

# extra edge, in style

ture], they're getting prices far beyond their expectations."

Mr Luttrell said home owners often didn't have objective views about their own homes.

"The most common issue is excess stuff. People have so much stuff lying about that they generally don't need," he said.

"We've been through properties where it's almost like a museum ... and we've had to convince the owner to pack some of it away."

Mr Luttrell said he has had to overcome the perception that the service is only for high-end properties.

Shift By Design charges \$295 for a two-hour in-home consultation.

In the past they've recommended clients move furniture, de-clutter rooms, organise cupboards, paint walls and fix leaky taps.

Mr Luttrell said some clients had spent between \$500 and \$20,000 adopting recommendations to improve the presentation of their homes.

"But that's quite often overcome by the result in the sale price," he said.

Milton Lowe is another operator in this emerging industry.

He started his real estate photography business, PropertyPIX, five years ago after working as a real estate agent for 16 years.

"It took a long time for agents to be convinced to use me, but there has definitely been a swing," he said.

"There is a stark difference between professional photos and photos taken by a [real estate] agent.

"Photos are the foundation of your whole marketing campaign.

"They go on the internet, in newspapers and in agent windows."

Like home stylists, Mr Lowe argues that the professional touch isn't just for expensive properties.

"Even if a house is only \$250,000, we need to show it in the best possible way," he said.

"If you get more inquiries, you'll probably get more offers and hopefully



**DIFFERENT WORLDS:** A cluttered room, above, assumes a more inviting appearance after a pre-sale makeover; and a bedroom, below, is given a clearout to attract buyers.



### TIPS FOR PRESENTING YOUR HOME

- Reduce clutter and maximise floor space.
- Clean up and pack away kids' toys.
- Remove personal objects such as excessive amounts of family photos and football memorabilia.
- Clean all surfaces in the kitchen and bathrooms, as well as windows.
- Eliminate odours from pets, cigarettes and cooking.
- Even though you live there, remember buyers are imagining their lives in your home.

**"People have so much stuff lying about that they generally don't need"**

these measures bring in the buyers.

Her company offers vendors a \$200 voucher to use on anything that will improve the appearance of their home before it goes on the market.

"We've had people put pebbles in their driveway, steam clean carpets and do lawns," she said.

These measures help reduce the number of faults potential buyers can identify and use to justify low offers.

Ms Hampson also encouraged vendors to have professionally produced videos made.

She employs a former television advertising videographer to make the films, which cost about \$500.

But Real Estate Institute of Tasmania chief

executive officer Martin Harris wasn't convinced of the need for measures like home styling and professional imagery, despite the depressed market.

"These things may make a difference but I would doubt it would make a massive difference," he said.

"Anything you can do is worth giving it a try, but I don't really believe any one of these things will be the magic bullet that sells your house overnight."

Mr Harris said vendors needed to be realistic about their sales approach.

"If someone is interested in your property, they're interested regardless of if you've got some bread baking in the oven or music playing in the background," he said.

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