



## March 2015

In this edition of our client newsletter we've gathered some key insights and commentary to help inform your financial and investment decisions.

This year is shaping up to be another challenging year in the world's markets. This means it continues to be important that you have clear goals in place which you are working towards with a strategy that's going to work over time.

Achieving your lifestyle goals now and in the future is important to us, so we'll continue to keep you informed with the latest thinking and ideas on key topics of interest throughout 2015.

To discuss any of the ideas raised in this newsletter, please don't hesitate to contact us. We hope you enjoy reading this edition.



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# Ready, set... auction!

## All you need to know about buying at auction

Bidding for a property at auction can be stressful but you can reduce the stress involved. Before you consider bidding use our tips to make sure you're prepared and know what to expect.

### Step 1:

#### Work out the costs

Working out how much you can afford to repay on a home loan plus all the associated costs of buying a property - like stamp duty - is the first step.

Of course, buying at auction means the final purchase price remains unknown until the hammer falls. But a defined financial limit means you'll know when to stop bidding.

Use a home loan calculator and speak to a financial planner to understand all the costs of buying a property.

### Step 2:

#### Arrange finance

Make sure you're ready to bid. That means knowing exactly how much you can borrow comfortably because your lender has assessed your situation and approved a specific amount.

Visit your lender before you start looking for a property and arrange pre-approval so you're set to go. With an approved home loan you can benefit from competitive interest rates and terms, plus the convenience of pre-approval.

### Step 3:

#### Do your research

It can take time to find the right house. Researching the area will give you an idea of prices for similar properties.

Attend auctions in the area so you understand the strategies agents use and what to expect.

Before buying at auction, make sure the property is solid - arrange building and pest inspections. And read the contract, certificate of title and section statement so you understand what you'd be buying. If possible, ask a solicitor to look over the paperwork with you.

### Step 4:

#### Ready, set... auction!

Before the auction, decide who'll bid for the property-speak with the real estate agent. You can ask someone to bid on your behalf; they may need to sign a proxy form.

If the reserve price-the minimum the seller will accept - is reached and you're the winning bidder you'll have to sign a contract of sale and pay 10% deposit immediately after auction. Ask the agent how you'll need

to provide the deposit. Will you need a personal cheque book?

If the reserve price isn't reached but you are the highest bidder, the agent may negotiate with you and the seller afterwards.

### Step 5:

#### Be prepared to walk away

If your heart's set on a particular property, it can be difficult watching someone outbid you. But it's better to walk away without a property than with a debt larger than you can repay.

Remember your financial limits and stick to them. You'll avoid paying more than you can afford - or than a property may be worth - and stay out of the emotional charge an auction can create.

Making the decision to buy or not to buy can be complex, so it's important to talk to your financial adviser before you take the plunge.







# Back to school subsidies

## Some subsidies may help with children in public or private school

Most parents would agree that sending children to school can be costly. Whether your children attend a public or private school, costs for uniforms, stationery and transport add up throughout the year.

Thankfully, the federal and state governments provide refunds and payments to help ease the financial burden of putting children through school.

We've put together a list of some of the subsidies available that you may be eligible for.

### Schoolkids Bonus

The Schoolkids Bonus is a payment from the Federal Government to a parent or carer receiving Family Tax Benefit Part A for a dependent child in primary or secondary education. It provides \$422 a year for each child in primary school and \$842 for each child in secondary school. This year, from 1 January 2015, payments will be subject to an income test and will only be payable to families with an adjusted taxable income of \$100,000. You can find out more about eligibility at the Department of Human Services website.

### Assistance for isolated children

If you have a child at primary or secondary school-age who can't go to a state school because of geographical isolation, disability or health reasons, the Assistance for Isolated Children scheme may provide tax-free payments exempt from income and assets tests. Find out more at the Department of Human Services website.

### Other allowances

In addition to federal funding, some states may provide additional payments for eligible families:

- Queensland families may receive payments to help buy textbooks and resources. Find out more at the Queensland government's education. [qld.gov.au](http://qld.gov.au).
- Lower-income families in South Australia may receive payments for education expenses. Find out whether your family is eligible at [sa.gov.au](http://sa.gov.au).
- Parents and grandparents in Tasmania may receive payments for children enrolled in kindergarten, and primary and secondary school. You'll find more information at [education.tas.gov.au](http://education.tas.gov.au).

