

THE AGENCY

A minimalist interior scene featuring a white console table, a wooden armchair with a cane back, and a shelf with various ceramic objects. The room has light-colored walls and a wooden floor. The text 'THE AGENCY' is overlaid in white at the top.

The Agency

Buyers
Guide
2024





Introduction

Welcome to this comprehensive guide to buying a property on The Central Coast. This guide provides valuable insights and tips to help you navigate the property market with confidence and make informed decisions.

Here at The Agency we believe we can make a real difference to the way we do real estate in Australia. Which is why we've brought together the nation's greatest real estate professionals under one roof - to do exactly that.

To unlock our team's potential to serve you better, we empower our agents by eliminating the red tape and franchise constraints that other agents face in most real estate firms throughout the country. Our agents work together as a connected, national team to create more opportunities and better results. That's why Australia's leading agents are moving to The Agency.

The Agency delivers across four key areas

- Residential sales
- Project marketing
- Property management
- Commercial

The combined strengths of these divisions allow The Agency to offer its clients a more seamless experience overall.

Team Hillsy



Team Hillsy service the entire Central Coast and focus mainly on Berkeley Vale, Killarney Vale, Bateau Bay and Forresters Beach. With over 30 years combined experience, Paul Hills, Harrison Freeland and Jodie Flanagan are proud to serve their community.

Paul has lived and breathed real estate for the past two decades. After he built an international career, beginning in England, he continued his passion after moving to Australia. Paul's customers recognise his commitment and loyalty to transitioning them through the buying and selling processes.

Harrison provides sales support to Paul. He brings a laid-back, easy-going energy to the room that instantly makes people feel calm and relaxed. He strives to have a positive influence and make friends everywhere he goes by establishing genuine relationships with everyone he meets.

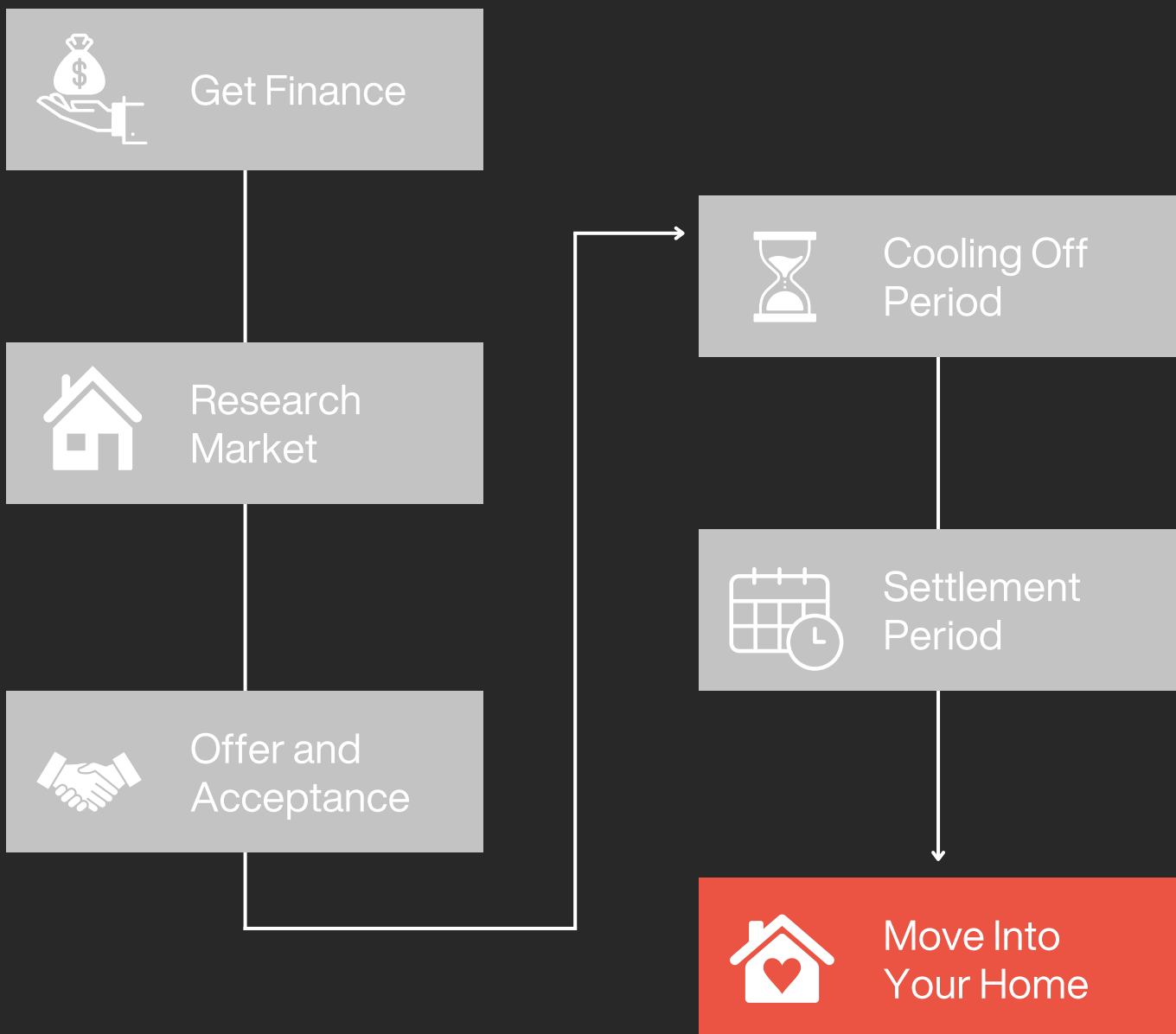
Jodie has worked in the real estate industry for over 14 years and has had a variety of roles in office management, personal assistant positions and property management. Currently working "behind the scenes" as Sales Support to Paul Hills, Jodie helps keep the team on track to achieving their goals and serving the community as best they can.

