

# Presented for Sale

*How to style your home for a better sale*



**A *FREE* guide to help you to  
sell your home faster!**

*With compliments from*

# Deborah East

***A House-Sold<sup>®</sup> Name Since 1995***

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Presented for Sale—How to style your home for a better sale  
By Deborah East

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<http://deboraeast.co.nz>

<http://facebook.com/DeborahEastRealEstate>

# Contents

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<i>Getting Started</i> .....	<i>Pg 4</i>
<i>Outside: First impressions</i> .....	<i>Pg 6</i>
<i>Outside: In the garden</i> .....	<i>Pg 7</i>
<i>Inside: Trick of the light</i> .....	<i>Pg 8</i>
<i>Inside: In the mood</i> .....	<i>Pg 9</i>
<i>Inside: But what about the children?</i> .....	<i>Pg 11</i>
<i>Inside: Keeping a lid on it</i> .....	<i>Pg 12</i>
<i>Inside: Quick Fix</i> .....	<i>Pg 14</i>
<i>Inside: All for show</i> .....	<i>Pg 15</i>
<i>Making the Most of It</i> .....	<i>Pg 16</i>
<i>Ready for Inspection</i> .....	<i>Pg 17</i>
<i>Directory</i> .....	<i>Pg 18</i>
<i>References</i> .....	<i>Pg 20</i>

# Getting Started

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Our homes are often held close to our hearts. Each room tells a story meant only for its occupants. Our history and our home's history become entwined, making it a part of us.

When we are thinking about selling our home, we need to be able to separate the house from the home, and look at it objectively - just as a buyer would.



Walk around your home, inside and out, and look at it. *Really* look at it. Cut through the emotional ties, strip it bare and see it through new eyes. Take a note book with you and jot down everything you see, including defects in fixtures and fittings, general cleanliness, the level of clutter, and the quality of light in each room.

Did you notice the lichen and flaking paint on the picket fence? What about those bedding plants from last year which you didn't get around to pulling out and replanting? And indoors, did you notice the bare light bulb in the hallway, and the dripping tap in the laundry?

These are the things that a buyer will notice almost immediately, and may cost you a sale, as they will see it as needing too much work.



## *Did you find any of these?*

### **Outside:**

- peeling paint and lichen on picket fence
- weeds growing in planters
- last year's bedding plants
- lawn needs mowing
- house number not straight - missing a screw
- letterbox dented or chipped
- chalk drawings up the front steps
- garden hose left out
- shrubs in front garden need pruning
- weeds growing through cracks in front path
- cracks in surface of foundations
- Tired garden furniture
- Grimy house exterior
- Leaking spouting

### **Inside:**

- finger marks along hallway wall
- bare light bulb in hallway
- dripping tap in laundry
- flaking paint on window sills
- squeaking door hinge to master bedroom
- cluttered kitchen counter
- kitchen cupboard door doesn't fully close
- lounge looks cluttered - too much furniture?
- little natural light in back bedroom
- bathroom smells damp
- mildew on bathroom ceiling
- kids toys on the floor



So now that you have identified what could be potential sticking points for that sale, what can you do to improve things?

# Outside: First impressions

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What does your home look like from the street? Does it have 'curb appeal'?

Once you have cleaned, tidied, repaired, pruned and mowed, see if there is anything missing that could improve the curb appeal, or even if anything needs to be removed in order to de-clutter the entrance.

Make sure the path and/or drive are free of weeds and clear of overhanging shrubs or containers. Check also that the front door looks welcoming.

## Could you:

- Put in a fresh new door mat?
- Re-paint the front door?
- Frame the entrance into the house with a potted shrub each side of the door?
- Put up some trellis or fencing to make the house more private from the road?
- Paint or replace the letterbox?
- Plant some perennials for instant colour?
- Refresh/add bark chippings or gravel to keep the beds tidy?
- Put up some hanging baskets?



Just remember not to over do it. Your buyers want to see an attractive, well maintained exterior, not have to fight their way through containers and hanging baskets, no matter how beautiful the flowers!

# Outside: In the Garden

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Don't neglect the rest of the garden either. Check your list from page 5. Did you take into account the garden furniture, barbeque, and children's outdoor toys, pool and sandpit if you have them?

