**Property North Agency Owners Handbook:**

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**Why Choose Property North Agency?**

**Section 1: Common Questions and Details:**

**Maximising your property’s return**

We ensure your property is bringing in the strongest return possible by minimizing risk, using proven marketing strategies and being able to shortlist the most reliable tenants for you to select from.   
We have an incredibly low vacancy rate. Built through a strong pre-screened tenant database to market your property to, quick-to-act property managers and creating tenancy agreements that end in strong rental seasons, making it easier to re-tenant your property if necessary.  
Providing you with the best tenants possible paying the best possible rent and minimizing any potential vacancy at your property.

**Marketing your property**

When listing your property we take high quality pictures, advertise on multiple listing sites including Realestate.com.au, Domain.com.au, our website, our tenant databases, corporate re-locaters and even social media groups.

High quality leasing signage is used out the front of the upcoming property.  
We have two openings per week Saturday and Wednesday and each opening goes for 30min (twice as long as our competitors).  
We also ensure we are available to take people through for private viewings

**Selecting the best tenant**

So how do we get the best tenant for your property?  
  
After extensive marketing of your property through multiple media formats. We will receive detailed applications from prospective tenants.  
These applicants are then screened, background checked, employment checked and run through the most up to date digital tenancy databases to ensure they are capable of servicing rent and have no black listed tenancy history.  
We also ensure your quality tenant gets the attention they deserve and reward them for being great. A great tenant is worth their weight in gold and we ensure they want to continue leasing your property.

**Taking a Bond**

Current regulations stipulate that the bond can be no more than 4 weeks rent based on the initial tenancy agreement. We use the latest technology with Fair Trading’s Rental Bonds Online – which means we can secure and lodge the bond with Fair trading fast – ensuring you can get your tenant in fast and securely.

**How do we collect rent?**

All our tenants pay rent through direct bank deposit. We prefer this method for a number of reasons:

* By law in NSW Tenants must have a fee-free way of paying rent
* It is the most convenient form of payment and allows tenants to set automatic payments – ensuring rent is paid on time every time.
* It is a low cost option for all involved – meaning we keep fees low for landlords.

**What happens if the tenant does not pay rent on time?**

We have a zero-arrears policy and all tenants sign an agreement with the following protocol:

* *2-3 Days in arrears* – a phone call, SMS and email are sent
* *5-8 Days in arrears* – a letter is sent to the tenant to advise of breach and the Landlord is notified
* *15 Days in arrears* – Non-Payment of Rent Termination Notice with 14days to vacate.

In order to minimize risk and maximize the potential of your property we must stick to this strict policy.

**When do I receive my rent money?**  
  
We disburse rent monies on the 15th of every month. If you require more frequent disbursements we can do that too.  
The money is deposited directly into the bank account of your choice.  
  
**What do you charge me?**

We try to keep this as simple as possible. We charge you a set percentage of rent received. As well as a $5.00 statement fee charged once a month  
To list your property and find tenants we charge 1 weeks rent.   
That’s it! No hidden fees or charges.  
We do not charge to renew leases, pay bills, or manage repairs/maintenance – which is typical of most agencies.

**Managing Bills and Rates:**  
We happily manage all your property related bills and rates at no extra charge. This way you all your outgoing property expenses will be listed on your end of financial year report.  
(Please note, we do not manage insurance policies – this is the only area left to the landlord to manage for liability reasons, we can recommend you to a great insurance broker to take care of this.)

**Management Agreements**

Management agreements are required between the Landlord and the managing agency. These agreements describe the terms in which we can manage your property and are valid for 12months. We must have a signed agreement before we can list and manage your property.

**Tenancy Agreements**

The law requires that there must be a written tenancy agreement between all landlords and tenants. The agreement must be provided by the landlord or the landlord’s agent. The Act contains a standard form of tenancy agreement, condition report and Tenant Checklist that must be used in all circumstances.  
We take care of this for you.

