

Granny flats

There are a few different reasons why you might want to include a granny flat on your property.

More living space
A granny flat can be a versatile space that can act as a second living room, guest accommodation or home office.

Multi-generational living
Your parents may be coming to live with you as they age, or you may have family living overseas who visit for extended periods of time. A granny flat can ensure they have their own space and privacy. Things to consider include safety and accessibility needs, such as even flooring and installing ramps instead of stairs and railing in wet areas such as bathrooms.

Adult children
When your kids become young adults, you might want to support them along their own journeys to home ownership by allowing them to live at home so they can save more. A granny flat can give them (and you) some extra privacy.

Rental income
If you can build a self-contained granny flat with its own street access, you may be able to earn some extra money by renting it out. It is important that you check the regulations in your area before doing this.

Things to consider

Before making any upgrades to your home, there are some questions you should ask yourself.

Value vs cost
Will the cost of the upgrade you're planning add value to your property? Does the value added outweigh the costs of getting a larger home loan?

Laws and regulations
Do you need permission from your local council to start your upgrades? Are you aware of the laws in your area that regulate what types of upgrade you can do?

Accommodation
Can you continue to live in your home while the upgrades are happening? If not, how much will it cost to move out of your home and then back into it when the upgrades are complete?

Disruption
How disruptive will the upgrade be to your lives and is this something you are prepared to deal with?

Treat the process as a journey. Give yourself some time and space to make changes as you go. Remember that each upgrade is a step toward making your home a functional space that will work for you and your family.

Selling your home

Your how-to guide

If you're selling a home for the first time, you might be wondering where to start. This handy guide will help you navigate the process.

Determining the value of your home

To make sure you can sell your home for a good price and avoid having it sit on the market for a long time, it is important to determine its value.

Get an appraisal

There are websites that can provide you with a calculated estimate on what your home could be worth, along with available property history and comparable properties in the area. This can be a great way to get a general idea, however it may not take into account any improvements you've made – so use this as a guide only.

You should also arrange for two or three local selling agents to provide a property appraisal. Not only will they be able to give you some guidance on setting your price, but you can also use this as an opportunity to assess which selling agent you would like to work with for the remainder of the process.

Research other listings

Research what is happening in the property market in your area by looking at listings from the last three months for similar properties in similar areas. Identical homes directly across the street from each other can vary significantly in some neighbourhoods due to factors like dividing lines, main roads, freeways and train lines so it is important to consider these factors in your research.

Try to compare properties that are a similar size and a similar age. One suburb might consist of homes built in the 1890s right next to another ring of construction from the 1980s. Values between the two will differ. Make sure you're comparing apples to apples.

Understand the market

You will also need to understand the current property market conditions. To get an idea about where the market is sitting, read the latest finance and property articles and reports, and talk to local selling agents.

When there are a lot of properties for sale and not many buyers, it's called a buyer's market. In a buyer's market you may need to allow some wiggle room on your pricing to ensure you are competitive with other properties being sold in the area.

When there are not many properties on the market but a lot of buyers, it's called a seller's market. In a seller's market you may be able to raise your asking price.

Preparing to sell

There is some work that goes into preparing a house to be sold but with some professional help, the process doesn't have to be difficult.

Work with a real estate agent

You should engage a real estate agent to help you sell your home. Real estate agents are professionals and have valuable insights and experience into the best ways to sell your home.

When choosing a real estate agent you should consider:

- Recommendations from family, friends and neighbours – your family, friends and neighbours can give you valuable and honest insights into what it is like to work with a real estate agent.
- Commission and fees – Real estate agents will charge you a commission to sell your home. They may also charge other fees, such as marketing costs. Compare the commission and fees of a few different agents to make sure you are getting a good deal.
- Selling strategies – Each real estate agent will have their own preferred strategy for selling properties. Choose an agent whose strategy aligns with your own.
- Engagement skills – It is important that you can build a rapport with your real estate agent and that you can trust them to engage with potential buyers to get you the best deal possible.

Marketing

Marketing your home is all about putting your best foot forward. You want to attract buyers by presenting a lifestyle they can aspire to. Your real estate agent will help you market your home, but it is important to note that the marketing costs may not be included in your agent's fees.

