



Readers' Choice Awards 2011

Which service providers boosted you to property success?

Our readers have spoken and the winners are...

Our annual Readers' Choice Awards have returned with a bang. This year we received an unprecedented number of entries, as readers rushed to vote for the property professionals they deemed to have best spurred on their success.

The awards are sponsored by the Property Investment Professionals of Australia (PIPA) – the industry watchdog, which looks after consumer interests and provides training. This is the fourth year the awards are being run and serves as the perfect platform for readers to acknowledge the investment advisors they considered the most insightful, dedicated and client focused.

The categories for 2011 included mortgage broker, tax specialist, buyer's agent, property manager, real estate agent and property investment advisor. Winners were decided by the highest number of unique votes cast for a candidate in a given category.

All winners have the skills and ethics needed to succeed in the property industry. They go above and beyond the call of duty, and help their clients make informed decisions to achieve their investment goals.

This year, five lucky voters won prize packs to the value of \$5,839. *Your Investment Property* magazine congratulates Meg Bracken, Kim Pavlyukovsky, Ramzan Khan, Andrew Miller and Lynne Hendry for being hand-picked by PIPA as this year's winners.

All Readers' Choice winners receive PIPA corporate membership and a National Suburb Scorecard Report from RP Data. They also receive 12-month PriceFinder PRO, Real Estate Investor and nmddata.com.au memberships.



PROPERTY INVESTMENT ADVISOR OF THE YEAR

Michael Yardney, Metropole Property Strategists

"Good advisors are not theorists, they're active investors. They've been able to learn from their own mistakes"

Michael Yardney, 2011 Property Investment Advisor of the Year, believes that good property investing starts with educating yourself. For the Metropole Property Investment Strategists' CEO and author of five books on property, this means learning from people who are unbiased and independent and have been through all the possible hurdles themselves.

"The best investment advisor is somebody who is actually successful," says Yardney. "Good advisors are not theorists, they're active investors. They've got a perspective that one only gets from having learnt from their own mistakes."

Yardney adds that learning from the right people can give an investor the depth and perspective needed to keep them from being side-tracked by much of the noise in the market.

"Investors must remember to take a long-term view. It's easy to get distracted by the little things going on in the market but you might miss the bigger picture. In this flat market, you should buy properties for strong capital growth – properties you can renovate and add value to – but don't

be in too much of a hurry. Don't take only a short-term focus."

Yardney bemoans the fact that the Australian property market of late has been the subject of a lot of mixed messages. Many pundits, particularly those from overseas, have forecast a drop in property values and say that markets will not go up for a significant time.

Others say markets are set to boom. Such uncertainty has made some investors nervous, with many more feeling stuck in the mud, unsure of what to do.

While a good investment advisor can help insulate an investor from many of these outside factors, Yardney advises that you should develop a good mastermind group. This would be a group of like-minded friends – investors with similar interests and priorities, who can talk and communicate with each other about going on in the market.

Whatever recommendations an investor may get, Yardney suggests keeping in mind that entering the market at the right time has as much a personal element to it as an economic one.

"Too many people want to buy property when they're not really ready. There is nothing wrong with waiting for a while and saving a little more in the meantime."

Yardney is no stranger to the possibilities that await the patient investor. He bought his first investment property 39 years ago, aged 20, and has built this into a multi-million dollar portfolio.

He has since become regularly featured on radio and as a keynote speaker at many major property conferences in Australia and South East Asia.



MORTGAGE BROKER OF THE YEAR

**Rolf Schaefer,
Metropole
Property
Strategists**

“Don’t get too fixed on price... Rather buy nothing than a third-grade property going at a great price”

Rolf Schaefer, our Mortgage Broker of the Year winner for the second year in a row, has a wealth of knowledge on property investment and finance, and structuring. The financial services professional is director at Metropole Finance and has decades of property investment experience.

Schaefer says that good investment decisions require composure. “At the moment, a lot of buyers are being lured into making poor property purchase decisions simply because the properties are cheap. I’d urge any potential buyer not to get too fixed on price. Be patient. Rather buy nothing than a really third-grade property that’s going at a great price.”

He adds that when getting a mortgage broker’s assistance in choosing the most suitable type of loan, look for a broker who is a property investor themselves. “Many mortgage brokers don’t have the personal experience of going through the process of buying properties. I think it’s vital that a mortgage broker owns investment properties and knows what it is like to be in their client’s position.”

Schaefer has been investing in property since the early 1990s and has grown a substantial portfolio that encompasses three states of Australia as well as some areas overseas.

He entered the realm of professional property investment in 2001, he says, as an escape from the more traditional corporate world of big name accountancy firms.

“I’ve always seen property as a cornerstone of my own investment strategy, so making the move to helping other investors was natural. To win this award for a second year is a great vote of confidence.”



REAL ESTATE AGENT OF THE YEAR

**Ian Hosking
Richards, Rocket
Property Group**

“It’s important to start the [property investment] process and learn through practical experience”

Australia’s favourite real estate agent Ian Hosking Richards is no stranger to a good investment strategy. He bought his first investment property 12 years ago with an initial \$20,000 deposit and has since built a multi-million dollar portfolio of over 30 properties. Hosking Richards is a qualified property investment advisor, has a diploma in financial services and has real estate licences in Queensland and NSW. He is also the CEO and founder of the Rocket Property Group.