If you do a lot of living outside, you may need to increase your outdoor storage. If space is at a premium, consider garden seating with built in storage.

Make your outdoor space a welcoming living area. In addition to the ideas on the previous page, you may want to:



- Put up a shade umbrella over the table
- Provide enticing seating, with comfy outdoor cushions
- Add lighting—use solar lights to avoid the need for wiring
- Encourage the birds with a bird feeder (unless it will become a buffet bar for the local cats!)
- Use trellis to fence off the rubbish bins and compost bin.
- Paint a plain garden wall or the side of the garage. Get creative! Use this space for some outdoor wall sculptures or mirrors.
- Add a veggie garden, or some raised beds.

# *Inside: Trick of the Light*

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The use of light and colour can make all the difference to how a room feels. If you have little natural light in one or more rooms, consider re-painting them in a neutral shade and accent with splashes of colour in the furnishings and houseplants.

If you are going to repaint a dark, or dull-looking room, check the 'Light Reflectance Value' (LRV) of the paint colours you are considering. The higher the number, the more light it will bounce around the room. As it is a percentage, anything with a LRV above 50 will reflect more light than it absorbs. Don't go too high though, or your buyers might wish they had brought their sunglasses with them!

It is also a good idea to avoid colours on the ceiling as they can make a room feel closed in. Even light tints can make a room seem dull - stick to true white.



Pop a large house-plant in a dark corner of a room. Choose something with bright, glossy leaves to help reflect the light. You may need to swap out another large item to keep it balanced if the room is looking too cluttered, or has too many items of the same height.

A well-placed mirror will also reflect light, making a room look instantly brighter.

Take a look at the lightshades you have through out the house. Do they throw the light up onto the ceiling, or back into the room? Changing the shades for a different style can make a big impact in the amount of light in a room, as well giving the room an instant lift.



# Inside: In the Mood

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Colour psychology is big business in the design world. Colour has the power to make us feel happy or sad, excited or calm. It is no whim that fast food restaurants favour red and yellow, or for GP waiting rooms to be painted soft green or blue.



Coloured cushions against a neutral background are a cost-effective way of adding colour.

Although colour psychology is a complex subject, it is worth considering if you are planning to re-decorate. Neutral colours are a great option, as they provide a 'blank slate' upon which prospective buyers can project their own colour schemes and pictures, but some people find they can look dull and uninteresting. Combining neutral walls and ceilings with splashes of colour in bedding, cushions and vases works well and can improve the overall feel of the room.

Don't use more than one or two accent colours in each room, and remember that the shade as well as the colour, is just as important. If you are unsure, many home decorating stores have trained colour consultants who will be able to advise you on achieving the effect you want.



Warm yellow-orange is used to effectively accessorise this bathroom.

## Red

As an accent colour, red adds warmth and balance to a cool colour scheme. It is a stimulant, which makes it a good option for a dining room or kitchen, where you want healthy appetites and flowing conversation. Don't overdo it though, or you may find the stimulating conversation turns into an argument!

## Green

Many people find yellow-greens quite a sickly colour, so they are best avoided. However light greens, especially blue-greens, can have a very calming influence; a great option for the bedroom, bathroom or lounge, where relaxation is the order of the day.

## Blue

Green's cooler cousin, blue is often used in bathrooms for its relaxing effect on the body. Blue also increases productivity, so works well for studies or the home office; especially darker shades. Don't overdo it if it is a small room, as dark colours can make spaces seem smaller.

## Yellow

Another great option for a study area, as it stimulates the mind. Exercise caution though, as its high light reflective value is thought to contribute to eye strain. Yellow is often seen as a joyful colour, and can be used to great effect as an accent in an otherwise dark room and to give an impression of sunshine.

## Orange

Red-orange is best avoided in anything more than the smallest of doses, as it can be difficult to get the balance right to avoid the negative effects of red. Dark orange too, can be off-putting to buyers as it signifies distrust and caution. Yellow-orange is a better option, as the yellow tempers the brashness of red.

## Purple

Light purple is great for creating a soft, romantic feel in a bedroom. It can be quite oppressive in large doses, so combine it with cream and soft greens. Dark purple is another one to avoid, or at the very least, only utilise in small amounts, as it can incite frustration, and uneasiness.

