

Newsletter September 1, 2011

## How to ensure your new property is clean when you take ownership

Ensuring your new property is thoroughly cleaned by the seller before handover can save money and time and can help you or your tenant move in faster, so how do you negotiate this? Buyer's agent Liz Wilcox of Hot Property Specialists Buyers Agency offers some suggestions...

When using a buyer's agent a cleaning clause would automatically be inserted into the contract, she says. "I have 130 conditions already drawn up by a solicitor and automatically written into a contract. The cleaning clause can be up to 250 words in length."

Wilcox says if approaching a solicitor to draw up a cleaning clause into your contract be specific because he or she doesn't know the property and what should be cleaned. "Going into the finer details is important because solicitors are accustomed to working in the vendor's favour."



The main points to include in the clause are:

- The property is at the standard of a professional or tenantable clean – this doesn't mean it needs to be cleaned by a professional but must be at a standard approved by a property manager. If the buyer isn't happy with the clean even after the cleaning clause is included in the contract, then we allow the selling agent to choose the property manager so the vendor doesn't accuse our property manager of being harsher in judgment. It's fair and reasonable then.
- If carpets exist we stipulate they must be cleaned by a professional and a receipt proving this must be handed over at settlement. If the carpets are new then we remove this clause unless a dog has been living inside.
- External dwelling clean – this includes removing cobwebs.
- Yard clean – the grass must be cut and any weeds must be removed.
- All glass internal and external needs to be cleaned.

The clauses should be specific to the property and always drawn up by a solicitor, Wilcox says. "Of course there must always be a cause and effect written into this clause so the last part of the clause must state what will happen if the clean isn't deemed to be a professional clean," she notes. "Here you must quote a figure of what it would cost if not deemed satisfactory. A good option is to hold \$1000 back at settlement until it meets the standard required."