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Welcome to the summer edition of the Local iQ.

Gosh, spring proved to be quite eventful weather wise: we experienced what seemed to be an earlier start to summer with some very warm days and then quick as a flash, a quite wintery burst. And recently the extremes of nature have been evident. During Victoria's period of below average temperatures and winter like conditions, parts of NSW and QLD were enduring above average temperatures, heatwave conditions and battling catastrophic bushfires. We take this opportunity to acknowledge the wonderful job of all the fire fighters and emergency service volunteers. Our thoughts and prayers are with those who suffered loss.

Interest in property shows no sign of waning with the improving Melbourne market conditions also beginning to filter to our local market. Whilst the RBA held Interest rates at its Melbourne Cup day meeting, there is continued speculation that they just may head into negative territory in 2020.

In this Xmas edition of Local iQ, we provide timely reminders for bush fire safety and why it's important to test your gas bottle & fittings before firing up your barbie this summer and some tips for Christmas selling.

As the year draws to a close and with the festive season almost upon us, we take this opportunity to thank you for your support during 2019. From all us of, we wish you and your loved ones, a very Merry Christmas and all the very best for 2020.

Kind Regards,

Vin, Sharon, Geoff, Nicole, Ben, Kate, Rita, Lee, Shannon, Emily & Stacey.

IT'S BARBIE TIME!

Today marks the official start of summer and although the past Spring has been quite a mixed bag, the warmer weather should now be here to stay for awhile. And with the warmer weather comes the great Aussie tradition of firing up the Barbie.

But before you do, you should take some time to make sure you'll be grilling safely as many barbeque accidents happen when you first use the grill after a long period of non-use over the winter.

The first thing you should do before using your barbeque is check your gas bottle. If it looks rusty or damaged in any way, replace it. Also check the fittings for leaks, including the hose and connectors. A simple way to test them is to spray on a solution of



soapy water and see if there are any escaping bubbles. 'Swap & Go' is widely available at petrol stations & convenience stores and offers the handy & cost effective service of swapping your empty gas bottle for a full one that has been safety checked. However if you prefer to fill your own gas bottle, be aware that bottles have a maximum life span of 10 years and hoses five years.

But don't roll out the apron & get the tongs ready just yet - even if you left your barbeque clean pre-winter, it will most likely have accumulated dust, spiders and other things that will most definitely not enhance your food offerings, so here's a few cleaning steps to ensure safe barbequing this summer:

- turn BBQ on to burn off built up cooking residue
- allow plates to cool then remove all solids with a brass bristle brush and hot, soapy water
- rinse well and allow to air dry
- spray a light coating of cooking oil over the cold grills and wipe off any excess with paper towel
- don't forget about the drip tray – replace fat absorber and/or volcanic rocks. And now you're ready for the sausages & hamburgers!

Office News

Christmas trading:

Our office hours during the Christmas / New Year period are as follows:

Monday, 23rd December	9.00am to 5.30pm
Tuesday, 24th December	9.00am to 12.00pm
Wednesday, 25th December	CLOSED
Thursday, 26th December	CLOSED
Friday, 27th December	CLOSED
Saturday, 28th December	CLOSED
Sunday, 29th December	CLOSED
Monday, 30th December	9.00am to 5.30pm
Tuesday, 31st December	9.00am to 1.00pm
Wednesday, 1st January	CLOSED
Normal office hours resume on Thursday, 2nd January 2020	

Office closure: Our Office will be closed on Monday, 27th January 2020 for the Australia Day public holiday

Staff News: Milestones: A big congratulations to Lee who celebrated her 5 year anniversary as part of our team on 25-Nov: it's amazing how quickly the years have flown by! Well done Lee!

WARRAGUL v DROUIN HOUSE & LAND BATTLE

Well it was a mad rush to the finish, but congratulations to Team Warragul for all their hard work in landscaping and styling 15 Nolan Drive, Warragul in preparation for Auction. The Team Warragul home, situated in the Brandy Creek Views Estate looked amazing and everyone who inspected commented on how wonderful the home looked both inside and out. A huge well done and thank you to all Club members, volunteers, sponsors and donors, for their time, effort, contributions and generosity. The Auction was held on 30-November-2019, so the result was not available at the time of print. Who won the Battle? Head to Facebook and Instagram for the result.



