**Small change, big rewards**

Experts tell Jordan Marshall the secrets of getting bang for your buck when it comes to cosmetic renovations

WHEN a house has been a home for a while things can look a little drab when it comes time to sell. However, splashing cash on a property you are moving on can be a hard decision to make. Renovator has asked the experts for their tips for sellers looking to spruce up their home before it hits the market.

THE BOTTOM LINE
“Always say for a cosmetic renovation, you need to spend no more than 10 per cent of the current value of the property to ensure you don’t overcapitalise,” said Renovating for Profit chief executive Cherie Barber. “That’s a maximum. You can do a lot cheaper if you work with what you’ve got instead of ripping everything out and starting from scratch.”

Advantage Property Consulting

buyers’ advocate Brant Williams said it was important to get bang for your buck. “For every dollar you are spending you want to make sure you’re getting $2 back,” he said. “You have to make sure it is the right thing for the property.”

CHECK THE BASICS
Building inspector Patrick Dunne said sellers often focused on the wrong things. “A lot of people spend unnecessary money on making it pretty when people want a blank canvas,” Mr Dunne said. Mr Dunne, whose company PADinspections is on the hipages, told of a house as an example of people skipping the basics. “Restumping is not that expensive to do, but buyers will deduct more from the price than fixing the problem would cost,” he said.

OUTSIDE UPDATE
“Street appeal is key as you want to create an emotional attraction,” Mr Williams said. “First impressions are important as homebuyers won’t see past something that needs a lot of work straight away.”

Ms Barber, whose new book, *Renovating for Profit*, hits the shelves next week, said sellers should start with a complete outdoor tidy up. “Then mow the lawns, neaten up garden beds, trim overgrown trees and shrubs, and repair or replace any eyesores like tatty letterboxes, fences or stained concrete driveways,” she said.

THE HEART OF THE HOME
Ms Barber said it was possible to completely transform a kitchen for less than $500. “Depending on the state of the kitchen, you may get away with keeping it all exactly the way it is, and getting busy with a paint brush,” she said. “These days you can find specialty paints for everything.

A step up is just swapping out a few things, like updating the appliances, putting in a new benchtop or retiling the splashback.”

BUDGET BATHROOMS
“A bathroom is an important thing to do. A nicely done bathroom does stand out, though it should be done in neutral colours,” Mr Dunne said. “When we inspect a house for a potential buyer, the bathroom is always something they are particularly focused on.”

Ms Barber said the key to minimising costs in the bathroom was limiting professional trades. “Just like with the kitchen, you can achieve an awful lot with specialty paints,” she said. “It’s going to be a lot cheaper to update the toilet and vanity if there’s no replumbing involved. And replacing the old bronze shower screen with a clear glass one can be done for less than $500.”

Quick Fixes

**SPENDING money on little things can make all the difference, according to Mr Williams.**

“New light fittings, door handles and bathroom fixtures are low cost ways to maximise sale price by modernising the property,” he said. Ms Barber said a fresh coat of paint throughout was key. “It’s the cheapest, quickest and best bang for your buck when you want to freshen up a tired property,” she said.

Then things like ripping up old carpets and polishing floorboards, updating the lights and window dressings, together they achieve a totally new look.”

Lucas Morris Homes

Come Home to Innovative Living

Lucas Morris has designed a series of award winning homes that capture the essence of modern living. Visit our display centre and see for yourself how your dreams can become a reality.

With over 50 years experience in creating Award Winning luxury homes, it’s not just expertise that makes a Lucas Morris Home spectacular, its also attention to detail, craftsmanship and drive for a top quality affordable home that sets the Lucas Morris brand apart from the rest. Add design flexibility and you’re sure to find more than a display home, but a beautiful place to call home.

**DISPLAY HOMES**
Open 1pm to 5pm Saturday to Wednesday or by appointment.
Sanctuary
62 Balmore Rd BALWYN Mel Ref: 46 B5
The Alumuna - Tullamore Estate Doncaster
24 Members Drv DONCASTER Mel Ref: 47 B1
A MEMBER OF THE Award WINNING ENGLANDHAT GROUP