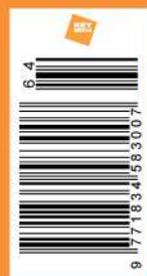


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PROPERTY INVESTORS AWARDS 2019



proudly presented by **your investment property**

We are delighted to announce the winners and finalists of the 2019 Property Investors Awards! As a celebration of the services that are integral to successful property investment, these awards recognise some of Australia's leading property professionals

2019 JUDGES



Peter Brewer
President, Real Estate Institute of Queensland



Damian Collins
President, Real Estate Institute of WA



Nerida Conisbee
Chief economist, REA Group



Kylie Davis
Board member, Property Investment Professionals of Australia



Adrian Kelly
President, Real Estate Institute of Australia



Ben Kingsley
Chairman, Property Investors Council of Australia



HERE'S THE THING about building a property portfolio and having success as an investor: you can't do it on your own. The wealthiest real estate owners know that you can't know everything yourself, so to achieve the best results you have to assemble a team of the best operators around you.

Earlier this year, *Your Investment Property* invited nominations for the second annual Property Investors Awards, which shine the spotlight on the best in the business.

The categories include agents, brokers, advisors, property managers, stylists and other specialist professions adjacent to real estate, all of whom help property buyers navigate the complex waters of investment.

Businesses were invited to submit entries directly, and our independent panel of judges – comprised of respected industry experts – were tasked with the tough job of reviewing these entries to come up with our shortlist and ultimate winners.

The Property Investors Awards seek to establish a benchmark for excellence in the industry, allowing investors to reference Australia's top performers and what they're doing right.

And now, we are proud to present the finalists and winners of the 2019 Property Investors Awards. Congratulations to everyone celebrated on the following pages!

CATEGORIES

There are eight categories of awards, recognising the range of talent across the industry



BUYER'S AGENT SERVICES



DEVELOPERS AND BUILDERS



MORTGAGE BROKERAGE



PROPERTY ADVISORS



PROPERTY MANAGEMENT



PROPERTY STYLISTS



RENOVATION SERVICES



TAX AND DEPRECIATION SERVICES



Michael Kumm
President, Real Estate
Institute of the ACT



Nicola McDougall
Director, Bricks and Mortar
Media



Melanie Mingas
Editor, *Australian Broker*
magazine



Rebecca Pike
Editor, *Mortgage Professional*
Australia magazine



Leanne Pilkington
President, Real Estate
Institute of NSW



Brett Roenfeldt
President, Real Estate
Institute of SA



Robyn Waters
President, Real Estate
Institute of Victoria



BUYER'S AGENT

WINNER:
HUNTER JAMES - BUYERS AGENTS, SYDNEY

HUNTER JAMES

Sebastian James

The number of buyers' agents entering the industry is increasing – but not all agents are created equal. While some have the runs on the board and the experience to direct investors towards quality properties, others are blindly dishing out advice without backing themselves with the knowledge and experience required to really generate strategic, lasting results.

Sebastian James, managing director of Hunter James Buyers Agents, falls firmly into the first category.

With a data-driven approach and the integration of artificial intelligence into its systems and processes,

James says his agency's approach is a cut above the rest.

"Over the past year we have adapted our service offering to better meet the high expectations of the modern property investor, achieved through a combined approach that leverages best-in-class

prop-tech solutions, along with personalised professional service that is tailored to each investor's individual circumstances, unique needs, wants and motivations," he says.

"As a boutique buyer's agency, we also have the unique advantage of being able to fully immerse ourselves in the needs of each and every valued client, creating a bespoke solution with our clients' best interests at the forefront of each and every decision. Hunter James was born to change the game for property investors by adopting a proactive and holistic client-for-life philosophy; as investors ourselves, we utilise proven research processes, evaluation and negotiation skills to ensure only the most exceptional results are achieved for all clients."

With a goal of "making the investing process simple and rewarding, giving our clients a true competitive advantage and a means to realise their dreams", Hunter James is a well-deserving winner of this category!