These are some basic things you should consider:

- **Photography** – Professional photos of your home can make a big difference to your listing. You want to show off all the best angles of your home to entice potential buyers. To really impress potential buyers, you could have the home professional styled before the shoot.
- **Listings** – You should list your home on real estate websites, as well as on your real estate agent's website. Your agent can help you write an enticing and aspirational description of the home.
- **Advertising** – Advertising your home helps to bring in potential buyers. The more people who see your listing with beautiful photos and an enticing description, the more likely you are to have lots of potential buyers inspecting your home.

Inspections

When it's time for inspections, you should make sure your home is looking its best. You want potential buyers to notice the beautiful floorboards and the fancy oven you splurged on, not the flickering hallway light and fingerprints on the windows.

In the weeks leading up to inspections you should focus on:

- **Repairs** – Hire a maintenance professional to tie up any loose ends in the home. Make sure all your light bulbs are working, there is no half-finished DIY projects and that everything is in good working order. You might also consider a fresh coat of paint.
- **Cleaning** – A professional cleaner can make sure your home is looking its best inside and out. You might also hire a gardener to tidy up your garden.
- **Styling** – Consider having your home professionally styled for inspections or, if you can't fit it into your budget, research the best ways to style your home to sell. Creating a Pinterest board of inspirational photos can help you create a clear vision for how you want to style your home.

Understanding LMI

Lenders Mortgage Insurance

Lenders Mortgage Insurance (LMI) is a valuable tool used by many lenders when loaning to home buyers. LMI can help you secure a loan so you can upgrade your home sooner, or achieve a better upgrade that wouldn't be possible without LMI.

What is Lenders Mortgage Insurance?

LMI, taken out by the lender, may make it possible for you to upgrade your home without a 20 per cent deposit. It protects your lender against the risk of losses, in case you are unable to make your home loan repayments, and the lender is unable to recover the outstanding loan amount from the sale of the security property.

If you are looking to renovate or upgrade to a higher value home, LMI can help you achieve this without having to save a 20 per cent deposit. The lender's cost of the LMI premium is often passed on by the lender to you.

The LMI fee may be paid upfront at the time of settlement as part of the lender's fees and charges for your loan, it may be added to your home loan (capitalised), or depending on your lender, you may be able to pay the LMI fee monthly until the lender's LMI policy cancels.

The numbers

Paying for the lender to take out LMI means that an upgrader who is interested in a $720,000 upgrade and facing the prospect of saving a $144,000 (20 per cent) deposit could potentially upgrade with as little as a 5 per cent deposit (or $36,000), subject to meeting their lender's other eligibility criteria. This means they can upgrade their home sooner, begin paying off their home loan and potentially start building more equity.

LMI fees are based on a combination of factors that influence the risk of a home buyer defaulting on their loan, but the key drivers are the amount of the loan and the value of the security (e.g. premiums are more expensive for larger loans with smaller deposits).

As an example, for an upgrader who wishes to upgrade to a $720,000 property and has a $72,000 deposit, Helia's LMI fee estimator returns an indicative LMI fee of $17,692 excluding stamp duty for a loan term of 30 years*. This is a small proportion of the overall cost that could help you upgrade your home months or even years earlier than if you had to save that additional $72,000.

Here to help

Helia, Australia's leading provider of LMI, helps home buyers get into homes sooner and reduces the stress associated with saving the traditional 20 per cent deposit. Helia also understands that home buyers might encounter financial difficulty, so we established a hardship program, which can assist home buyers struggling with their loan repayments. We help by supporting lenders to offer home buyers deferred and/or reduced repayments.

*Also excludes other costs of purchase. Assumes that no other fees and charges are payable. Lending criteria and conditions apply to approval of credit products. The actual LMI fee may significantly vary from the estimate depending on a range of factors including, the loam amount, loan purpose, borrower type, security type, location or updated information received at the time of the application.

Case study

Upgraders: Grace and Harry

Grace and Harry bought their first home in 2015 in the regional town they both grew up in, before their first son, Noah, was born.