## Pink

Many men find pink too effeminate, so you could be cutting your number of potential buyers by half before your house is even on the market! Keep it to a small amount on cushions and rugs, and opt for cerise or fuchsia rather than softer pinks.

## Brown

Pale browns can look very elegant if you are using a neutral colour palette. Many people are comforted by darker browns, but they can be very dominating, so use with caution. Be aware that you don't drift into the tans, as these can be quite dull and get sickly if combined with yellow.

## White

Total absence of colour. Although white is a clear, clean colour, it can be cold and intimidating in its pure form. However there are many shades of white which take on some of the personality of the hues they are tinted with, and with the right accents, they work well in most rooms.

## Black

Opposite to white, black is the complete absorption of light. Used as an accent, it conveys elegance and mystery. For the best effect, only use small amounts. Grey combines white and black, and is a difficult colour to get right. To avoid the colour being too draining or conservative, choose a shade that has been subtly tinted with blue or red.

# *Inside: But what about the Children?*

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Kid's toys get everywhere! What's more, the kids often have the smallest bedrooms in the house, so some pretty clever storage solutions are needed if their belongings are to be kept under control.

Young children love to carry things about from room to room. Incorporate this in your storage by keeping everything tidied away in small baskets. The child can easily carry their toys about, and at tidy-up time, it is just as easy to pop the basket back on the shelf again. Just be mindful that the baskets are not over-filled and need to be kept on shelves low enough for the children to reach.



Attractive plastic or wicker baskets are readily available from homeware shops and some supermarkets. If there is space, put up a couple of rows of shelves along one wall in the bedroom or playroom. Or, if space is limited, could shelves be fitted into the wardrobe, or the baskets stored under the child's bed?

Toy boxes are another great storage idea for children's rooms. Some also double up as a seat. Look for one that has a cut-out finger guard for safety.

For children of all ages though, the real key is to have a good sort out. Get rid of the outgrown clothes and toys that are no-longer used. You may want to do this sort-out when the kids are not around, as otherwise you may find everything you take out, gets put back in!

# *Inside: Keeping a Lid on it*

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Your buyers need to be able to visualise themselves in your home. If they are not able to relate to it, they are unlikely to be interested in purchasing it.

If your home is cluttered, it makes it harder for buyers to visualise their own belongings in the rooms, or to determine if the rooms will be large enough for their needs.

## **Kitchen**

Clear away as much as possible off the kitchen benches.

Get rid of excess kitchen equipment. Remember, buyers will often check how much storage space you have, so keep the cupboards and pantry tidy and un-cluttered as well.

## **Lounge**

Bookcase shelves should be no more than 2/3 full, and use unobtrusive bookends to hold the books in place.

Keep only the number of items on sideboards, buffets, tables etc. to a minimum. When you group a display of objects, aim for a mix of heights, and group things in threes or fives.



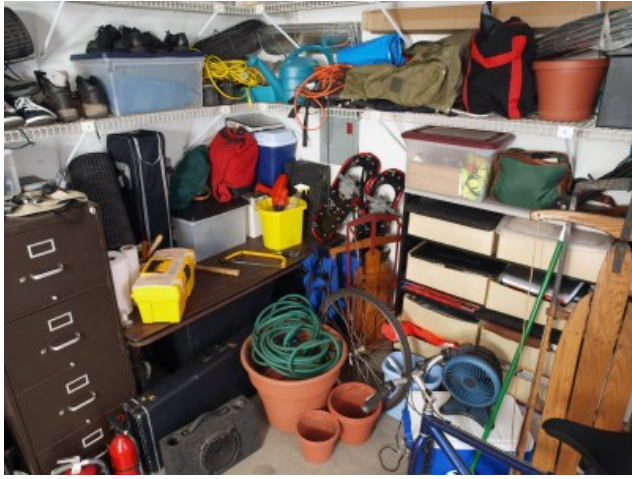
## **Bathroom**

Keep makeup, toiletries, cleaning products etc. in the cupboards and drawers. If storage is a problem, look at investing in a narrow storage unit, or mirrored wall cabinet. Consider keeping make up and cleaning products in a different room to free up space.