JUDGE'S COMMENT

"Hunter James scored top marks in their key business achievement over the last 12 months and their year-over-year growth and market share. Their positive impact on the wider community, including the HJ Give Back Campaign, also scored top marks"

Brett Roenfeldt
Real Estate Institute
of SA

- Cate Bakos Property
- House Finder
- Hunter James Buyers Agents
- Patrick Leo
- Propertybuyer
- Rethink Investing





BUILDER/DEVELOPER

WINNER: CHOICE HOMES



Over a quarter of a century ago, plumber Steve Knight and his wife Gillian, a nurse, incorporated Choice Homes as a family business on the Gold Coast. In their first year, they operated from their home garage and built three properties with 15 subcontractors.

Today, the thriving business oversees the construction of hundreds of homes every year under the guidance of CEO Troy Knight, Steve and Gillian's son.

This year, Choice Homes marked 26 successful years in the industry, servicing the Gold Coast, Logan, Brisbane, Ipswich and Beaudesert markets, as well as the major resource industry hub of Mackay. It is this longevity in the building game that helped their entry stand out from the pack.

"Choice Homes' growth has been evidenced by the number of house builds across our locations, which sees us completing an average new home every day of the week, Monday to Friday," says Ben Peasley, marketing manager at Choice Homes.

"We now build all homes with a seven-star energy rating and have introduced a solar scheme; this is a major innovation that represents a joint initiative with SunYield by Stoddart Group and puts a 6.5kW PV system on a Choice Home, integrated with a smart switchboard, app and billing system that replaces the power meter. The landlord can either sell energy direct to the tenant, or, if the tenant opts out, sell the solar power back into the grid."

It is innovations such as this that give the business a competitive edge. As it stands, the scheme generates an average of \$25 per week of electricity income (\$1,300 per year) for the investor, while tenants can expect to see annual savings of around \$275.

"We place a great deal of emphasis on product innovation and communication," Peasley says, "and that in turn has helped drive consistent sales and repeat business."

No wonder our judges were impressed!

JUDGE'S COMMENT

"The Choice Group of Companies has become a success story in its own right, whilst bolstering client service and satisfaction"

Michael Kumm
Real Estate Institute
of the ACT

Troy Knight



- AR Developments
- Choice Homes
- Perpetual Projects



MORTGAGE BROKERAGE

WINNER:
ZIPPY FINANCIAL



Louisa Sanghera



Louisa Sanghera, principal at Zippy Financial Group, has been a finalist in no fewer than 17 industry awards, taking out the top place in half a dozen categories. What makes this all the more impressive is that she's only been in the mortgage broking industry for five years.

"I have grown Zippy from being a sole broker to having a team of four, and from \$0 to a \$132m loan book in under five years, with huge growth in 2018," Sanghera explains.

"I achieved this through an innovative community marketing strategy, growing and purchasing several online community groups, which collectively afford Zippy an audience of over 100,000 members. Zippy sponsors the groups and through daily interaction and support is placed in a position of trust, making us first choice among members."

It's this innovative approach that captured our judges' attention. Sanghera drives 99% of new business through customer recommendations, which is

"a testament to our exceptional service", but the effort she pours into maintaining relationships both in person and through these online communities has been central to Zippy's success.

"In 2018, I fully mapped our customer journey and service charter and automated all systems, freeing up more time to spend with clients," she says.

"We now meet in person three times during the process and I further support them with video explainers with my voiceover to ensure full understanding. We maintain contact throughout, every two days at a minimum, so no Zippy client is ever left wondering what's happening and never has to chase us for information."

This client-first commitment extends to regular follow-up post-settlement.

Sanghera says, "I continually price clients' mortgages in the market, renegotiating better rates with their lender, which builds huge loyalty, and I love that my clients know they know they never need to shop around for a better deal."

JUDGE'S COMMENT

"Zippy is positioned to support an often overlooked market segment – women. Women influence the majority of financial decisions in the home and are often in need of additional support when it comes to their financial options after a relationship breakdown. That Zippy recognises this and goes the extra mile to connect with these clients is what really sets the business apart"

Melanie Mingas
Editor, Australian Broker



- All R Loans
- iChoice
- BF Money
- Smartline
- eLINK Finance
- Zippy Financial



PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

WINNER: RENTAL RESULTS



In the last 12 months Rental Results reached a significant milestone when it celebrated its fifth year in business.