**Renewing a lease**

Tenants will be notified that their lease is ending 2 months prior to the end date. A new agreement with any rent adjustments will be provided. We give this much notice to ensure that if the tenants do not want to renew, we have sufficient time to list and find a new tenant if required – effectively minimizing or having nil vacancy period.  
If the current tenant would like to renew, they simply sign the new agreement and continue to reside in the property with any rent adjustments if needed.  
We do not charge renewal fees like most agencies (typically they charge between 1 or ½ a weeks rent for tenancy renewal)

**Breaking of a fixed term lease**

Under the latest tenancy laws a break lease fee must be in all agreements – this is state legislation.

If the fixed term of the agreement is for 3 years or less and the tenant wants to break, the fee is:

* 6 weeks rent if they move out in the first half of the fixed term
* 4 weeks rent if they move out in the second half of the fixed term.

If the fixed term is for more than 3 years and you and the Tenant agree to include a break fee clause, you can agree on the amount and write it into the agreement.

As the landlord/agent the agreement can only be terminated early if there was a breach of the agreement or if the property is being sold.  
  
Outside of the fixed agreement (month-to-month lease) The tenant must give 30days notice to vacate, and the landlord must give 90days notice for tenants to leave.

**Condition Reports/ Inspections**

There are 3 types of condition reports for all properties:  
*1) Ingoing Condition Report:*  
This sets the standard of the property. It is a detailed report of the property before the tenant moves in. It outlines the properties condition, or any existing damage. This report includes detailed photos of all areas including fittings, fixtures and appliances that come with the property.

This report is given to the tenant and landlord – the tenant must report any discrepancies no later than 14days after the tenancy agreement begins.

This report will be used as reference for all routine inspections and out-going report at the end of tenancy.

*2) Routine Inspection:*  
These inspections take place every 4-6 months during tenancy. We create a detailed report on the properties condition, any wear, damage or maintenance that may be required. We produce this report with images and videos – the report is available through your landlord portal and can be viewed any time you like.

*3) Out-going Condition Report:*  
This is the final condition report when a tenant vacates the premises. We use the in-going condition report as reference – if any damages or problems are found deemed at fault by the tenant, repair costs may be claimed from the bond lodged with fair trading.

**Landlord Portal**

To make things easy we have created a powerful user-friendly landlord portal which means you can log in anytime to access financial reports, see job/repair status and view detailed inspection reports with photos and videos.

Some of the things you can now access through the portal include:

* The current financial status of all your properties
* All historical statements and copies of attached bills
* All general scanned documents attached to the owners folio
* Photos and details for the property and tenancy
* Financial activity graph
* Activity summaries for jobs and inspections

This Portal is such a simple and handy tool for owners – we invested a lot of time and money into making this useful and user-friendly piece of technology.

**Repairing and maintaining my property**

We are fortunate enough to have an associated builders group – Built By Meric.  
They are a fully licensed team of builders, electricians, plumbers, plasterers and tilers. Which means we can offer fast repairs and maintenance at a discounted rate. (We are also happy to work with any preferred tradesperson you may have)  
Any job or repair over $300 taking place at your property must always be approved by the landlord and once approved is listed on the landlord portal with live updates on its progression.

Something we also offer if requested is complete renovation or maintenance plan:

Renovation can be a great way of building equity into your property.  
Our job is to ensure the best financial performance of your property and there are two very strong reasons to put together a maintenance/renovation plan for your property.

1. Building Equity: Renovations add value to your property, for example it may be worth spending $20k on a renovation to increase your properties value by up to $60k or more – potentially giving you the equity needed to invest in your next property, or asking for higher rents.
2. Ensuring that you aren’t ignoring small maintenance issues that could become expensive bigger problems in the future.

**Pets in your property**

It is up to you if you want to permit pets on your property.  
If you decide to allow pets you, the landlord, must still approve them.   
We also add a carpet-cleaning clause to the agreement that ensures when the tenant vacates that all carpets must be professionally cleaned and fumigated for fleas.

