

Slower sales tipped but new stock lifts hopes

Spring in market



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SPRING is just around the corner. For real estate, that means "For Sale" signs will start popping up like wild flowers as buyers come out of hibernation and the prime selling season gets under way.

Even the most upbeat of real estate agents is being forced to admit that this year's spring will fail to match last year's, when more than 1000 properties went under the hammer over successive weekends.

But new stock is coming onto the market, with more than 600 properties being auctioned this weekend, compared to around 490 last weekend. Talk of lower interest rates has given the market a confidence boost and early reports from agents and buyer advocates suggests auction crowds are growing.

After all, it's a lot easier to clamber out of bed on a sunny, spring morning than on a wet and grey winter one.

"It's part of the Melbourne

psyche that people hibernate during the winter period," Fletchers director Tim Fletcher said.

"When the sun starts to shine, they come out of their shells.

"Stock levels are not going to be what they were last year but there is new stock coming on the market and there are some quality homes coming up for sale."

While listings climb throughout the warmer months, Mr Fletcher said he is yet to be convinced that weather plays much — if any — role in selling a home.

"For whatever reason, there is a belief that it is best to sell when the flowers are blooming, although this is not the case," he said.

Many vendors also prefer to avoid an auction sales campaign that extends over the AFL grand final weekend, certain that buyers will be too busy following the football to bid on a property. Again, Mr Fletcher said he doesn't follow the conventional vendor wisdom and

points out there is a rise in listings in the six-week period following AFL's biggest day.

Given this, he often advises clients to launch an early spring campaign to avoid the extra post-grand final competition.

"The idea that holding a sales campaign over the footy finals is a bad idea is really more myth than reality. The grand final is one afternoon. If you're listing in spring, my advice would be to do it earlier rather than later and don't be put off by the footy."

Among those preparing for an early spring sale are Doug and Cherine Gibson, who are selling their four-bedroom, two-bathroom family home at 4 Clovelly Court in Balwyn North.

Mr Gibson said while the timing of his sale was determined by their work schedule, they did see advantages in selling in the spring.

"We have a large garden with a lot of trees and it will be nice to see everything in bloom. It's a great part of the house, so it will be good for

buyers to see it at its best."

Making your home stand out is more important than ever. In spring, this means paying extra attention to the garden.

"Clean up outside and create street appeal," said Michael Atwell, founder of online real estate agency ForSaleForLease.com.au.

"This includes mowing the lawn, raking leaves, cutting back bushes, removing cobwebs and checking if outside lights are working."

Dress outdoor areas to encourage potential buyers to visualise themselves relaxing in your home. Setting up a table and chair outside with a book or stringing up a hammock can do the trick.

"With the lacklustre winter real estate season nearly over, sellers may easily improve their chances by simply outshining the flood of listings that appear in the spring," Mr Atwell said.

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