Just as importantly, “we also reached our initial goal, which was to manage 500 properties”, explains director and principal Lauren Robinson – and they’re nowhere near finished with goal-setting yet!

Lauren Robinson



“We have grown the business predominantly through word of mouth and customer referrals, which is a testament to the level of service offered,” Robinson says.

“It has allowed our office to expand into larger premises, when we purchased a commercial office, and we’ve also introduced a number of tech-based systems and processes to improve efficiency and offer greater time savings for the team, and to better service our clients.”

Following the successful launch of her book, *Rented*, last year, Robinson has become passionate

about educating landlords and ensuring they advocate for themselves to get the best possible outcome.

“Ask any experienced property investor and they are bound to have at least one story about a property manager who didn’t do due diligence on a tenant, failed to do regular inspections, made no effort to stay in contact, ignored maintenance requests, or refunded the bond early despite the damage,” Robinson says.

“At Rental Results, we know these stories, because we hear them all the time from clients who are looking to move their investment property to our agency. Having someone who is experienced look after your asset, taking care of the day-to-day management, building a great relationship with your tenants and dealing with any issues that arise can save you a lot of time and headaches. At Rental Results, as property investors ourselves, we take our role of safekeeping one of our client’s most valuable assets seriously.”

JUDGES’ COMMENTS

“Adopting the latest technology, transparency for both investors and renters, and flexible working arrangements for staff around strong targets and rigorous measurement make this an impressive business. Its philosophy of giving back is also highly commendable”

Kylie Davis

Board member, Property Investment Professionals of Australia

“The property management industry is broadening its offerings with a new breed of service-focused agencies. The impressive growth and trading results of this year’s finalists sends a warning shot to the legion of emerging DIY and self-management apps that they have some serious competition ahead”

Peter Brewer

President, Real Estate Institute of Qld



- ACTIVE Property Services
- Blackbird and Finch
- Advantage Property Management
- Rental Results
- ARIA Living



PROPERTY ADVISOR

JOINT WINNER:
CAIFU PROPERTY



Drew Evans



Damien Lee

Caifu Property may be a relatively young business within the property advisory space, but directors Drew Evans and Damien Lee certainly have the experience and know-how to guide their clients towards financial security.

The pair, who have two decades of industry experience between them, are committed to their broad philosophy of underpromising and overdelivering, which is why they are most proud of the results they've been able to achieve for their clients.

"In 2018, our projected return for clients across all our small development opportunities was set at the conservative rate of 14% when they were presented with the deals. The actual realised result came in at 27% – almost double what clients had been anticipating," says Evans.

"We believe that the key to our success is our detailed and thorough due diligence, dependable partners and a commitment to our philosophy to plan for the worst but hope for the best. This strategic approach keeps our clients safe

and makes sure their expectations are fully met."

The quality of the partners Caifu Property chooses to work with also reduces the risk of budget blowouts and time overruns, which are two major challenges in the development space.

"We make it possible to go from property investment novice to proud owner of a profitable small development in around 18 months," Evans says.

Passionate about education, he adds, "Ultimately, knowledge is the key to making safe, profitable investment decisions. So we share our knowledge with investors before they become a client. We don't want investors with limited funds to be drained of their valuable resources to become educated, to then realise they can no longer invest because they have spent their investment funds on education... We make all of our educational content free to access, to enable property investors to capitalise on the experience we have gained over the years."

JUDGE'S COMMENT

"With the customer always in mind at every stage of the journey, Caifu has seen its loan applications for each month more than double in the last year. The group understands that most of its clients are busy professionals and so it has placed a high emphasis on its communication and making sure they are the right fit"

Rebecca Pike

Editor,
Mortgage Professional Australia



- Caifu Property**
- DPN – Direct Property Network**
- Momentum Wealth**
- Empower Wealth**
- Metropole Property Strategists**
- OpenCorp**



PROPERTY ADVISOR

**JOINT WINNER:
EMPOWER WEALTH**



In a volatile property market, access to quality, unbiased advice is essential. This is something Empower Wealth firmly believes in, and to achieve this has grown its business to a team of seven Qualified Property Investment Advisors (QPIAs), three associate advisors, and two support staff.