**Strata By-Laws**

Strata schemes are effectively small communities where the activities and attitudes of residents can have a significant impact on the satisfaction and enjoyment of others. Therefore, it is important to be aware of your responsibilities and obligations when you own or live in a strata unit.

Each strata scheme has its own by-laws, which are a set of rules that govern such things as the behavior of residents and the use of common property. The by-laws apply to all owners and residents of a strata scheme.

The by-laws can vary significantly from scheme to scheme and it is important to understand which by-laws apply to your scheme. A copy of your scheme's by-laws is kept on the strata roll and is available from either the secretary of the owner’s corporation or from your managing agent (if your scheme has one).

By Laws usually pertain to thinks such as:

* Parking restrictions
* Garbage disposal
* Common area usage
* Keeping of animals
* Behavior of residents – noise, property use etc.

**Landlord Insurance**

Landlord insurance policies cover things such as loss of rent, malicious damage, accidental loss, legal liability etc. We strongly recommend all landlords take out a policy. This is one area that Property North Agency will not manage for landlords for liability reasons – **this is the landlord’s responsibility**. (However we can recommend you to a great local insurance broker – just ask us for more details)

**Smoke Alarms**

A smoke alarm is an effective early warning device designed to detect smoke and alert you to the presence of a fire, and increase the time available for safe escape.

Your property is required by law to have installed at least one smoke alarm in a hallway outside a bedroom or other suitable location in each storey of the property. Tenants are not allowed to remove or interfere with smoke alarms, without a reasonable excuse. If a smoke alarm is battery operated the tenant is responsible for replacing the batteries and testing that it is working. This should be done once each year.

**Dryers and Washing Lines**

If the property does not have a washing line, then the landlord must provide a dryer so tenants have some form of drying out laundry.

**Loose Fill Asbestos**

A number of new laws have been introduced to identify properties affected by loose-fill asbestos insulation and to protect residents, workers and communities.

Tenants must now be told if the premises they want to lease is listed on the loose-fill asbestos insulation (LFAI) Register, or becomes listed during their tenancy.

**Giving a Termination Notice:**

The minimum period of notice you can give the tenant to vacate is:

* 14 days – if the tenant is 14 days or more behind with the rent or has committed some other breach of the tenancy agreement
* 30 days – if the fixed term of the agreement is due to end
* 30 days – if the premises have been sold after the fixed term has ended and vacant possession is required by the buyer under the terms of the sale contract
* 90 days – if the fixed term period has expired and no new agreement has been signed.

These notice periods are designed to give tenants reasonable time to find another rental property. If they can find a property sooner they can move out at any time without having to give you any formal notice. Except where notice has been given for the end of the fixed term, the tenant's responsibility to pay rent ends from the date they hand back possession, not the end of the notice.

There is no minimum notice period required if notice is given on the grounds of:

* the premises being destroyed or wholly or partly uninhabitable
* ceasing to be legally usable as a residence
* being acquired by compulsory process (eg. by the RTA)
* on the death of the sole tenant.

**Managing costs incurred at my property**

We can manage outgoings such as Council Rates, Water Rates, and Strata levies.  
Some owners prefer to manage these outgoings themselves so its up to the landlord to let us know which outgoings they would like us to manage.   
We do not charge any additional fees for bills and rate management.

**Financial Statements**Landlords will receive monthly statements by email, End-Of-Financial statements yearly and be able to access all statements anytime through their online Landlord Portal.

