

FIELD RESOURCE

Preparing Your House to Sell

A room-by-room checklist for Brisbane homeowners

Daniel Gierach

RAY WHITE COLLECTIVE

[DANIELGIERACH.COM](https://danielgierach.com)

Preparation is not the same as renovation. Most sellers either underprepare (presenting a cluttered, poorly maintained property) or overspend (renovating rooms that buyers will change anyway). Both reliably produce a worse outcome than focused, evidence-based preparation. This checklist takes you room by room with the items that actually move buyers and the ones you can safely leave alone.

Street appeal and entry

Buyers form a significant part of their impression before they step inside. The facade, the garden, and the path to the front door set a tone that is difficult to overcome if the first look is unfavourable.

- Mow, edge, and trim all lawn areas. Remove dead plants and replace with simple, low-maintenance plantings.

- Clean gutters and downpipes. Staining on fascia boards signals deferred maintenance.

- Pressure wash driveways, paths, and any concrete areas.

- Repaint or touch up the front fence and gate if faded or flaking.

- Replace or polish the front door hardware.

- Check that the letterbox is in good condition and numbers are clear and clean.

- Sweep the front porch and remove any items that have accumulated there.

- Replace any blown bulbs in entry lights and check that the doorbell works.

Living and dining areas

These rooms carry the emotional weight of a buyer's inspection. Clutter, personal photos, and an overfilled room all make it harder for buyers to picture themselves living there.

- Declutter thoroughly. Remove at least 30 percent of furniture and most decorative items.

- Clean all windows inside and out. Natural light is the single most effective presentation tool.

- Repaint marked or scuffed walls. A fresh coat of warm neutral white is almost always worthwhile.

- Repair any damaged or stained flooring. For timber floors, consider polishing rather than replacement.

- Update lighting if globes are dim or fittings are dated. Use warm LED globes at 2700K to 3000K.

- Remove personal photos and distinctive artworks. Buyers should be able to project themselves into the space.

- Pull furniture away from walls slightly to make rooms feel more spacious.

- Style coffee tables and surfaces with no more than three intentional items.

Kitchen

The kitchen is where buyers spend the most time during inspections and where they focus most sharply on maintenance and condition. Full renovations rarely return their cost; targeted cosmetic work often does.

- Deep clean every surface: benchtops, splashback, inside cupboards, the rangehood, the oven, and the sink.

- Replace handles if existing ones are outdated or mismatched. New handles cost under \$200 and change the feel of the room.

- Consider painting cabinetry if the bones are good but the colour or finish is dated. Use a professional.

- Repair or replace any damaged benchtop sections.

- Ensure all appliances work. A non-functioning dishwasher or rangehood gives buyers leverage.

- Clear all benchtops of appliances and personal items for photography and open homes.

- Replace any stained or worn tea towels with fresh white or natural linen.

- Empty the bin and check there is no food smell before every open home.

Bathrooms

Bathrooms are scrutinised heavily for signs of water damage, mould, and deferred maintenance. Full renovations before sale rarely make financial sense unless the bathroom is genuinely non-functional.

- RegROUT tiles where the grout is stained or cracked.
- Reseal around the bath, shower, and vanity if seals are lifting or discoloured.
- Replace taps and fittings if they are heavily corroded or dated.
- Address any mould on ceilings or walls. Fix the ventilation cause, not just the surface.
- Check that exhaust fans work.
- Remove all personal items, toiletries, and medications for open homes and photography.
- Place fresh white towels on rails. Roll spares and store them in a basket.
- Replace shower curtains if discoloured.

Bedrooms

The master bedroom sets the emotional tone for buyers. Secondary bedrooms are assessed primarily for size and storage. The work here is largely decluttering and neutral presentation.

- Use a hotel-style bedding arrangement for the master: fresh white or neutral linen, minimal cushions, no personal items on bedside tables.
- Clear wardrobes to approximately half capacity. Buyers open robes and read overfilled storage as a space problem.
- Repaint if walls are heavily marked or have strong personal colours.
- Ensure all built-in robes open and close smoothly.
- Present secondary bedrooms as bedrooms where possible, not as offices or storage.
- Make all beds before any inspection.
- Place a small lamp on each bedside table to warm the space in photography.

Outdoor and entertaining areas

In Brisbane's inner east, outdoor living is a material part of a home's value. An underperforming outdoor area can measurably affect sale price.

- Clean and oil timber decks. A weathered deck can look dramatically better after an afternoon's work.
- Pressure wash outdoor entertaining surfaces, including pavers and concrete.
- Repair or replace any damaged deck boards, pool fencing, or gate latches.
- Stage outdoor furniture to suggest how the space can be used.
- Check that outdoor lighting works.
- Mow lawns and edge garden beds immediately before open homes.
- Hide bins from view during inspections and photography.
- Skim the pool and brush waterline tiles before any inspection.

Garage and storage areas

A clean, organised garage suggests a property has been cared for throughout. An overflowing one raises questions about the rest of the house.

- Remove as much stored material as practical. Hire a skip or use a storage unit for the campaign.
- Ensure the garage door operates correctly and quietly.
- Clean the floor, particularly any oil stains.
- Check that all power points and lighting work.
- Sweep cobwebs from corners and ceiling.

What to leave alone

Knowing what not to spend money on is as important as knowing what to fix. The following rarely return their cost in a sale context unless they are genuinely broken or creating compliance issues.

- Full kitchen or bathroom renovations in properties above \$1.2 million, where buyers typically renovate to their own taste
- New flooring where existing floors are sound but dated
- Landscaping upgrades beyond mowing, edging, and basic plantings
- New window treatments if existing ones are in good condition
- Home automation or technology upgrades
- Structural improvements that are not visible and will not be reflected in comparable sales

The week before listing

A short countdown to make sure nothing is missed in the run-up to professional photography and the first open home.

- Finalise all painting, repairs, and cleaning at least three days before photography.
- Confirm the photography brief with your agent. Walk through the home in daylight and identify any final issues.
- Stage each room with no more than the agreed styling items.
- Have the lawn mowed and edged the day before photos.
- Pull every vehicle off the driveway before photography and open homes.
- Brief any housemates, tenants, or family on the open home schedule.
- Plan where pets will go during open homes.
- Arrange somewhere to take valuables and keys during open homes.

This checklist is a starting point. Daniel can walk through your property and give you a specific, prioritised preparation list based on what actually moves the needle in your suburb and price bracket.

Daniel Gierach

RAY WHITE COLLECTIVE

0412 523 821

daniel.gierach@raywhite.com

danielgierach.com