From left to right: Jodie Flanagan, Paul Hills and Harrison Freeland





The Home Buying Process



Researching the market

Choosing where to live and finding a home you love can be tedious and stressful. The more familiar you become with an area the easier it will be to make a decision. Your research should involve a balance of online and in-person exploration. Not just to see the presentation of a home but to get a feel of the area too.

Consider factors such as proximity to amenities, transportation, schools, and work. Research the lifestyle, infrastructure, and development plans in the areas you are interested in.

Often buyers create a long list of features they want in a property and they never find it.

Instead, write a short list of essential features the property **MUST** have. E.g., number of bedrooms & bathrooms, yard for pets, study/office, garage, etc.

It is important to consider the difference between your wants and needs to help you create a shortlist of properties.

Visiting open inspections will give you a better understanding of homes in an area too.

Try forming relationships with agents and buyers advocates to assist you with finding an area an home that meets your requirements.





Finance & Budget

There are many professionals you will engage with when you start your home buying journey, such as:

Mortgage Lender - works for a financial institution, such as a bank, and will be the one who approves your loan and borrowing capacity.

Mortgage Broker - Consult with a mortgage broker to explore various loan options and lenders. They can assist in finding the most suitable loan product, negotiate competitive interest rates, and guide you through the application process.

Real Estate Agent - works for the home-seller, also known as a vendor. They will communicate between the buyer and seller to negotiate an agreed sale price.

Buyers Advocate - also known as a buyers agent. They act solely in the buyers best interest and can assist with property search and negotiations. Recommended if you are buying in an area you're unfamiliar with or if it is your first time purchasing. There are fees for this service.

Conveyancer/Solicitor - works on your behalf to fulfill the legal aspects of the purchase. They will conduct property searches, review contracts, and ensure a smooth settlement process. There are fees for this service.



Finance & Budget

Additional Cost and Budgets

Once you engage with professionals you can start to assess your financial situation. It is important to get a crystal-clear indication from your lender, exactly how much you can borrow. This will give you a better idea of your budget when you are making offers on properties.