**Part 2: Setting up your property for rent – what you need to be ready.**

*Open for inspection Tips:*

Presentation:

1. Ensure the gardens have been tended. Mow the lawns, sweep the paths, clear the gutters and clean the pool. These areas are all seen before entering the property, if they are messy prospective tenants may dismiss the property before even entering or they will see the yard and pool as a burden not a valued feature.
2. If the property is still furnished for inspection try and remove as much clutter as possible – this not only makes the area look tidy, but makes it feel bigger too.
3. Get the carpets and curtains cleaned professionally. It makes a world of difference. We can organize this for you, its not that expensive and can usually be claimed as a tax deductible.
4. Make sure all curtains and blinds are open. Turn the lights on too if needed. You want the property to be bright and open.
5. If you plan on doing any painting or need to repaint areas, use light neutral colours – bold bright colours may put off some prospective tenants.

Timing:

1. If the property is in a noisy area (ie main road) we will time the inspections to be over the quieter periods – the same goes for busy parking areas.
2. If the property only receives sunlight during a particular time of day, it’s worth timing the inspection for that light.

*Cleaning:*

1. Before tenanting any property we always recommend that the carpets are professionally cleaned (with pest control for fleas if there have been pets). All odors to be removed, the smell of cigarettes and pets can really put tenants off.
2. All ovens should be thoroughly cleaned and grease trays removed of any grease and oil.
3. Kitchen benches, cupboards and drawers emptied and cleaned thoroughly
4. Bathrooms, toilets, showers, basins and bowls should all be clean, and clear of any mould or soap scum.
5. Garage or car space should be clear of any rubbish or debris

*Repairs:*

Your property should be in working order – if there is anything that is broken or looks like it is about to fail, this should be repaired prior to tenancy. If something breaks or is problematic enough that a tenant cannot stay on the premises it could cost you loss of rent or rent reduction over that period. So it is cheaper to get it fixed before tenancy.

*Washing Line or Dryer:*As a landlord you need to provide your tenant with a means to dry laundry. This means if there is no washing line on the property a dryer must be provided.

*Pest Control:*

A property must be clean and free of any infestations when tenancy begins. This includes fleas in the carpet – so we always recommend pest control along with professional carpet cleaning and a copy of the invoice to be presented for our records.

*Appliances:*

We always suggest only supplying the mandatory appliances (oven, cooktop and dryer if no washing line is supplied) Any other appliance provided becomes the responsibility of the landlord, which means all costs of repair and replacement are on the landlord.

*Landlord Insurance:*

Landlord insurance policies cover things such as loss of rent, malicious damage, accidental loss, legal liability etc. We strongly recommend all landlords take out a policy. This is one area that Property North Agency will not manage for landlords for liability reasons – this is the landlord’s responsibility.

**Part 3: Your Property Plan:**

At Property North Agency we offer a little more than your typical property management agency. We came from being in the landlord’s shoes ourselves, and decided to create an agency that kept things simple and a little more holistic.

As part of that holistic approach we put together a property plan for your investment.

This plan takes into account things such as general repairs and maintenance, building equity through renovation, mortgage and trust structure through our associated builders, brokers and accountants.

**Your Property Plan considers the following areas:**

1. General Repairs – What needs repairing and what may need repairing in the future.
2. Scheduled Maintenance – this is a guide to your typical life span of certain areas, fixtures and fittings.
3. Building Equity through renovation – This is where you perform a renovation that increases the value of your property significantly more than the cost of renovation.
4. Half Yearly Valuation report and CMA – every 6 months we produce a valuation report and Comparative Market Analysis of your property. This analysis looks at the current value of your property, how it compares to similar properties within the area, local market trends and the rental performance of your property.

We assess the above reports and plan every 6 months to ensure your property is performing at its maximum, and look at ways to improve or continue its great performance.

**Part 4: Our Guarantee:**  
  
At Property North Agency we are the Risk Reduction Specialists! Our team will work with you to ensure you’re receiving the highest possible return on your investment property. The entire department are heavly focused on maximising your income and optimising capital growth on your investment property.

We understand when you are selecting a new managing agent it can be a very stressful process for many landlords as you don’t know if they are going to deliver on their promises.

At Property North Agency we understand promises can be easly broken and the good news is we GUARANTEE our service.