Five years later, in 2020, Noah and his younger brother Jackson were growing up quickly and wanted their own bedrooms. Grace and Harry both began working from home. It was clear the family of four needed more space, for work and play, than their two bedroom apartment could offer them.

They began researching houses nearby, hoping to find a bigger home their family could thrive in. They found that, with the estimated equity from their existing apartment and their current savings, they would have a $55,000 deposit after allowing for payment of stamp duty*, conveyancing fees and other upfront costs. They engaged a mortgage broker and explained what they were looking for. With the help of Helia's Deposit Comparison Estimator, the mortgage broker helped them understand the options available to them with the deposit they had now.

The mortgage broker explained that they could upgrade to a house valued up to $550,000 with a $55,000 deposit if the lender obtained Lenders Mortgage Insurance (LMI).

Their savings and the equity in their existing apartment would provide them with a 10 per cent deposit after allowing for payment of stamp duty*, conveyancing fees and other upfront costs. A lender may be prepared to provide a loan amount up to 90 per cent of the value of their new home plus an LMI fee. Based on the estimates of the LMI Fee Estimator, Grace and Harry worked out that they could upgrade to a house in the regional city they love, if the lender used LMI.

Crunching the numbers

Home price
$550,000

Deposit
$55,000

Loan amount
(including LMI fee)
$505,240**

Home value
after three years
$750,000***

In 2023, three years later, the value of Grace and Harry's house has increased by $200,000, which is more than the cost of the LMI fee.

* Amount of stamp duty payable will vary depending on the Australian State/Territory where the relevant property is located.
** 2020 loan amount of $495,000 based on 90 per cent LVR plus the LMI fee of $10,240. Excludes stamp duty, conveyancing fees and other upfront costs. Assumes that no other fees and charges are payable. Lending criteria and conditions apply to approval of credit products. The LMI fee is capitalised into the loan amount by the lender. The actual LMI fee may vary depending on a range of factors including the loan amount, the loan purpose, borrower type, security type, location or other information received at the time of the application.
*** 2023 home value based on a desktop valuation. The outcomes assume a rising property market, with no additional advances or redraw made. The example does not take into account monthly repayment amounts, fees, charges and additional loan commitments. The outcomes may differ in a falling property market.

Checklist

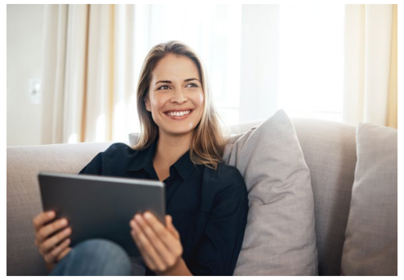
Buying a property

Use this checklist when inspecting properties so you can compare the pros and cons of each.

Happy house hunting!

The location

- ☐ Does the area have the local amenities you might need?
  - ☐ Shops
  - ☐ Schools and child care
  - ☐ Doctors/hospital
  - ☐ Public transport
  - ☐ Food and entertainment
- ☐ Are there any local council planning changes or planned infrastructure developments in the near future?
- ☐ How long will it take you to travel to work?



Inside the property

- ☐ Check what is included – carpets, curtains, blinds, light fittings, air conditioning, heating and any appliances
- ☐ Are there enough bedrooms and bathrooms?
- ☐ What is the condition of the electrical wiring?
- ☐ Is the plumbing operational?
- ☐ Are walls, ceilings and floors in good condition?
- ☐ Is the kitchen in good condition?
- ☐ Do all the windows and doors open?
- ☐ Is there enough storage space?
- ☐ Is there space for your fridge, dishwasher, washing machine and dryer?

Outside the property

- ☐ Is there off-street parking?
- ☐ Is the building structurally sound?
- ☐ Are there signs of damp around the house (e.g. bubbling paint, a musty smell)?
- ☐ Check the condition of paintwork, windows, fences, gardens, roof and guttering
- ☐ Is it possible to extend the property in the future?
- ☐ How much northerly sunlight does it get?
- ☐ Is it noisy? Traffic, trains, planes

Checklist

Moving house

Whether you're moving to a new home or just moving out for a couple of months while you renovate, this moving checklist will assist you with a stress-free move.

