

# Boss women: The feminine touch in property

With corporations still working to overcome a culture of gender bias, many women in Australia are choosing to explore self-employment through property – and they’re killing it. **Jacqueline So** reports



**WOMEN** are gaining ground all over the world as powerhouses in business. Even traditionally male-dominated spheres are experiencing a growing feminine presence as, with greater opportunities, women are being given the platform to show they are just as capable as their male counterparts.

The property scene in Australia is a great example of this. We are increasingly seeing women move to the top of their careers in real estate and related

industries such as finance and mortgage broking.

With dynamic experts like REA Group chief economist Nerida Conisbee and HashChing board advisor and COO Siobhan Hayden – former CEO of the Mortgage & Finance Association of Australia – leading the way, women are providing leadership and insights in a generally male-dominated industry, helping to drive innovation and inclusivity along the way.

The property industry also provides a platform

for women to create their own businesses and leave their own mark, with dozens of renovation companies, trades services, buyers’ agencies and other related businesses being set up with females at the helm.

So, what is pushing women to such dizzying heights in the world of property?

According to the June 2019 quarter Women’s Index published by Financy and Data Digger, women in Australia are still waiting for economic equality to

become a reality, as a result of middling levels of full-time employment opportunities for women and slow appointment to leadership positions in the top 200 listed companies.

“The superannuation gender gap widens significantly by 45 years of age because of time spent out of the workforce raising children, so women still need to have a plan for making extra contributions later in their working life,” says AMP financial planning advisor Dianne Charman.



## WOMEN IN CONSTRUCTION

- The building and construction industry will need around 300,000 more participants over the next decade.
- Master Builder Australia has developed a mentoring program that aims to encourage women who are starting out in building and construction.
- The program seeks to close the gender gap in terms of pay and provide a clear career path for females in construction.



This may be a reason why many women have felt motivated to strike out on their own in order to get their due.

In the Labour Force Survey

women in Australia are actually entrepreneurs, with 34.9% of all business owner-managers being female. Over 46,000 women

and networking opportunities online to grow their brands.

Property investment has also become a great way for women to generate income without having to feel like they're sacrificing work-life balance, given its flexible nature and relatively open playing field in which gender is generally no barrier to results.

Property Council of Australia CEO Ken Morrison adds that its '500 Women in

Property' initiative is an effort to champion women in the industry who it believes would benefit from further networking, profiling and professional development opportunities.

He says the council aims to support emerging female professionals, as this is "pivotal to achieving gender diversity in the property industry".

"There are a thousand different jobs you can do in the property industry," Morrison says. "It's exciting, it's dynamic, meaningful, and you're involved in creating communities for future generations." ➤

**"Property is exciting, dynamic, meaningful, and you're involved in creating communities for future generations"**

released in time for 2019 Women's Day, the Australian Bureau of Statistics notes that 12.1% of employed

established their own businesses in just the past year, taking advantage of the ease of communication



# 2020 vision: Women in property

We canvassed a handful of high-achieving women in the property and finance industry and asked: what do you love about real estate, and how do you think property has the power to change people's lives?



"I am actively encouraging women to step up and get involved in the issues that matter to our industry, to take themselves out of their comfort zone and challenge themselves to take their careers to the next level, to step up and take board positions, and to speak on panels and at conferences"

*Leanne Pilkington, managing director, Laing+Simmons, and president, Real Estate Institute of NSW*



"As a renovator I often found that the tradies wanted to talk to the 'decision-maker, not the little lady'. Little did they know! When it is my house, my reno, it is my decision. We managed to correct some of those opinions quickly, and seeing the number of women in mortgage broking and working as property educators grow has been refreshing!"

*Jane Slack-Smith, founder of Your Property Success*



"Education truly is the secret to success. I've been able to educate many women around the maze of lending options available to them to reap the rewards of competitive interest rates and mortgage products, and as a mentor I have 'paid it forward' and mentored over 150 start-ups - many of them women - in their own finance broking careers"

*Nancy Youssef, CEO of Classic Finance Group*



"I love what property represents to people by way of a home's warm and nurturing environment that is your own personal haven. I'm also passionate about using property in a tangible way to create wealth and prepare for the future. There is something secure about having bricks and mortar in your portfolio that can offer a return each month, plus offer capital growth over time"

*Amy Sanderson, head of property investment management at LJ Hooker International*

The ABS notes that 12.9% of employed women in Australia are actually entrepreneurs, with 34.8% of all business owner-managers being female



**"I'm so passionate about property because I see it as a great way for people to build wealth. I really have a strong desire to help women achieve financial independence and improve their financial futures – especially helping single mums and divorced women to get back on their feet following relationship breakdowns"**

*Louisa Sanghera, managing director of Zippy Financial Group*



**"I love property with a passion. I'm a big believer that 'a man is not a retirement plan', and I hope that I have inspired other women to have a go, to not rely on a husband or partner to create the wealth, and to provide an opportunity for women to learn about property investing – so that they can do it too for themselves"**

*Helen Collier-Kogtevs, managing director of Real Wealth Australia*



**"Women are often said to be more in touch with their emotions and the emotions of others. Too often, particularly with investors, we hear that decisions shouldn't be made with emotions; they should be made with numbers. Yet emotion plays such a huge part ... by understanding that other players in the market are also driven by emotion, we can work out how to capitalise on that. It is key to really mastering the property game"**

*Veronica Morgan, principal of Good Deeds Property Buyers*



**"You can't be what you can't see. So I hope that any women in real estate reading this can hold on to their vision of whatever they want to achieve in their career, whether they are a receptionist, sales PA, property manager or salesperson, because other women have gone before them and created it"**

*Miriam Sandkuhler, CEO of Property Mavens*



**"I've always felt incredibly rewarded by property. It's something I've been physically able to see for the commitment and hard work I've put in, particularly from a renovation perspective. Although my strategy has remained consistent, every deal provides a new challenge or option to try something new, talk to new people and visit/research new areas. I've experienced the various benefits of investing in property numerous times, and that certainly helps fuel the passion even more!"**

*Crystal Palmer, 2017 Strategic Investor of The Year, Your Investment Property magazine*