- In Western Australia, families may be eligible for payments to help with older children in high school. Visit concessions. [wa.gov.au](http://wa.gov.au) to find out more.

### Getting to and from school

Daily school-travel costs can add up year upon year. Make sure you know about the public transport concessions available in your state. Some states allow children to travel free while others offer discounted fares and rules, and conditions can change from year to year.

State	Public transport website
NSW	School Student Transport Scheme
VIC	Public Transport Victoria
QLD	School Transport Assistance Scheme
SA	Adelaide Metro
TAS	Transport Access Scheme
WA	Student SmartRider
NT	Northern Territory Government Department of Transport

### Find out more

Make sure you're making the most of the payments and subsidies you may be entitled to. Every little bit helps when the cost of raising kids is ever-increasing.



# Top apps for the over 50s

With almost 80% of 55-64 year olds and 46% of 64+ year olds on-line in Australia<sup>i</sup>, there is no denying that the SilverSurfer generation are embracing the World Wide Web – and not just from a computer – phones and tablets are fast becoming the most popular way to discover all the net has to offer. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics<sup>ii</sup>, the four most popular types of online activities within this group are; paying bills or online banking, accessing government services, voice or video calls over the internet and social networking.

Here's a list of apps you should know about, and they're all free to download, unless otherwise stated.

## 1. Banking & paying bills

Most financial institutions have a mobile banking app for free download. Some are better than others – with the Commonwealth Bank's latest app released earlier this year a great example. Both CBA & NAB offer BPay QR Code scanning within their apps. You can upload BPAY payment information quickly and simply by scanning the QR code on your bill from within your mobile banking. Just one or two clicks and it's paid.

## 2. Government services

In the range of apps available from the Department of Human Services is Express Plus Seniors. Compatible with iPhone, iPad, iPod touch from the iTunes app store & Android from Google play it allows seniors a simple way to do their Centrelink business on the go using their mobile device.

## 3. Voice calls

With friends and family more widely spread across the globe than ever, phone bills can be costly – but they don't need to be. As long as the person you are calling has the same app on their mobile phone – you can speak to each other for free. One of the most popular is Viber, available on iPhone

and Android. The best thing is, once you're set up, it automatically accesses your address book and will show you everyone in there who already has the app too!

## 4. Video calls

FaceTime is an app that automatically comes loaded on your iPhone, iPad, iPod Touch<sup>iii</sup> or Mac. Wifi is a must for FaceTime, otherwise you'll struggle to make it work – or you'll face hefty data bills! If not with Apple then Skype will be your best video-calling friend. It's a little more involved - setting up an account and then finding your family and friends, but it's a small effort in order to see your loved ones on the other side of the world.

## 5. Making communication easier

If you find the keyboard too small on a smartphone try the Dragon Dictation app. This helps users send emails, texts and surf the web through accurate voice dictation and a user-friendly interface – it's available for iPhone, iPad and Android.

## 6. Social Media

There are many out there – Twitter, Instagram and Facebook! It's a great way for users to stay connected to friends and family. You can also interact with brands or products that you like – for example AusGrid post updates on Facebook when services

is down, Brands announce flash sales and special offers too. Be sure to read the privacy settings so only people you have accepted as friends can see your photos and information.

## 7. Health

If you're actively managing an illness, taking regular medication and remembering doctor's appointments this is the app for you. Med Helper – Pill Reminder and Medication Tracker, available for iPhone, iPad and Android. It helps you keep track of prescriptions, alarms remind you to take medication, and tells you when Doctors appointments are scheduled and when medications are running low or about to expire. Multiple profiles let you manage others in your care too.

## 8. The everything app

Silverline is a suite of apps created to serve seniors. Available on Apple and Google App stores, the Care Pack has been designed to make interactions intuitive and the adaption of the technology as user-friendly as possible. The Care Pack includes special Camera, Medication, Contacts, Well-being, Location and Emergency features – perfect for the less tech-savvy or older person wanting technology but not knowing where to start.

i <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/8146.0Chapter32012-13>

ii <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Latestproducts/B10BDF0266D26389CA257C89000E3FD8?opendocument>

iii \*FaceTime video calling requires an iPhone 4 or later, iPad 2 or later, iPod touch (4th generation or later) or FaceTime-enabled Mac with a Wi-Fi connection. Availability over a cellular network depends on carrier policies.

