



Downsize Detail

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS

A FREE PLANNER FOR SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS HOMEOWNERS

The Two Month Countdown.

The week by week plan for getting a Highlands home ready to sell, in the order the research says works.

Clearing a long held home takes about two months done properly. Bowral homes take about three months to sell. Print this, put it on the fridge, start before the agent does.

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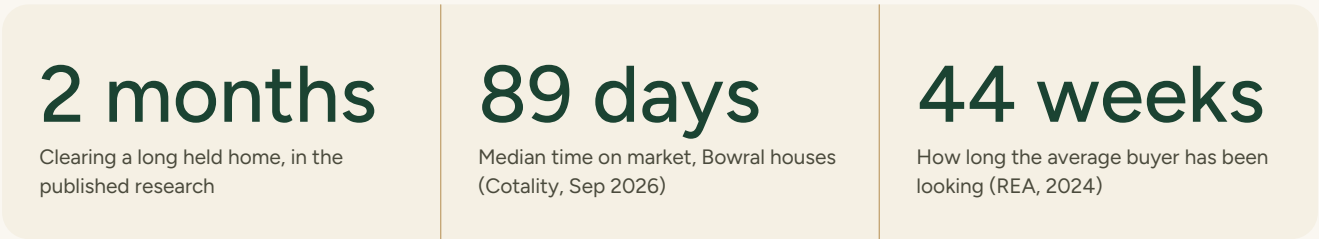
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WHY TWO MONTHS

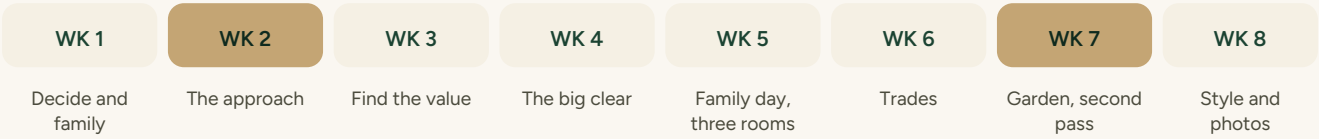
The timeline nobody gives you.

Agents tell you when the photographer is coming. Nobody tells you how long it takes to be ready. Most vendors find out in the last fortnight, with a skip in the driveway and a lifetime of decisions still to make.

Researchers who interviewed households after they had cleared a long held home found the job took about two months and ran in the same order almost every time: the big furniture and the family pieces first, then everything else sorted into keep, sell, give, donate and dispose. The people who felt best afterwards were the ones who knew their things had gone somewhere they would be used.



The eight weeks at a glance. Gold weeks are the ones the research says move the price most.



The order matters more than the speed. Family before the skip. Sell before dispose. Clear before styling. If you run out of time, do the weeks in order and stop where you must.

WEEK 1

Decide what stays. Walk it with the family.

The big decisions come first. Once the meaningful things are settled, everything else is just sorting.

- ☐ Walk every room, shed and storage area once with a notepad. Sort nothing yet.
- ☐ List what is coming to the next home. Measure it against the new floor plan.
- ☐ List what is promised to family. Ring them now. Collection date is week five.
- ☐ Photograph anything that might be valuable. You will want the photos in week three.

WEEK 2

The approach. What the buyer sees from the road.

Street presentation is worth up to 7 percent of sale price in published research. Highest value work on the list, so it goes early.

- ☐ Clear the driveway, carport and front verandah of everything that is not a car or a chair.
- ☐ Trailers, boats, machinery and materials out of sight of the road.
- ☐ Mow, edge, mulch, sweep. Book the gardener now for weeks two and seven.
- ☐ Walk to the gate and turn around. That is the first photo on realestate.com.au.

WEEK 3

Find the value before anything goes in a skip.

Owners value their own things at about double what a buyer will pay, so guessing fails in both directions. The shed is usually worth more than the lounge room.

- ☐ Shed and garage first: tools, machinery, mowers, trailers, camping and fishing gear hold value.
- ☐ Antiques, signed art, jewellery, watches, coins, medals and collections go to an auction house for an opinion.
- ☐ Be honest about brown furniture. The 1988 dining suite is a donation and that is fine.
- ☐ More than a car boot of sellable items? Organise a contents sale now, not a dozen online listings.



HALFWAY

The point where most vendors are still deciding, you are clearing.

WEEK 4

The big clear. Sheds, garage, under house, spare rooms.

The week that gives the buyer back whole rooms. Brain imaging research shows objects in view compete for attention, so a full garage is not seen as a garage at all.

