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INTERESTING TIMES

In all the years I have been involved in the property industry I cannot recall a more crazy time. A lot of investors are just watching, not having a clue what to do. If you read the local newspaper you get some very positive articles on property investment and also some quite negative ones. The national papers and news program paint a very grim picture at present and the sad thing is that bad news sells.

What is interesting is how people are comfortable buying in the good times but not the bad times. Let's think about this: when is the best time to buy? I would much prefer to invest in property when the market is down. Now, it is impossible for anybody to predict the exact bottom of the market, just like it's impossible to pick the exact top however, if you buy at the bottom, or close to the bottom, there is more room for a gain when the market corrects itself and keeps

moving. History has shown markets always recover eventually. It feels safer for most people to buy in a good market because there are no voices in the back of their heads saying negative things such as: "Imagine if I buy now and the market drops even further."

There are a lot of economists and analysts out there making a living crunching figures and analysing endless amounts of data and information, but one of the major keys to becoming a successful property investor in my opinion, is having the courage to back yourself and just have a go. It's important to be an educated buyer, of course, but there are a lot of people out there that over analyse and eventually end up doing nothing. I love the phrase, "expect the best but plan for the worst". This is some of the best advice I have ever been given.



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INTEGRATING LANDSCAPE



December marks the start of summer, Christmas festivities and seasonal changes as the wet season approaches our region. The year at U Plan has presented many interesting projects in a challenging economic environment. However it has been the range of sustained long-term local issues that have really caught my eye.

This year we have seen many local community groups undertaking a wide range of local landscape and environmental actions from tree plantings, weed eradications to clean up activities and major community protests.

From a landscape design perspective we have had the privilege of assisting many home and property owners, through the preparation of plans and provision of implementation advice and support to enhance their local environment. Local back yards throughout our region are being established as carbon 'sinks', wildlife refuges, water conservation basins, kids adventure areas and outdoor entertainment rooms.

We have observed an increase in awareness of and demand for local plants as people recognise the qualities and benefits of planting more of the wonderful endemic plants that have adapted to the soils, habitats, water regimes and climate of our local region.

Local and other government agencies are also requiring an increasing environmental and landscape focus on the range of local projects being approved or being implemented by these agencies. As a community we are facing further decisions regarding the impacts of climate change and long term sustainability. These and other trends all work towards enhancing the identity and special landscape qualities of our local environment.

I must take this opportunity to wish everyone a safe and happy Christmas. This year I am looking forward to Christmas in the local community, surrounded by people, places, plants and landscapes that are all so special.




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