Ben Kingsley



With the highest concentration of QPIAs of any property advisory business in Australia, Empower has guided and helped more property investors this year than ever, at a time of falling prices and declining demand for property investment advisory services across the industry.

This last fact didn't go unnoticed by our judges, who were suitably impressed by the team's effort and commitment to providing in-depth statements of property investment advice (Property Plans).

"Our plans are the only plans in Australia that measure individual and global cash flow and property analysis for a 40-year period, by the

month," says director Ben Kingsley.

"And our plans are the only ones where the content includes over 150 pages of insights and analysis, based on each individual client's circumstances. In other words, no two plans are ever the same."

This tailored approach has helped Empower's property advisory division's revenue grow by over a third in the last year, while the group moved up the *Australian Financial Review's* Fast 100 list of the fastest-growing companies in the country for the third year in a row, landing at number 47, up from 72 in 2017 and 98 in 2016.

"As an integrated finance and property investment advisory practice, we offer specialist advice in order to create a passive income for our clients," Kingsley says.

"Although we're always looking for ways to be better, our combination of qualified and experienced professionals with market-leading innovative technology solutions means we are gaining a closer and more in-depth relationship with our clients, which can only benefit their outcomes over time."

JUDGES' COMMENTS

"Empower has shown exceptional growth ... as recognised by its improved ranking over consecutive years in the AFR's Fast 100. It has introduced a number of innovations aimed at providing an integrated finance and property investment advisory service"

Adrian Kelly
President, Real Estate
Institute of Australia

"Their work in elevating the voice of quality property advisors has been impressive. Property advisory is relatively unregulated and can attract less scrupulous advisors. Empower has been a key part of creating the Property Investors Council of Australia and done a lot to educate people about property"

Nerida Conisbee
Chief economist, REA Group



PROPERTY STYLIST

WINNER: 3 PEA'S PROPERTY STYLING



Jo Powell



The 2019 financial year has been a period of significant growth and achievement for 3 Pea's Property Styling, as the team has relocated to a larger warehouse facility to streamline logistics, in addition to launching an online homewares store.

Director Jo Powell and her team have also been engaged to style landmark rural properties across Victoria, and they've had the opportunity to stage several multimillion-dollar residences in the heart of Ballarat – as well as play a role in the presentation of a number of significant Bayside properties in Melbourne.

"Our year-on-year growth has steadily increased over the five years since our inception, and despite the entry of several new service providers in our local area and the resulting increased competition, 3 Pea's Property Styling's market share remains consistently strong at 32%," Powell says.

"Our 3 Pea's Property Styling & Homewares online store is a significant addition and is anticipated to be a substantial growth area for us. We created it in response to increasing demand from those who sell, purchase or inspect a house styled by 3 Pea's Property Styling, as the store facilitates replication of the styled look in our clients' own homes, complete with a stylist's support."

With a goal of ensuring that the property styling process is as stress-free as possible for each and every client, Powell says she and her team are committed to maintaining excellent relationships with all stakeholders, from the trades engaged to undertake maintenance, to the photographer, videographer and real estate agents engaged to list the property.

"We strongly believe that this is a key contributor to the sale outcome and client experience," Powell says.

JUDGES' COMMENTS

"3 Pea's has demonstrated consistent growth since its inception five years ago, and continually develops its offering to support its core business. The strategic addition to its offering, such as online assets, a new warehouse, social media support and their ongoing media and PR strategy, will ensure this growth continues"

Leanne Pilkington
President, Real Estate
Institute of NSW

"Development of an online homewares store to support the business allows diversification and enhances the ability to work on various property types, which reflects in the growth of the business"

Robyn Waters
President, Real Estate
Institute of WA



- 3 Pea's Property Styling
- Majestic Home Styling
- Chez B Property Styling



RENOVATION SERVICES

WINNER:
NAOMI FINDLAY PTY LTD

NAOMI FINDLAY
Rapid Renovation Expert

Naomi Findlay



Naomi Findlay has worked with hundreds of property owners over the years to help them optimise their spaces through property styling and staging. Having achieved success in a range of innovative ways, which all work seamlessly to support her core offering, Findlay captured our judges' attention.