6 weeks to go

- ☐ Set a moving date and book the removalists (or friends and family to assist you)
- ☐ Start collecting boxes or have them delivered so you can start packing
- ☐ Organise time off work for the move if necessary
- ☐ If hiring a van or removal company, think about parking outside your old and new home
- ☐ Organise insurance cover notes for your new home
- ☐ Keep a list of incoming mail in the lead up to the move for change of address notices later
- ☐ Collect any change of address forms that come with any of your subscriptions
- ☐ Start keeping a folder with all moving documentation (checklist, quotes, phone numbers etc)
- ☐ Check all of your larger appliances will fit into your new home

4 weeks to go

- ☐ Have a clean out of anything you don't want to keep
- ☐ Sell or donate any unwanted items
- ☐ Arrange a council rubbish collection for what is left over

3 weeks to go

- ☐ Arrange to have your mail redirected
- ☐ Advise your change of address to:
  - ☐ Accountant/Australian Taxation Office
  - ☐ Australian Electoral Commission
  - ☐ Banks
  - ☐ Centrelink
  - ☐ Child care centre
  - ☐ Doctor/dentist
  - ☐ E-tags, tolls and mechanic
  - ☐ Friends, family and colleagues
  - ☐ Insurance providers (building, contents, car, life)
  - ☐ Medicare
  - ☐ Private health fund
  - ☐ School/TAFE/university
  - ☐ Solicitor
  - ☐ State authority for drivers licence and car registration
  - ☐ Superannuation fund
  - ☐ Telephone and internet service providers
  - ☐ TV, magazine and other subscriptions
  - ☐ Vet, microchip registry and local council
  - ☐ Your employer

2 weeks to go

- ☐ Transfer or set up utilities – electricity, water, gas, telephone, internet and pay TV
- ☐ Gas cylinders should be empty and valves left open
- ☐ Pack up all items you won't be using before the move
- ☐ Label boxes clearly with room destination and those that need to be handled with care
- ☐ A good tip is to number your boxes so you can check all have arrived
- ☐ Create a floor plan for removalists (so they know where to put the boxes)
- ☐ Book a locksmith to change locks at your new house on moving day
- ☐ Confirm removalist company booking
- ☐ Collect appliance instruction booklets and put them somewhere easy for the new owners to find
- ☐ Cancel any regular services such as lawn mowing

1 week to go

- ☐ Stop buying food and try to eat from the pantry, fridge and freezer
- ☐ Settle any outstanding bills
- ☐ Back up your computer
- ☐ Set aside bed linen and towels to be used on the first night in your new home

1 day to go

- ☐ Defrost and empty the fridge and freezer
- ☐ Turn off the washing machine
- ☐ Finish all your packing and make sure the boxes are clearly labelled with any instructions for the removalists

Moving day

- ☐ Have your moving survival packs and folder with moving documentation at hand
- ☐ Have instructions for the removalist
- ☐ Continue to check the house for anything you might have missed (high shelves, under the bed, back of drawers)
- ☐ Ensure gas and electricity meters have been read and the telephone, cable and internet disconnected
- ☐ Leave appliance instruction books and a note for new owners with your forwarding address
- ☐ Leave behind garage door openers and any spare keys for the new owners
- ☐ Turn off the power, hot water and gas
- ☐ Check you have left nothing behind
- ☐ Lock all the doors and windows

At your new home

- ☐ Check you have all the keys and any instructions to your new home (appliances etc)
- ☐ Check any utilities are connected and hot water is on
- ☐ Have your locks changed
- ☐ Assemble and make the beds as soon as possible so you can fall right into them at the end of your big day
- ☐ Notify moving company immediately if anything is missing or damaged
- ☐ Ensure all your doors and gates are closed when the movers leave to avoid confused or stressed pets escaping
- ☐ Keep cats indoors for about a week to familiarise themselves with new surroundings

Your survival packs for moving day.

Survival pack

Include cleaning products, kettle, tea, coffee, cutlery, milk, bread, takeaway menus, phone chargers, essential toiletries, toilet paper and medications. Don't forget your pets – make sure you have some food, water bowls, beds and leads.

Next day essentials

Ensure you have bedding, towels, and clothes. If you have children, remember to pack their favourite toy to help them settle into their new bedroom on the first night. Make sure you have any school uniforms and supplies they might need.

