



Welcome Home

An introduction for first home buyers

A man with a beard and short dark hair, wearing a black t-shirt and blue jeans, is sitting on a dark wooden deck. He is holding a young child with blonde hair, wearing a white t-shirt and patterned shorts, in his arms. The child is looking towards the camera. In the background, there are white wicker chairs and large green plants. To the right, a woman's arm and hand are visible, wearing a gold ring. The overall scene is bright and outdoors.

An introduction to buying your first home



Taking the leap into building or buying your first home can be one of life's most exciting yet daunting experiences.

You may have been thinking about, and planning to, purchase your first home for weeks, months or even years. But as things start to get more serious, you can still be left with many unanswered questions. Where should I buy? What is the best house and land package for my needs? How much can I afford to borrow, and from which lender? Are there any ways I can save money? Who is going to help me out and who do I need to be wary of?

These questions and others will be answered in this handy First Home Buyers Guide. We'll take you through all the important steps from start to finish, including:

- + Finance and pre-approvals
- + Grants and schemes for first home buyers
- + Building a new home versus buying an existing home
- + Conveyancing and solicitors
- + Choosing a builder or house designer
- + Navigating contracts
- + Things to remember before moving into your new home

Getting organised

There are several early steps that should be taken long before building or buying your first home. It's never too early to make a start on...

Securing employment

It may go without saying, but in order to meet your regular mortgage repayments, you will need to be able to prove to your lender you have been employed or consistently earning for an extended period of time - and your partner may need a reliable job, too!

Savings

In most cases, you will need to have saved for a significant deposit for your first home - particularly if you want to avoid paying [lender's mortgage insurance \(LMI\)](#). As a general rule, buyers are required to stump up 20 per cent of the purchase price - around \$80,000 for a \$400,000 loan. However, you may be eligible for assistance with your deposit - see more on that in our grants and exemptions section.

Research

Think long and hard about the type of house and land that will suit your needs now and into the future. How many bedrooms, bathrooms and living areas will you need? Are you lifestyle-oriented, or is it more important for you to be [conveniently located](#) near work, schools, shops and other amenities? Attending as many open homes as you can and visiting [display villages](#) for inspiration will make it easier to make a decision when the time comes.

Spend less on your first home

There are grants and exemptions first home builders and buyers should be aware of that may help out with the costs associated with your first home.

Queensland First Home Owners' Grant

If you are living in Queensland, haven't owned a property before and are buying or building a new home, you will likely qualify for a \$15,000 [grant from the State Government](#). Some banks also allow this grant to form part of your deposit.

Stamp duty

Also known as transfer duty in Queensland, this is a one-off government fee payable when you buy land or property. First home owners may be eligible for an [exemption](#) when purchasing a vacant block of land worth less than \$400,000 (saving up to \$7,175) - or an existing house under \$550,000 (saving up to \$15,925).



How much can I borrow?

For many people, finance may not be the first item on the agenda, but it should be.

A good starting point is to visit a bank or mortgage broker, who will step you through the entire finance process. This involves undertaking an audit of your financial situation, so you can be given recommendations on how much you can borrow based on your ability to earn - and save - your money.

Mortgage brokers can be useful as they have the ability to assess your borrowing capacity with multiple lenders, which means you may be able to find a more competitive interest rate or better terms for your loan.

Once you have gone through this process, your bank or broker will issue you with 'pre-approved' finance, which will determine your house-hunting budget.



Should I build or buy?

What's better for first home owners – building or buying?
The simplest answer is,
it depends on your own
individual goals or situation.



Benefits of building your first home

- + Building a new home usually requires a lower deposit.
- + You may be eligible for the Queensland Government's \$15,000 First Home Owners' Grant, which is only available to those buying or building a brand-new home.
- + You generally pay less stamp duty when you build a home because the duty is only payable on the land.
- + Brand new homes come with a structural guarantee, from some builders this can last more than 20 years.
- + You're buying a brand-new house, so there will be less maintenance required and you won't be buying potentially hidden problems or structural defects.
- + You can choose a block of land in your preferred location and then design your home to suit your needs and lifestyle, now and into the future.
- + Buying into a new masterplanned community, such as [Ellendale's Cedar Glen](#) in the leafy outer Brisbane suburb of Upper Kedron, often means access to new infrastructure and amenities.

Benefits of buying an existing first home

- + You can move right in and don't need to wait until your home is built.
- + It may be easier to buy an existing home simply because there could be more available on the market – particularly in built-up areas, where it can sometimes be difficult to find vacant [blocks of land](#) to build a new home.
- + If you buy an existing home, you often have the ability to renovate or add your own personal touches.

Why do I need a conveyancer or solicitor, and what do they actually do?


A [conveyancer](#) is a licensed professional who specialises in providing advice and information about the process of buying or selling a property.