TALKING REAL ESTATE – Statement of Information

Since May-2017, Real Estate Agents have been required to prepare a pricing fact sheet for every residential property they are engaged to sell. This fact sheet is known as the Statement of Information and must be prepared in the form approved by Consumer Affairs Victoria.

The Statement of Information must include:

- an indicative selling price for the property;
- details of the 3 most comparable property sales to the property for sale; and
- the median house or unit price for the suburb/locality

The Statement of Information must be:

- displayed at all open for inspections;
- included with any internet advertising; and
- given to prospective buyers within two business days of their request.



BUSH FIRE SAFETY

Over the last few years, Victoria has experienced several extreme bushfire seasons. As we embark on summer, the recent fires that have ravaged NSW and QLD provide yet another reminder just how catastrophic bush fires can be and the trail of devastation they leave behind. Despite bushfires being a common hazard of the Australian summer, many residents are unprepared for the potential for bushfires.

Many parts of the Baw Baw Shire are designated as bushfire prone zones. As such, these are our top 5 tips for bushfire safety:

1. Prepare a Bushfire Survival Plan. The Plan should outline the steps you and your family need to take to ensure their safety. And consider different situations – bushfire conditions can change rapidly, so it's also worth considering a Plan B, C or even Plan D. But it is not enough just to have a Plan - ensure all members of your household are familiar with the Plan and practise it. A real-life bushfire situation will be both physical and emotional and all members of your household need to know what to do.
2. Put together an emergency kit. We found an excellent checklist on the Australian Red Cross website: <https://www.redcross.org.au/getmedia/9c3af5a8-e6ba-4ecb-944e-c0e2c59474a1/2017-09-13-Get-Packing.pdf.aspx?ext=.pdf>
3. Understand bushfire danger ratings. Ensure you are familiar with the different Bushfire Alert levels and Fire Danger Ratings. This will help determine when to trigger your Bushfire Survival Plan.
4. Clean up outside. Clear roof gutters of leaves and debris; ensure wood is situated well away from the house, store flammable liquids, paints and pool chemicals away from the house. It's a good idea to have at least 1 garden house that reaches the perimeter of the property.
5. Leave early. The safest option in a bushfire is to leave early – don't wait until it's too late. You should strongly consider leaving if you are not bushfire prepared or where a Code Red Fire Danger Rating has been issued. Remember, not all properties can be defended nor is everyone physically and emotionally capable of doing so. If in doubt, you should always leave early.



TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL CHRISTMAS SELLING

The Christmas holiday season is usually a hectic time for most of us, but it can be even more so if your home is for sale. Keeping your home 'inspection ready' can represent a challenge during the holiday period. If your home is on the market over the festive season, here are some selling tips:

- Street appeal is important. Ensure you keep lawns & gardens neat & tidy and make sure your home can be seen clearly from the street.
- Christmas lights are attractive at night, but unfortunately do not add appeal to your home during the day. Perhaps consider a few well placed lights instead of a lighting spectacular – just for this year.
- Keep the house cool, but not cold. Entering a house that is too cold can cause just as a negative impression as a house that is too hot; if you have air-conditioning set the temperature at a comfortable level.
- Keep decorations on the conservative side. Not all prospective purchasers may celebrate in the way that you do. You don't want to overwhelm people, you want them to notice your house - not your decorations.
- And finally, but importantly - don't stress it! If you can convey the comfort & joy your family has shared in the home, a new family will be looking forward to making their own Christmas memories!



Local iQ online

We are trying to reduce our impact on the environment and encourage receipt of the Local iQ electronically. To register is simple – just email your details to info@qre.com.au and have your newsletter delivered straight to your inbox!

SUBSCRIBE

For Our Newsletter

Subscribe to receive Local iQ electronically by 5pm Mon 16-Dec-19 and go into the draw to win a Xmas Hamper valued at \$100



UPCOMING EVENTS

December

- December
- 1 World Aids Day
- 3 Eureka Day
- 26 Boxing Day test v NZ

January

- 20 – 2/2 Australian Tennis Open
- 25 Chinese New Year
- 27 Chocolate Cake Day

February

- Ovarian Cancer awareness month
- FebFast
- 14 Valentine's Day
- 25 Shrove Tuesday