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Special points of interest:

- [Coroner calls for review of property training program in Queensland](#)
- [Look out for Real Estate scams](#)
- [Real Estate Fraud Prevention Guidelines](#)
- [Fair Trading Blitz on Auction Procedures](#)

**New Course
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[Trust Account Breaches. A Brisbane real estate agent and her property company were fined \\$180,000 earlier this year for trust account breaches](#)

Coroner Recommends an Overhaul of the Rental Industry

A recent coronial inquest into the death of seven week old Isabella Diefenbach after she fell from her father's arms when he tripped on rotten timber boards, has called for a review of the current property management training program in Queensland to ensure that there is an appropriate amount of guidance about how to inspect decks/verandahs/stairs and what constitutes and emergency repair.

The inquest examined issues which had been highlighted by the case. These included the obligations of tenants, lessors and letting agents in respect of the maintenance and repair of residential rental properties, communication of concerns between the tenant and the managing agent, the adequacy

and timeliness of the response of the real estate agency to the identification of wood rot and the adequacy and timeliness of the landlord's response.



The Coroner also recommended the need to reinforce the importance of regularly and properly maintaining residential rental properties, the tenant's need to promptly report and document repair issues, the letting agents need to promptly report these issues to the

landlord and seek instructions and the landlords need to respond promptly with the assistance of licensed contractors.

Maurice Blackburn lawyer Gino Andrieri, who represented the Diefenbachs at the inquest said the coroners findings could see major changes to the real estate industry, "These changes will require a range of industry bodies to work together to implement, but the priority for the Diefenbach family has always been to ensure lessons are learned and that something like this can never happen to another family." To read full article [click here](#)

Warning on Real Estate Scams

A rise in real estate scams has resulted in consumers being warned about fake rental advertisements and to ensure that they visit properties and make detailed inquiries before paying money and signing leases.

A recent scam has seen a two bedroom unit in Sydney advertised for \$550 per week. The photos and wording had been copied from a reputable agent.

At the same time, a two bedroom unit in the same build-

ing was being advertised by a known agent for \$1,350 per week indicating that \$550 per week for a similar unit was too good to be true.

Real Estate Fraud Prevention Guidelines



As part of our overseas education program and support, Macdonald Education sponsored a Sri Lankan junior netball team tour to Sydney. A great time was had by all.



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The Minister for Fair Trading has announced the release of new real estate fraud prevention guidelines to combat the increase in identity fraud and scams and help real estate agents verify the identification of vendors.

This follows two incidents in 2010 and 2011 that resulted in properties being sold in Western Australia without the consent of their owners.

The new guidelines cover

- 1 Confirming the identities of the Vendors or their Representatives.
- 2 Prescribed documents that must be included with the contract of sale.
- 3 Possible Fraud Warning Signs.
- 4 What should be done if fraudulent activity is suspected.

Agents should be aware of the following warning signs; Contact details are not provided until instructions to sell a property are received; Transaction involves people located overseas; A request for funds to be sent to a different bank account to that normally used by the client; Advice is received that the sale is urgent. For more information on the Real Estate Fraud Prevention Guidelines go to NSW Government.

Blitz on Property Auction Procedure in Sydney

NSW Fair Trading has put Real Estate Agents on notice, following a recent blitz on property auctions.

Teams of Fair Trading investigators have been monitoring property auctions across Sydney's Inner West, Northern suburbs and South Western suburbs, to ensure that real estate agents are complying

with the fair trading requirements set under the Property Stock and Business Agents Act 2002.

The investigators are on alert to detect the illegal practices of deliberately under-quoting to potential buyers, over pricing to vendors and dummy bidding.

Eight agents with a total of 17 properties (30% of property files inspected) have so far been found to be non-compliant. All eight failed to keep paper records of their estimated selling price. Two of the agents are now being investigated as a result of allegations of false representations made to either the seller or prospective purchaser about the estimated value of a property.

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