They oversee the settlement process including checking that any special conditions of the contract are satisfied, such as finance due dates, and they administer the process from signing the contract until settlement. This includes checking there are no 'skeletons in the closet' that are attached to your property, such as unpaid bills or unexpected encumbrances on the land that are not immediately obvious.

While a conveyancer will guide you through the process, some buyers prefer to engage a solicitor, because they will have broader legal knowledge and can offer legal advice.



How do I spot
a good builder?



There are many factors to consider when looking for the [right builder](#). Here's a list of questions you can ask to help you find your perfect match:

Assistance with building costs or deposit

Ask whether or not a builder will help you to cover some of your upfront building costs, such as soil and contour tests. Some builders will cover these costs and some won't. Builders can also require a deposit prior to obtaining council approval for your home design – usually the required amount is around five per cent, however some builders require less.

Budget

If you are working to a tight budget, see if you can get a fixed price quote from your builder to help rule out any unexpected costs.

Time

Some builders are more efficient than others and some are willing to provide a fixed guarantee on how long the process will take. Be sure to ask how long your build will take, particularly if you need to be moving into your new home by a certain date.

Type of block

Different types of builders specialise in building homes on certain kinds of blocks. Whether you have a flat or sloping block, be sure to match the land with the right builder.

Proven track record


Be sure to ask how long your builder has been building for, and request proof of licence, insurance and accreditation. This is key!

Contract

Some builders are more willing than others to allow home buyers to customise the design of their home. If adding your own personal touch is important, make sure you find a builder willing to help you turn your ideas into a reality. Just remember to factor in more time and budget to add your own personal flourishes!

Customise your home's design

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Know your paperwork

It helps to have a good idea of the key steps ahead of time.

Pre-approval

This is basically a financial background check prior to signing a contract that determines the amount the bank will lend to you. Having a pre-approval arranged in advance can be helpful to determine how much you can afford to pay for your first home.

Contract

Formal contracts will be drawn up for you to sign and in the case of buying off the plan, there will generally be a contract with the developer to buy the land, plus a separate contract with the builder relating to the building contract. Make sure you read through the fine print in detail and if you have any questions, be sure to seek advice before you sign.

Submission to the lender

Once you have a signed contract, the paperwork needs to be sent to the bank for valuation and approval.

Settlement

Generally 14 days after finance approval, the house or land settles and now belongs to you. For land that is not already titled, it may take a little longer for titles to be issued by the State Government. The mortgage broker and conveyancer will manage the final stages of this process this with you.

Building your new home

A few key steps can make this a more straightforward experience, including:

- + Determine who your liaison person is at the building company - and don't be afraid to contact them regularly if you have any concerns or questions.
- + Keep in touch with your builder to see if construction stays on-track. You should be able to arrange a time to inspect the progress of your property during the build with your builder.
- + Prior to the house being completed, the builder will invite you to inspect the property to check for defects. If you aren't confident doing the inspection yourself, you can arrange an independent consultant or building inspector to complete the inspection for you.





What else do I need to think about?

There are a range of additional things worth considering that may make the whole experience a more pleasant one:

Budgeting

Start off on the right foot and create a new household budget before you move in. This will help to ensure you have no problems meeting your mortgage repayments.

Cost savers

Consider cost saving measures such as solar panels and water tanks to save on utilities, while helping the environment – there are some great government subsidies to take advantage of too!

Moving day

You may need to be flexible with your move-in day in case the build takes longer than expected.

Changing address

Don't forget to notify your electricity and water provider and the bank of your new address.

Prior bills

Ensure all phone and utility bills at your former residence are paid. If they are not, providers can cause havoc with your credit history.

Insurance

As soon as you receive the keys to your new home, be sure to arrange for home and contents insurance.

Get involved in your local community

Don't be a stranger! Particularly in a [new masterplanned community](#), you'll find there are a lot of people in the same situation who are keen to meet new faces. In the era of social media, be sure to check if there is a Facebook community page for your development or local area... and if there isn't, create one!

Looking for your perfect first home?

You can live just 12 kilometres to the Brisbane CBD in the leafy Ellendale masterplanned community at Upper Kedron. [Cedar Glen at Ellendale](#) is a limited release of boutique homesites offering a premium lifestyle for less. Ideal for first home buyers, you can choose from a stunning range of house and land packages brought to you by some of Queensland's leading home builders.

Cedar Glen is within easy walking distance of a planned neighbourhood retail village, including a new childcare centre, and is just a short drive from local parks and playgrounds, ensuring the everyday essentials are right by your door.

ellendale
UPPER KEDRON

Visit the Ellendale Sales Centre 324 Canvey Road, Upper Kedron

T 1300 720 858 W ellendale.com.au



Cedar Woods Properties Project: Ellendale, QLD

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