If during the first 3 months you are not satisfied with our level of service we promise to you. We are prepared to refund the first 3 months and will give 100% money back on your management fees \*

\* Only applies to management fees. Property North Agency must be notified in writing within the 3 month service guarantee period.

**Why Choose Property North Agency?**

**Keeping it Simple:**

At the core of our business, we want to keep things simple for you. We understand you have other important things to worry about, so leave your property in the hands of our professional staff, and let them make life easier for you.

**Our Guarantee:**If during the first 3 months you are not satisfied with our level of service we promise to you. We are prepared to refund the first 3 months and will give 100% money back on your management fees \*

\* Only applies to management fees. Property North Agency must be notified in writing within the 3 month service guarantee period.

**Senior Property Manager:**  
The key to any good relationship is people. We have great people that are given the tools needed to manage your property to its full potential.   
Unlike most agencies our focus is property management – not sales. This means we appoint a senior property manager to ensure smooth professional management of your investment.  
Our property managers are not overloaded with hundreds of properties to manage individually. We want to be able to give you and your property the attention they deserve.  
  
**Strict Screening Process:**All tenancy applications go through a rigorous screening process to ensure we only put forward the best tenants for the landlord’s final selection.  
The screening process includes the most up-to-date tenancy database blacklists, financial background checks and employment checks just to list a few.  
  
**Quality Tenant Database and Corporate Re-locators:**As we do many openings for properties we get to meet a lot of quality tenants. We take pride in building our database with quality tenants and the type of property they are interested in. It’s not uncommon for us to have a screened quality tenant ready to move straight into your property. Ensuring the minimization of untenanted periods.  
We also work closely with corporate re-locators, getting corporate professionals arriving from interstate or internationally into your property.  
 **Quick to Act and Tenant a property:**Being a boutique agency, and not overloading our property managers ensures we are able to promptly organize photography, listing and openings to get your property tenanted as quickly as possible with quality tenants.  
  
**6 Monthly Property Reports:**We go above and beyond when it comes to reports on your property’s performance.  
In conjunction with routine inspections every 6 months, we also produce property valuation reports and in-depth Comparative Market Analysis for your property. These reports detail similar properties within close proximity to yours, how they have performed on the market in both sales and rentals. Included in the report are details on the local market in general and how your property has performed, compares and is currently valued at.  
  
**Landlord Portal:**At Property North we have heavily invested into our cloud-based property management software. With our Landlord Portal, you can log in to download financial reports, live job or maintenance updates as well as detailed photos and videos of your latest inspection. It allows you to stay up-to-date with your property and make sure everything is running the way it should be.  
  
**Maintenance/Renovation Plan:**Another service we offer is maintenance and renovation plans.  
A common misconception with an investment property is that you want to spend as little as possible on the property, to maximize the yield.  
While our job is to ensure the best financial performance of your property there are two very strong reasons to put together a maintenance/renovation plan for your property.

* Building Equity: Renovations add value to your property, and it might be worth spending $20k on a renovation to increase your properties value up to $60k or more – potentially giving you the equity needed to invest in your next property.
* Ensuring that you aren’t ignoring small maintenance issues that could become expensive big problems in the future.

**Retaining Great Tenants:**Here at Property North Agency we understand the value of quality tenants. They ensure your investment property is well looked after, rent is paid on time and make our jobs here much easier.   
We like to let quality tenants know that we appreciate them. From time to time we send out small rewards and gifts to thank them for being great, paying on time and looking after your property.  
Right now we are sending out a little Christmas gift and card to all our tenants. This is not something we charge landlords for, we just want to hold on to quality tenants and show them our appreciation.

**Our broad team:**Not only do we have a friendly, professional and efficient property management team – we also work closely with associated builders, accountants and mortgage brokers. So you have access to experienced professionals in all facets of property investment.  
We work for you and its in our best interest that you get the best advice and service possible to get the most out of your investment.