Hosking Richards says that the starting point for any good property investment should be thorough research. Thereafter, investors need to take action. “Too many people get bogged down in the detail and don’t move forwards. You can’t know everything before you get started, so it’s important to start the process and learn through practical experience.”

He adds that investment decisions often come to a point where people need to take a leap of faith.

“The basics need to be mastered, but if you are the type of person who needs to know absolutely everything before you take action, you will probably never end up buying anything.” This is the third year that

Hosking Richards has been voted Readers’ Choice Real Estate Agent of the Year, to which he is delighted. “I feel honoured to win this award for a third time. While I am the face of Rocket, it is very much a team effort and I have a fantastic team behind me. Every vote for me is a vote for the whole team.”



PROPERTY MANAGER OF THE YEAR

**Melissa Johnson,
Capital 360**

“A good property manager communicates well and knows what their clients want”

Melissa Johnson, a Capital 360 senior property manager and licensed real estate agent, has always had a passion for property. She purchased her first property at age 20 and says that she joined the industry because she enjoys helping other people achieve their investment goals.

“I’ve always loved customer service,” she says. “I believe that a good property manager is someone that communicates well and knows what their clients want. It is all about helping people make the decisions that will work best for them.”

Johnson joined the industry straight after finishing high school, aged 17. She quickly gained experience in residential real estate and after a year became a Queensland property manager – a role she has filled for the last five years.

She says that the key to a sound property investment strategy is to do lots of homework. “Many buyers focus only on price, but the cheapest is not always the best. It can sometimes be the opposite. You should always do lots of research and get many opinions. You can make money in this industry if you make the right choices.”



TAX SPECIALIST OF THE YEAR



Shukri Barbara,
Property Tax
Specialists

“The best tax advisors listen to their clients and ... get the message across without leaving people feeling confused and uneasy”

Shukri Barbara has been a certified public accountant for over 30 years. He is a principal advisor at Property Tax Specialists where he advises property investors on asset protection and minimising their tax liabilities.

He takes pride in providing property investors with a unique outlook on opportunities and investment decisions, which he says comes from broad business experience and a post graduate degree in marketing.

“It is very exciting to receive an award for Tax Specialist of the Year. It’s fantastic news and it feels great to get recognition for hard work.”

Barbara believes that when it comes to property needs, tax advisory is a people’s game. Accounting and tax services are technical fields, but a good property specialist will not overload their customers with industry jargon.

“The best tax advisors listen to their clients and communicate with them at their level. They get the message across without leaving people feeling confused and uneasy.

“They also understand that different people at various stages of life have different needs, and will advise people according to what their particular situation is at the time,” explains Barbara.

BUYER’S AGENT OF THE YEAR



George Kafantaris,
Metropole
Property
Strategists

George Kafantaris is on a winning streak. For an unprecedented fourth year in a row, he has been voted Readers’ Choice Buyer’s Agent of the Year.

“I am humbled to win this award once again,” he says. “Whenever I have won this award, it has always been a great time for reflection. I’d like to believe I’ve won these awards for being genuine and approachable.”

Kafantaris is a chartered accountant and a qualified property investment advisor at the Property Investment Professionals of Australia. He is also a director of Metropole Property Strategists and has a Bachelor of Business in Accountancy and a Queensland real estate licence.

In his opinion, a great property buyer has their client’s best interests at heart, not their own. “A buyer’s agent is not a transaction, it’s a relationship. If an agent simply asks, ‘what do you want and what’s your price range?’ they’re not a buyer’s agent. The best buyer’s agents provide independent, unbiased advice for their clients.”

Another key ingredient is the ability to help clients sift through the minefield of marketing material presented at seminars, on the internet and just about everywhere else. There are numerous ways to create an investment strategy, and a buyer’s agent should help clients develop one that suits their needs.

This, however, is only half the job. As important as a strategy may be, it is only the beginning, says Kafantaris. Investors need to review their strategies and portfolios on a yearly basis because markets and expectations can change.

“If investors constantly review their strategy, they can factor changes in and avoid any knee-jerk reactions.”

READERS’ PRIZE WINNERS
Congratulations to the lucky voters:

- Meg Bracken**
- Kim Pavlyukovsky**
- Ramzan Khan**
- Andrew Miller**
- Lynne Hendry**



They each win a prize pack worth \$5,839, including:

- a 12-month PriceFinder single membership valued at \$1,980
- a 12-month platinum membership to NMD Data valued at \$199
- a 15-month Michael Yardney mentorship program valued at \$2,295
- My Knowledge access from Real Estate Investar valued at \$850
- a selection of myrpdata reports of your choice from RP Data valued at up to \$200
- a 12-month subscription pack including *Your Investment Property*, *Your Money* and *Your Mortgage* magazines worth a total of \$315

THE READERS’ CHOICE AWARDS JUDGE



Margaret Lomas
is chair of Property Investment Professionals of Australia (PIPA),

and judged this year’s Readers’ Choice Awards.

PIPA was formed by industry practitioners with the objective of representing all stakeholders in the property investment industry. Members subscribe to a strict code of conduct and the organisation acts as a watchdog to protect consumers. Visit www.pipa.asn.au