

WARNING: READ THIS BEFORE MAKING AN OFFER ON A STANDARD RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY IN AUSTRALIA

Buying a home is exciting, but it can be stressful and expensive if something goes wrong. This quick guide helps you avoid common mistakes. Rules vary by state/territory, so always chat with a solicitor, conveyancer, or your Owlfinance broker before signing anything.

1. Deposits and Cooling-Off Period

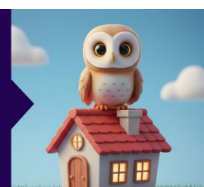
- Keep your initial deposit low: \$1,000 - \$2,000
- Never pay more than 10% total deposit, we recommend negotiating a 5% deposit.
- Cooling-off lets you change your mind (only for private sales, not auctions). Length and penalty vary:
 - NSW, QLD, ACT: Usually 5 business days (lose 0.25% if you back out).
 - VIC: 3 business days (0.2%).
 - SA: 2 business days.
 - WA & TAS: No automatic cooling-off (ask to add one).
 - NT: Up to 4 business days in some cases. It starts when you sign (or when contracts are exchanged/signed by both sides — check your state). Use this time to sort finance and inspections.

2. Finance Clause — Protect Yourself

Pre-approval is not the same as final approval. Don't go unconditional on finance unless your loan-to-value ratio (LVR) is super low (under 60-70%) and you're 100% sure.

Make your offer SUBJECT TO FINANCE. This means if your bank says no, you can walk away without losing your deposit. We recommend requesting '14 days to get finance approval'.

3. Settlement Timing



- Aim for 60 days or more from contract date (gives time for finance).
- Avoid Fridays — banks get busy, delays happen, and you could face extra penalties or removalist costs.
- Monday–Thursday is usually smoother. Discuss shorter times with your broker.

4. Building and Pest Inspections

This is one of the best ways to protect yourself. Standard clauses often only let you cancel for "major" issues (big structural problems or serious pest infestations). Minor problems (like small cracks or old termite marks) might not count.

Make your offer SUBJECT TO BUILDING AND PESDT INSPECTION. This means if there are problems, you can walk away without losing your deposit. We recommend adding this clause 'This contract is subject to the buyer getting a building inspection report within 7–14 days that's satisfactory to the buyer'.

5. Hidden Building Work or Problems

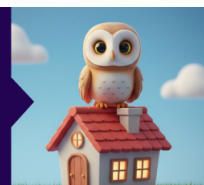
Sellers don't always have to tell you about unapproved additions or old permits. Do a council search to check what was approved vs. what's actually there. Unauthorized work could mean expensive fixes or council orders later — and you'd pay if it happens after you buy.

6. What's Included (Chattels/Stuff)

Make sure the contract lists everything staying (lights, curtains, floor coverings, appliances). Take photos on inspection day. Test appliances work and note it in an email.

7. Pools, Spas, Rubbish, Solar Panels

- Pools/spas: Most states require registration and safe fences/barriers. Check with the council — make the seller prove it's compliant.
- Rubbish: Minor rubbish is acceptable, but heaps of junk? Add a clause to make seller clean up.
- Solar panels: Add a clause saying they're paid off and not leased/encumbered.



8. Title Insurance (Optional Extra)

One-off insurance that covers hidden title surprises (e.g., boundary errors). Not essential, but worth considering for peace of mind.

9. Foreign investors and temporary residents

Foreign buyers usually need FIRB approval first. Big penalties if you skip it — check:

<https://foreigninvestment.gov.au/>

10. Check the Size and Boundaries

The contract usually includes a title search or plan showing the property's measurements and boundaries. Walk around and measure key spots (like from the corner of the street) to make sure it matches what you see. Especially important in streets with similar-sized blocks — you don't want to buy the wrong lot! Small differences might not let you cancel, but big ones could give you options (like compensation or pulling out).

Summary:

- Private sale? **ALWAYS** add **subject to finance** and **subject to building & pest inspection** clauses.
- Get a solicitor/conveyancer: <https://www.owlfinance.com.au/conveyancer/>
- Get a building & pest inspector: <https://www.owlfinance.com.au/building-and-pest-inspection/>
- Talk to Owlfinance before you commit — we help make sure finance lines up and conditions are solid.

Disclaimer: This is general information only — not legal or financial advice. Rules change and vary by state. Always get professional help tailored to you. Contact Owlfinance for your finance questions!
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