Ask your lender about any additional costs you may encounter. Account for expenses such as stamp duty, legal fees, inspection costs, and moving expenses when setting your budget.

Example Costs:

Home and Contents Insurance - \$1800

Legal Fees - \$1600

Stamp Duty - \$30,000 (\$800,000 property, excluding First Home Buyers)

Rental Truck - \$200

Pest and Building Inspection - \$500

It is crucial to factor in expected and unexpected costs to ensure you don't offer more than you can afford. Having a defined budget and a clear indication of your borrowing power will assist you during the negotiation process as well. It is also advised that you keep your budget private.

Offers and Negotiations

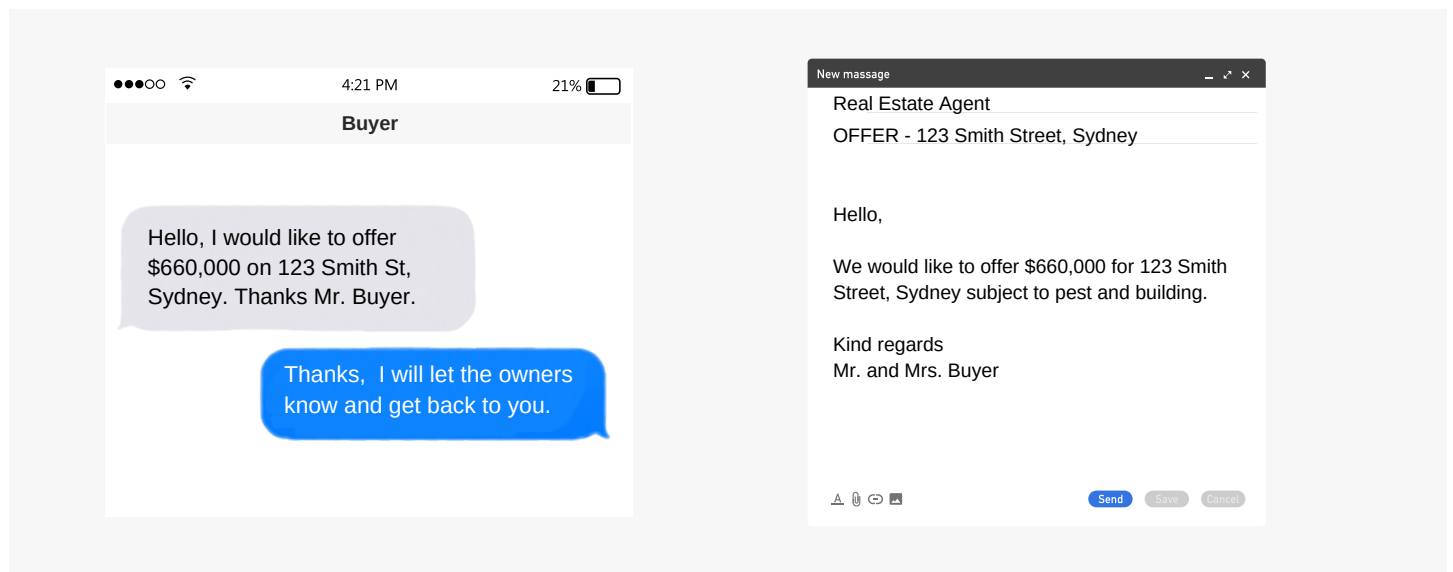
How to put in offers and negotiate with agents

When it comes to submitting offers on a property and negotiating with real estate agents, it's essential to be prepared and strategic. Here are some tips and information to help you navigate this process effectively:

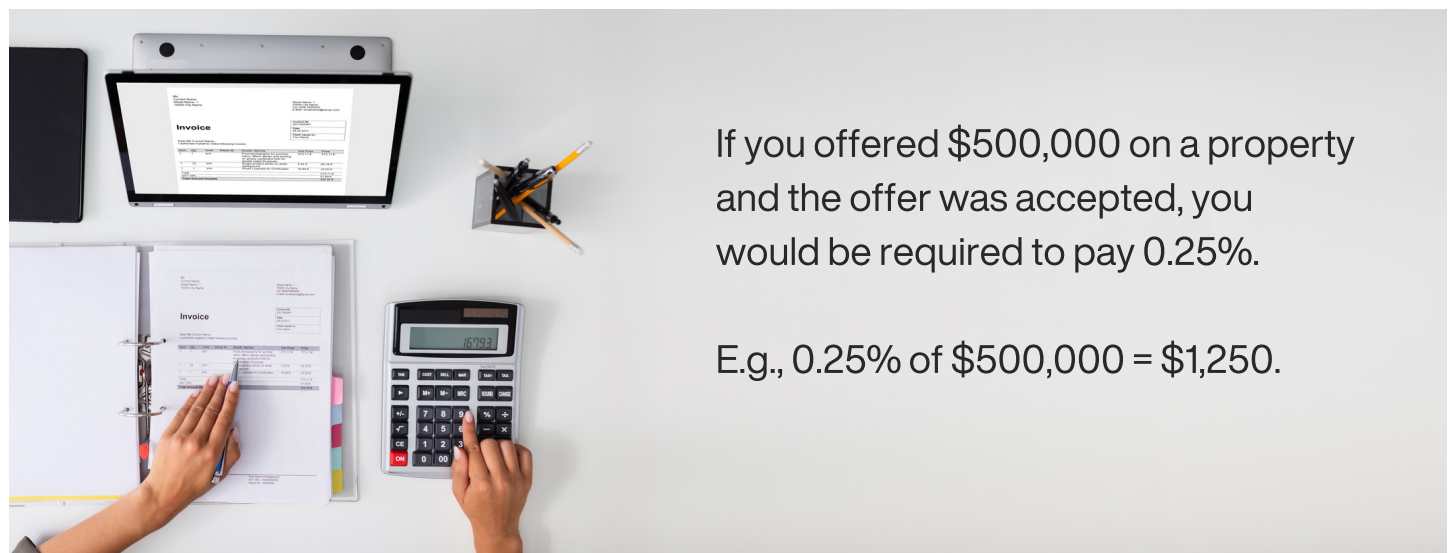
1. **Research** the property and the local market thoroughly. Look at recent comparable sales nearby as a guide for how much you should be paying.
2. Start with a **strong offer** by determining your maximum budget and set an initial offer that is competitive but still within your budget. Starting with a strong offer can demonstrate your seriousness as a buyer and potentially discourage other potential buyers.
3. **Clearly communicate** your offer and any special conditions you may have, such as subject to finance or a satisfactory building inspection. Put these details in writing to avoid any misunderstandings.
4. **Consider the timing** of your offer. If the property has just hit the market, the seller may be less willing to negotiate. On the other hand, if the property has been on the market for a while, they may be more open to negotiations.
5. Consider using a **"nibble" technique**, where you make a slightly improved offer with small conditions attached, such as a shorter settlement period or specific repairs. This can encourage the agent to work with you to close the deal.
6. **Avoid getting emotionally attached** to a particular property during negotiations. This mindset allows you to make objective decisions based on the property's value and your budget.
7. Consider engaging a **buyer's agent** or a qualified property advisor who can negotiate on your behalf. They possess the expertise to navigate the negotiation process and may have established relationships with real estate agents.

Offers and Negotiations

You can submit a formal offer on a property by texting or emailing your name, your offer and the property address, to the real estate agent. Here are some examples.



When an offer is accepted, you are required to sign a 'Contract of Sale' and deposit 0.25% of your offer. This will take you into a 'cooling off period'. Until you sign and make your deposit, the property is still for sale and the owners can accept another offer. It is advised that you act quickly if your offer is accepted. Here is an example of a 0.25% deposit:



If you offered \$500,000 on a property and the offer was accepted, you would be required to pay 0.25%.

E.g, 0.25% of \$500,000 = \$1,250.

