

## 10 Tips to help with house hunting ( <http://www.lifehacker.com.au/2007/11/post> )

- 1. Do** some research ahead of time to get an idea of what's available in the market. Do this a week or two in advance if you can. Using [www.realestate.com.au](http://www.realestate.com.au) and [Domain](#) plus [Google Maps](#) should give you an idea of what's available in your price range in the areas you are interested in. Keep an open mind – make sure you tick the “Include surrounding suburbs” box when searching on a suburb name or postcode.
- 2. Spend** some time working out what you want to look for. Have a good idea of what features are a \*must have\* for you, and what are just \*nice to have\*s\*. This will make the hunting a lot easier – because you're aiming to create a short list of properties to view, rather than looking at a large number of properties and finding you've wasted time looking at properties that really aren't going to be suitable.
- 3. Take** advantage of your contacts. Let your friends/social networks know you are looking – someone may know of a place coming vacant soon. Don't neglect this step – because your goal is to find out about properties before they get shown in an open inspection and competition gets really fierce.
- 4. Start** a notebook with the information you'll need to fill out property applications – especially your references as they have a big impact on whether your application is successful. Get the name, business address and phone number of one and preferably two previous real estate agents who've agreed to provide you with references – this will really help.
- 5. If** at all possible, arrange 1-2 days off \*midweek\* to look at properties – having time during the week to look can mean the difference between being the first and sometimes only person to see a property, versus being one of a large throng who attend a Saturday viewing.
- 6. A** few days before your chosen “househunting days”, start creating a short list of the properties you want to inspect. [Realestate.com.au](http://Realestate.com.au) lets you create a shortlist online.
- 7. Do** \*not\* just wait to see which agents advertise inspection times – ring them. If you ring the agent, you can ask to see the property ASAP and hopefully they'll tell you about the midweek opening or arrange a private viewing for you. Make sure you ask the agent if they have any other properties available or coming available soon.
- 8. Once** you've created your shortlist and contacted agents about inspection times, make sure you write down all the details in a running sheet for your house hunting day or days. Have an idea of which properties look the best to you – and make them the priority if you have limited time to spend looking.
- 9. The** application. Two main things will make the difference here – make sure you take the time to fill out your application thoroughly, and make sure you've prepared your list of references. If there are one or two properties you really expect to like, pick up an application form ahead of time from the real estate agent's office so you can fill it out ahead of time. Often landlords will accept the first thorough application they see that they can't fault - so your preparation time will pay off. Make sure you've checked with the people you're putting down as references so you know they're willing to be your referee, and you've refreshed their memory about when you rented from them or worked for them.
- 10. It** should go without saying, but be polite, professional and honest with the real estate agents you speak to. Even though they're busy people, being polite and asking for help will help you find the agent who's willing to take a moment to think about upcoming properties which might suit you, or make the time for a private viewing of a property.