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Decluttering and downsizing during self-isolation

Does self-isolation have you dreaming of decluttering and moving to a new home?

In these Covid-19 times of strict social distancing and home isolation, a change can be as good as a holiday.

For South Australians aged over 55 seeking a lifestyle change, now is the perfect time to begin planning your next move.

Nat Johncock, Real Estate Services Manager at retirement living provider ACH Group, says much of the groundwork can now be done from the comfort of your couch.

Plan now

“As a result of the pandemic, we’re spending more time in our own homes than ever before,” Ms Johncock said.

“We’re seeing our homes in a new light, perhaps good and bad, and for those approaching retirement, it now may have become apparent that their current home is not really fit for the future.

“With extra time on our hands, this really is a perfect time to nail that wish list for what you would like in your next home.”

- Are you seeking to downsize to an affordable low maintenance lifestyle?
- Do you want somewhere to indulge in your love of gardening or is low maintenance more important to you so you can spend time doing the things you love?
- Do you really need a third bedroom or would two suffice? Remember, you’re downsizing!
- What about guest or grandchildren overnight stays?

It’s also worth taking into consideration how well your home will accommodate your needs as you age. For example, limiting the number of steps or stairs in the home.

“If you are a couple, your partner may have differing views, so communicating and agreeing on a list of essential and non-essential features is a great way to start,” she said.

“Once you have a wishlist you can more effectively search what’s on offer.”

Budgeting

There can be a whole range of lifestyle reasons why downsizing is an appealing option.

“One key indicator may be that your income no longer matches the expenses of your current home, especially if it’s ageing and needs a lot of maintenance,” Ms Johncock said.

“If you’re looking to free up some cash, downsizing to a smaller, easier-to-maintain home is a really great option.

“If you have a home to sell, it is actually a great time to obtain a market appraisal from a good real estate agent (preferably one which has been recommended to you by a friend or family member). Understanding the current value of your home is a crucial step in setting a budget for your next purchase. Real estate agents are still able to provide you with an appraisal during Covid-19 restrictions.”

Start decluttering

Preparing for downsizing is likely to involve some form of declutter.

While most people welcome the concept, the thought of having to deal with all the belongings collected over the years can be daunting.

“Taking small steps is an ideal way to start and being in isolation provide us with time on our hands,” she said.

“Even if you’re not ready to move just yet, your home life will likely be all the better for it.”

Virtual inspections

Community restrictions on social gatherings has ACH Group experiencing a sharp rise in virtual inspections.

“Virtual inspections are a great way of taking in key aspects of a property at any time of day or night,” Ms Johncock said.

“You can invite friends and family along to take a look and provide their opinion.

“With all this information and assistance now available at your fingertips, or at the end of a phone, making the move to your new home is very achievable in self-isolation.”

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