

Street Smart Newsletter

January 2018



Budget friendly tips to re-energise your home for 2018



We all start the year with the best of intentions, to eat healthy, to use that dormant gym membership and to be the best, shiniest versions of ourselves. Rather than doing a full 180° change and thinking you will easily adjust there are a few little things that you can change, adapt or improve so that at least your home starts the year at its best.

Clear the clutter

This is the obvious one - You've taken down your Christmas lights and thrown away all of the packaging that surrounded your presents but why stop there. Open up your cupboards, look under your beds, peak into the storage places and sort through your garages. Pull everything out that you've stored safely for later use and then have a good hard look at those priceless possessions that are too good to throw away.

There are sentimental things, things that you should really find some better way of honouring than shoving into a cupboard. Separate those things and decide where to put them so you can see them or relate to them to actually remind you of whatever it is they remind you of in the first place.

Think "reduce, reuse, recycle" with the rest of your stuff. Reduce the amount of things you are keeping by being brutal. If you didn't remember you had it or know you haven't touched it for over a year then it needs to go. I say in over a year as there are seasonal things that get used once a year that you need to keep, but if the object doesn't get used year on year, whether its clothes, appliances, containers, boxes, bags or whatever the belonging find a way to shed it. Some things go to recycling, some to rubbish, some to charity, but find a way to cleanse yourself of the bits and bobs that fill your home.

Maintenance

Look at your walls - Do you have screws or hooks hanging out of them that don't have artwork or pictures on them? If so either find something to hang on them or remove, patch, sand and touch up the paint over them. Same goes for bangs and bumps from the wear and tear of the last year. Head to your local hardware store and buy a rapid filler with an applicator that dries quickly.

Have a walk around your home with a screw driver and an allen key or two and just eye ball things like your bathroom accessories or wall mounted shelves - if it's loose, tighten it up.

If it needs replacing, get onto it, these things are usually really quick to fix if found early, the longer you leave them the worst they become. The same is true for everything you'll experience in 2018 so get into the habit of noticing everything that needs a little tweak and tweak it sooner rather than later.

Give your walls and ceilings a spot clean where necessary. Get some spray and wipe or a bucket of warm water and sugar soap and clean those small or medium sized marks and scuffs off walls or ceilings. Often just a wipe of those black marks left from shoes or squashed bugs or whatever else lingers on will freshen up the look of your paintwork.

If you have some really trouble painted areas though that just don't liven up consider giving it a new coat of paint. A wash with sugar soap of the wall and one coat is often enough to simply refresh the look of the room, it takes little prep and there's no dust from sanding. Of course if you're painting a room properly you need to sand, undercoat and do 2 top coats, but a simple refresh is far more straight forward - though the quality of the surface you're painting will always dictate how long the paint adheres before peeling or flaking.

Look at the grout in your kitchen and bathroom tiles. This is also another really quick upgrade if you have cracks, gaps or greying, you can simply grout over the top or spot grout any problem areas to extend the use and look of these areas.

Shower heads that don't deliver on the promise of a nice blast of relaxing warm water need to go. Say goodbye to spluttering, random changes of direction and generally underperformance by simply replacing the shower head. You can find replacements at Bunnings for \$30-\$150 that you can simply screw on in place of your old fittings. They come with thread tape and often need nothing more than a wrench to tighten up. Say hello to a better showering experience in 2018.

Presentation

Look around your home with a critical eye and see if your soft furnishings have managed to make it through the last year unscathed. If there's mild use on cushion covers, pull them off and clean them as per the cleaning instructions on the label, generally just a good wash in the machine will bring them back to life.

Does your couch or upholstered furniture look a little sad? You can spot clean them with spray upholstery cleaners available at the supermarket or hardware store or for the pieces that were really well used throughout the year get a professional steam or drycleaner in to give them a thorough going over. The fabric is often just fine under all of that everyday dirt and grime and your home will look and smell better for the attention.

Look at your book shelves. Are they well ordered with a nice balance of books and decorative items? If not sort them out, stack big books, organise novels into sizes and colours if you're so inclined, place your favourite decorative pieces throughout and bring your book shelves to life.

Limited impact from foreign buyer ban

The upcoming foreign buyer ban on purchasing existing properties is expected to have a minimal impact on sales, according to new research from the Real Estate Institute of New Zealand.

A recent REINZ survey of its members revealed that currently only a minority of buyers are from overseas (3.8%).

REINZ chief executive Bindi Norwell says that ahead of the government's upcoming foreign buyer ban they were interested to understand exactly what percentage of sales were to international buyers.

"There is minimal data available. So, who better to ask than those who deal with this day in and day out – our members.

"Our survey indicates that only a small number of sales are made to buyers from offshore – the clear majority of sales are made to locals (63.9%) and those from other towns or cities from within New Zealand (29.8%)."

The survey also looked at the make-up of open home visitors and this showed that the majority of open home visitors were local (64.1%).

They were followed by 28% from out of town and only 4.5% from overseas, while the remaining 3.4% were classed as 'other'.

Norwell says that, given international buyers are such a small part of the market they are interested to understand what impact the government believes the foreign buyer ban will actually have.

"We know when looking at Australia that a similar policy there has had little impact with Australia still remaining the third most unaffordable country in the world."

The survey also looked at the make-up of buyers in the market overall.

It shows that currently most purchasers are owner occupiers (52.3%), followed by first time buyers (26.3%).

Investors amounted to just 14.2% of buyers, while the remaining 7.3% of buyers were classified as 'other'.

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Rob Taylor

Licensed Salesperson - REAA 2008
LJ Hooker Green Bay

Mobile: 021 840 015

Office: (09) 827 4928

Email: rtaylor.greenbay@ljh.co.nz
58 Godley Rd, Green Bay, Auckland

Migration flow plateaus

New Zealand's record breaking migration flow – which has been contributing to high housing demand – looks to have plateaued, albeit at historically high levels.

There was an annual net gain of 70,400 migrants in the year ending November 2017, according to the latest Stats NZ data.

That means the annual total of migrants dropped for the fourth month in a row.

The slowing of annual net migration was driven by record non-New Zealand citizen migrant departures. There were 27,800 in the November 2017 year, compared with 22,900 in the November 2016 year.

Once seasonally adjusted, there was a net gain of 5,600 migrants in November, which was the same as October's monthly net gain.

This was actually up on September's net gain of 5,200 migrants, but it remains well down on the 6,300 migrants who arrived in June this year.

The expectation is net inflows to moderate, as policy changes trigger a moderation in net non-NZ resident arrival numbers, while departure levels are expected to lift from historically-low levels.



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