- ☐ Value is already set aside. What remains is keep, donate or dispose.
- ☐ Book the skip for the end of the week, not the start. An early skip swallows things that should have sold.
- ☐ Donate well. The op shops in Bowral, Mittagong and Moss Vale take good furniture and homewares.
- ☐ Spare room back to a bedroom. Garage back to a garage. Nothing in the shed but the shed.

WEEK 5

Family collection day and the three rooms that matter.

A 2025 survey of 1,266 agents found buyers imagine themselves in the living room, the main bedroom and the kitchen. Make those three rooms feel like rooms again.

- ☐ Family collect what was promised. Anything not collected by Sunday goes to the sale or donation pile.
- ☐ Living room: remove a third of the furniture. One object per surface.
- ☐ Main bedroom: bed, two side tables, nothing on the floor, wardrobe half empty.
- ☐ Kitchen: benches and fridge front clear. Pack the personal photographs.

WEEK 6

Trades. The list every agent carries.

Trades quote higher the moment they sense a deadline. Booked in week one, done in week six, after the clutter is gone and they can reach the work.

- ☐ Paint touch ups on scuffed walls, doors and skirting.
- ☐ Gutters, downpipes, the cracked tile, the dripping tap, the sticking door.
- ☐ Every globe working. Windows cleaned inside and out. In the Highlands the light is the selling point.
- ☐ Anything the agent flagged at the appraisal. Ask for the list again.

WEEK 7

Garden, exterior and the second walk to the gate.

The second pass outside, now the sheds and trades are done. This is where the up to 7 percent is banked.

- ☐ Gardener's second visit: lawns, hedges, beds, paths.
- ☐ Pressure wash paths, driveway edges, verandah boards and front steps.
- ☐ One good outdoor setting. Remove the rest. A table set for two reads as a lifestyle.
- ☐ Walk to the gate again. Compare with the week two photo.

WEEK 8

Styling, the final clean and the photographer.

Styling a cluttered home is decoration. Styling a cleared home is presentation. Only now does it earn its money.

- ☐ Stylist in or fresh linen, a few plants and one bowl of fruit.
- ☐ Professional clean the day before photos. Not the day of.
- ☐ Cars, bins, hoses and the dog out of every photograph. Every blind up, every light on.
- ☐ Keep it this way. Bowral homes take about three months to sell and every open home starts at the gate again.

NEXT STEPS

Two free ways to find out where your property stands.

If you would rather not run the countdown yourself, Downsize Detail project manages all eight weeks, to one fixed price after one visit, with one point of contact from first walk through to settlement. Start with whichever of these suits you.

FREE · 2 MINUTES · NO OBLIGATION

Get your free property scorecard and personalised report.

Sixteen quick questions about your home and your timeline. You get a score across the five areas that decide what a Highlands home sells for, plus a personalised report on what to fix first.

Go to downsizedetail.com.au and take the **Sell For More Scorecard**.

FREE · 15 MINUTES · PERSONALISED

Book a free 15 minute personalised video call.

Talk through your property with Downsize Detail and hear what it needs, in what order and roughly what it involves. No forms, no pressure. If it is not for you, you still leave with a plan.

Go to downsizedetail.com.au and book your **free 15 minute video call**.

Prefer to talk now? Call Downsize Detail on **0434 395 387**.

Bowral, Mittagong, Moss Vale, Robertson and the Southern Highlands.



WHERE THE NUMBERS COME FROM

The research behind this guide.

We only quote figures we can point to. Every study below is published and peer reviewed unless marked otherwise. Local market figures are dated because they move.

Ekerdt, D., Sergeant, J., Dingel, M. and Bowen, M. (2004). Household Disbandment in Later Life. *Journals of Gerontology Series B*, 59(5). About two months, in a predictable order.

Johnson, E., Tidwell, A. and Villupuram, S. (2020). Valuing Curb Appeal. *Journal of Real Estate Finance and Economics*, 60. Street presentation worth up to 7 percent.

Kahneman, D., Knetsch, J. and Thaler, R. (1990). Experimental Tests of the Endowment Effect and the Coase Theorem. *Journal of Political Economy*, 98(6).

McMains, S. and Kastner, S. (2011). Interactions of Top Down and Bottom Up Mechanisms in Human Visual Cortex. *Journal of Neuroscience*, 31(2).

2025 Profile of Home Staging, survey of 1,266 real estate agents, February 2025. Industry survey.

realestate.com.au Property Seeker Survey 2024, 13,400 Australian respondents. Industry survey.

Cotality (formerly CoreLogic) suburb data, Bowral 2576, twelve months to September 2026.

General information for Southern Highlands homeowners, not financial, legal or valuation advice. Market figures are correct at the date shown and will change. Research findings describe averages across the studied groups, not a promise about any individual property. Photography shows Southern Highlands properties prepared by Downsize Detail.