Cooling Off and Settlement

What happens in the cooling off and settlement period?

Cooling Off Period - This is a specified period of time after the exchange of contracts. In New South Wales, the standard cooling off period is five business days, but it can be extended if necessary and both parties agree.

The buyer has the right to rescind the contract and withdraw from the purchase during this time but they will forfeit their 0.25% deposit.

During this time, the buyer should get a pest and building inspection or a strata report, depending on the property type. When you receive the pest and building report, you should call the inspector and ask them to go point out any concerns or major issues e.g., termites, plumbing leaks, bad drainage, etc.

Settlement Period - The settlement period refers to the time between the exchange of contracts and the completion of the property purchase, where the buyer takes legal ownership of the property. In NSW, the standard settlement period is typically 30 to 90 days, but it can be negotiated and specified in the contract.

The buyer finalises their financing arrangements, pays the remaining balance of the purchase price, and ensures all necessary paperwork and legal requirements are completed. The seller ensures the property is vacated, and any agreed-upon repairs or adjustments are made as per the contract.

The agent will conduct a pre-settlement inspection with the buyer, preferably after the previous owner has moved out and prior to settlement day if possible.

On the settlement date, the buyer's solicitor or conveyancer will exchange the final payment for the transfer of legal ownership and provide the buyer with the keys to the property.

Top Tips

Top 5 Questions To Ask Real Estate Agents

When you find a house online you like or you are at an open home, these questions will give you better insight into the property.

1. What is the price guide and is it negotiable? (This will tell you if the property is within your budget).
2. Are there any known issues with the property? (If there are serious issues it is best to avoid the property).
3. Are you aware of any future developments in the area? (Do your own research here too as the agent might not know).
4. Have you had any offers yet? (This will show that you are serious and ensure you don't miss out).
5. What changes have the owners made to the property? (If the owners have made changes, get any relevant documents./certificates to show it was done properly).

Top 4 Questions To Ask Your Mortgage Lender

Here are four questions we got from a certified mortgage lender that they believe every buyer getting a loan should think about.

1. What is the difference between equity in property and borrowing capacity?
2. Considering what I spend in my account, what are my realistic cost of living expenses after I buy?
3. What does pre-approval mean and how long does it last?
4. What plans do I have to repay my loan if it will continue into retirement? And am I comfortable with the loan?



Frequently Asked Questions

Q. How much deposit do I need to buy a house?

A. A standard deposit required for a home loan is 20%, however, the exact amount required will change if you are getting an assistance scheme or grant. It is best to speak with your financial provider for specific figures.

Q. Is My 0.25% deposit refundable?

A. Generally, no. Your 0.25% deposit is used to take the property into cooling-off period. In extenuating circumstances the owners can refund the 0.25% deposit, but there is no obligation from them.

Q. What is unconditional / conditional sale?

A. An unconditional sale means that if you want to buy a property there will be no cooling-off period. You are required to put down the 10% and sign contracts the same day and you cannot pull out of the deal. A conditional sale means you have a cooling-off period and can pull out if your finance falls through or you are unhappy with the pest and building report.

Q. What is the difference between private treaty, auction and Expression of Interest?

A. Private treaty is a standard sale and is the most common way a property is sold.

Auction requires bidding for the sale on a specific date. Auction sales are unconditional, meaning you are required to sign contracts and deposit 10% if you are the highest successful bidder. You can purchase an auction property prior to the auction date if the owners accept.

EOI - expressions of interest sales ask for best and final offers by a fixed date. Similarly to auctions, the highest offer by the end is reviewed and accepted by the owner. However, the agent does not need to disclose the other offers.

For more information, top tips and FAQs, visit our website www.paulhillstheagency.com.au.



Thank You

We hope you found this booklet insightful and informative. If you would like any more advice or tips, please contact us.

Paul Hills
Property Partner
0421 742 752
lpaulhills@theagency.com.au
theagency.com.au

Harrison Freeland
Property Partner
0422 540 788
harrisonfreeland@theagency.com.au

