

**Writing Sample: Damian Clarke**

**Brief: Short blog post to be used by mortgage brokers to inform potential clients and invite enquiries**

**Ultimate client: Loan Market**

**Publication: Various Loan Market websites**

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## **So you want to buy an apartment**

### **Convenient, trouble free, easy living**

Apartments are great – someone else does maintenance, security is good and you can close the door and head away without a care. Right? Yes, if you choose carefully.

### **Location, location. Location! It's a cliché for a reason**

Look where you want to live but also test your assumptions against objective criteria. Have you really looked at everywhere three kilometres from the city, or are you discriminating? Rough areas are usually nicer than you think. Expensive places have pockets that are cheaper than you think.

### **Test the location against your needs**

#### **If you're buying to live there...**

Spend a morning or a weekend in your new neighbourhood. Park your car and walk around as if you were walking to the shops from home. Have a coffee, visit the library, buy a paper and some fruit, take the kids to the park, try the night life – do the things you like to do.

On a weekday, get up early and try your commute from your proposed new home. Is the bus so crowded that you can't get on? Is the railway station a zoo? Is it really walking distance from work? Test the same assumptions about the school trip and your weekly shop.

#### **If you're buying as an investment...**

Do people rent here? How long do properties stay on the market? Pretend to be a renter and try to rent an apartment like yours. A queue for an inspection is a good sign, a lonely estate agent is a warning sign.

### **You've found the place – now do your homework**

#### **Off-the-plan and new Builds**

New builds have no history and off-the-plan have less! Visit completed projects by the same developer or builder to see how they are aging – many big developers and builders list their past achievements on their websites.

Be aware that when you buy off the plan the developer has the option to change the size and design of your lot during construction so buy from a developer with a good track record.

### Existing property

Read the strata report carefully. Company title and tenants in common properties will have less information available. The age of the building is important as there are generally issues every 20-25 years when waterproofing membranes deteriorate, external windows can fail and owners start to refresh or renovate their kitchens and bathrooms. Look for evidence that repairs have been managed well.

Look for cues in the condition of the building – including a walk down the fire escape and through the carpark – that indicate good management. A welcoming foyer, neat balconies, orderly carpark, a pleasant smell and a vacant visitors parking spot or two are all good signs. There are some good tips [here](#), and [here](#) and [Flat Chat](#) is a good resource, particularly for understanding admin issues.

Also ask the neighbours what it's like to live in the building. It's amazing how much a disgruntled neighbour can tell you.

Above all, if it feels wrong for you, it is wrong for you. Buy what you feel comfortable with.