A tool kit

Pack essentials like allen keys, wall hooks, screwdrivers, hammer, nails, light bulbs, scissors, etc. This will help you avoid having to rummage through boxes when trying to construct your furniture and settle into your new home.

Don't forget a bottle of wine and glasses to celebrate the move!

Helpful definitions
Mortgage and property terms

It's important you understand the language associated with your mortgage and the property market so you can make informed decisions.

Amortisation period
The time taken to repay a debt, including accrued interest, in full through regular repayments.

Basis points
Refer to a common unit of measure for interest rates and other percentages. One basis point equals 0.01 per cent. For example, 50 basis points equal 0.50 per cent.

Certificate of title
Documents the ownership of or interest in land. It provides a description of the land, proprietorship and shows any registered interests such as mortgages, charges and caveats. It also shows any restrictive covenants and easements which affect the estate or interest.

Credit report
A file that is kept by a credit reporting agency that shows a person's credit history. Banks and financial organisations refer to credit reports when considering applications for loans and credit cards. A person with a poor credit history may find it difficult to obtain a loan or a credit card.

Equity
Home owners often talk about how much equity they have in their house. Property investors often talk about how much equity they have in their portfolio. This is the value of the property (or portfolio) over and above the amount they owe on their loan(s).

Fixed interest rate
Fixed interest rate loans lock your monthly interest repayments at a set rate for a period, after which they will revert to the standard variable rate. A fixed interest rate can be a good choice for home buyers who want certainty around interest payments but beware of break costs or prepayment fees.

Loan contract
A contract between you and a lender which sets out the terms and conditions of your loan.

Mortgage duty
Mortgages may attract duty based on the amount secured by the mortgage. This duty is usually paid to the applicable state authority on your behalf by your lender and added to your loan. The rate and amount of duty payable varies in each state and territory.

Mortgage Protection Insurance
This covers your loan repayments if you fall sick, suffer an injury or lose your job. If you die prematurely, the loan will generally be paid off. Policies differ widely and can be a combination of life insurance, income protection and permanent disability insurance. This is not the same as LMI.

Negative gearing
Borrowing money to invest where the return from the investment is less than the borrowing costs. For example, the rental income from your investment property is less than the interest payments on the loan used to purchase the property.

Off-the-plan
Buying a property off-the-plan means signing a contract to purchase an apartment that has not yet been built. You will be able to view the building and design plans but there is no physical property to inspect.

Principal
This is the outstanding balance owing on your loan on which interest is typically calculated and charged. Generally, your regular home loan repayments will consist of principal and interest components, gradually reducing the amount owing on your loan.

Redraw
This is an optional feature on certain loans that allows access to any additional repayments made on your loan. If you redraw funds from your home loan, your outstanding balance will increase.

Repayment frequency
Refers to the regularity of loan repayments over a period of time that you must make as indicated in your loan contract. Repayment frequencies are generally weekly, fortnightly or monthly.

Revolving credit or line of credit
A flexible ongoing loan arrangement that allows you to borrow within a specified and agreed credit limit. Typically, the line of credit will also be used for everyday transactions. Interest is added to the loan each month, and repayments are not made while the loan is within its credit limit.

Security
Security for a loan refers to the asset(s) a lender can claim against if you default on your loan. For home loans, it usually includes the property being purchased.

Serviceability
Your capacity to meet loan repayments based on your income and expenses. Helia's serviceability calculator can help you understand whether you may be able to meet future loan repayments.

Stamp duty (on a property purchase)
Also known as transfer of land duty, transfer duty and conveyance duty. When you buy property, you are generally required to pay stamp duty to the relevant state or territory government. The amount varies between each state and territory and is based on the market value of the property or the purchase price. Exemptions and concessions may apply in some circumstances; check with your solicitor or conveyancer to see if you are eligible.

Variable interest rate
If your loan has a variable interest rate, the interest charged on the outstanding balance of your loan may increase or decrease. Lenders may also change your regular loan repayment amount based on changes in the interest rate. Lenders do not have to track changes in the official cash rate and you should make allowances for higher-than-expected increases.

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