Findlay's energy and enthusiasm for what she does was evident to the judges in the testimonials she has received across many areas, from speaking to training, to styling and the development of her app, Rapid Reno Mate.

"In the last 12 months, I've achieved so much for myself, for my students and for the renovation and home-staging industry," Findlay says.

"My key business achievements include educating hundreds of successful renovation students to reach their property goals, publishing my book, *The Start Up*

Guide to Renovating for Wealth, with sales all around the country, and I was also awarded the Rising Star Ausmumpreneur Award."

Furthermore, Findlay's app was awarded a Bronze Stevie Award for Innovation in Education and Training Apps, while her YouTube series about renovating and property, *The Reno Show*, reached over 100,000 views. She was also selected as one of the designers for Channel 10's *Changing Rooms*.

"My business has seen some amazing innovations, mass growth and uptake year-over-year, including more students and more media opportunities. Being such a new business, the numbers are still adding up, which is exciting, but we are expanding more and more as we continue to grow. Although growth for a small business is important, it is not our key business focus. Support for our students and their results are, and will always be, our focus."

JUDGES' COMMENTS

"Naomi has established her services as one of the top services in the field of renovation. The depth of content and resources for her clients is compelling and extensive and this is why her services are in demand and why she has received multiple business awards to date"

Ben Kingsley

Chairman, Property Investors Council of Australia

"Naomi's business has continued to go from strength to strength, with myriad achievements over the past year – all the while ensuring that the success of her students remains front and centre"

Nicola McDougall

Director, Bricks and Mortar Media



- Naomi Findlay Pty Ltd
- Renovating Made Easy
- Refurb 4 Profit

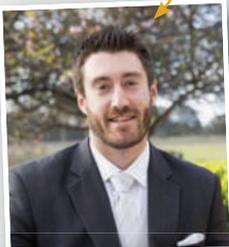


TAX AND DEPRECIATION

WINNER: WASHINGTON BROWN DEPRECIATION SPECIALISTS



Peter Foldes



Tyron Hyde

Property taxes haven't generated quite as many headlines in the past as in the last few years. First there were the major changes to depreciation laws back in 2017, then earlier this year Labor threatened to tinker with the negative gearing policy.

This has created a turbulent environment for tax specialists to navigate, but Tyron Hyde, director of Washington Brown, has turned crisis into opportunity – a fact that wasn't lost on our judges when evaluating this award.

Peter Foldes, national alliances and development manager at this category's winner, Washington Brown, says the federal budget announcement in May 2017 "significantly" changed the rules of engagement around depreciation.

"Despite this, we have seen our profits increase, largely thanks to a focus on cost-efficiency and expenditure that has led to a reduction in costs that do not support our core service or increase value for our clients," he says.

"Dedication to the customer experience has seen us achieve the 'Excellent' Net Promoter Score, frequently gaining a monthly 'World Class' status, and we've maintained our 4.9-star Google review rating through our unwavering focus on the customer."

While the total size of the market has decreased recently due to reduced investor activity, Washington Brown has produced over 11,000 reports this year so far and counting.

"We also have a report amendment policy: to better support our clients and to further increase the value of our service, clients are able to have their report updated for free to include any items purchased for their investment property within the first three years of report completion, up to a total value of \$15,000," Foldes says.

"We hope that in this way our clients are able to upgrade their properties, to secure tenants or to increase yield, without incurring additional fees to ensure they are continually receiving the maximum allowable deductions."

JUDGE'S COMMENT

"Washington Brown scored top marks in key business achievement over the last 12 months, with an impressive profit increase, also scoring top marks in year-over-year growth and the overall support they provide to their clients. This support includes two new ATO compliance reports, *Keep Claiming It* and *Upside – Only Guarantee*, and a depreciation report amendment policy – all innovative products for their clients"

Brett Roenfeldt
Real Estate Institute
of the NT



- BMT Tax Depreciation
- Washington Brown
- MCG Quantity Surveyors
- WSC Group