## **Bedroom**

As with the kitchen, buyers will check out the storage space, so sort through any clothes that are no longer worn. If necessary, put up shelves in the built-in wardrobes, and line with baskets to store shoes, handbags and other smaller items.

Keep the number of items on bed-side and dressing tables to a minimum.



## Garage

Don't empty out clutter only to fill up the garage with it!

Many DIY stores stock garage storage units, which are a worthwhile investment if you have a lot of tools, or hobby equipment. Make use of wall space for hanging tools, bikes, kayaks etc.

If you have sorted out a lot of unwanted items as you work through the house, donate them to charity, hold a garage sale, or list the items on an internet auction website.



## General

Don't over-fill rooms with furniture. If you have a small lounge, but have filled it with two large bookcases, a couple of lazyboys, a three-seater sofa and a large coffee table, Could you manage with just one lazyboy and put the other one in storage? Perhaps the bookcases could go into storage too, and the coffee table swapped with a smaller one belonging to a friend or relative?

Don't be afraid to move things into a different room to make better use of the space. Perhaps you could create a reading nook in a large, relatively empty, bedroom by taking a side table and chair out of a lounge?

If, after all that sorting, organising and discarding, you still feel the house is too cluttered, consider moving items off-site by renting a storage unit from a local storage company.

Deborah has a courtesy van available to clients. Great for moving stuff into storage, or to take junk to the tip after that garage & garden clear-out. And if family or friends are looking for a van, may be possible to borrow it in exchange for a donation to charity.

# Inside: Quick Fix

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Here are some hints and tips to get your home fresh and sparkling.

(The author holds no responsibility for the effectiveness of these tips. It is advisable to patch test any solution in an inconspicuous area first)

## Odours

**Bathroom:** Keep your bathroom smelling fresh by making a dried flower arrangement in a shallow dish. Use clay cat litter under the flowers to absorb any unwanted smells.

**Fridge:** Keep an open container of baking soda in your fridge to absorb odours.

**Bins, fridges and litter trays:** wipe down with a solution of 1 teaspoon of lemon juice in 1 litre of water.

## Carpet deodorizer

Deodorise your carpet by sprinkling with a mix of 3/4 cup baking soda, 1/4 cup cornflour, and 5-6 drops lemon or vanilla oil. Leave overnight before vacuuming.

## Discolouration on metal

Clean discolouration from aluminium, brass and copper with white vinegar.

[Ask Deborah about her ozone deodorising machine!](#)

[It is the sort major hotels use after a serious problem to remove smells from rooms. It is great to get rid of unwanted smells such as cooking or pet or cigarette odours, and may be borrowed by her clients at no charge.](#)

## Bath stains

Remove bath stains by rubbing with a paste of baking soda and vinegar. Leave for a few hours before rinsing off.

## Carpet stains

Spot treat carpet stains with the following:

Coffee – cold water and glycerine (available from the baking section in the supermarket)

Ink— equal amounts cream of tartar (available from the baking section in the supermarket) and lemon juice

Gel ink— spray with isopropyl alcohol, then dab with kitchen towel. Repeat until the stain is removed

Nail polish— 3tsp glycerine, 3 tsp apple cider vinegar and 3 tbsp hot water.

Rust - Lemon juice and salt, followed by plenty of water to flush it out. Blot well.



# Inside: All for Show

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“It’s the little things that make the big things possible. Only close attention to the fine details of any operation makes the operation first class.” \*

There are many small things that can be done in your home that make all the difference when it comes to selling. In addition to the ideas on page 6 for the outside of your house, consider these ideas for inside:

## Bathroom

- If you don’t have a bathroom extractor or heater, consider getting them installed.
- Replace towels with new ones that complement the colour scheme. Replace the shower curtain too, if you have one.
- Replace the toilet seat if it is cracked, or looks grimy .
- Add some height with a tall vase, or some twisted willow on the vanity unit.

## Kitchen

- Let the light in! Take down net curtains, replacing them with venetian blinds if you need privacy.
- If utensils are on display and look a bit old and tatty, replace them.
- For a quick refresh, change the drawer and cupboard handles. Repaint doors if needed, and get the worktops repaired or painted if they are chipped or dull-looking.

## Bedroom

- Replace faded bed linen.
- Always iron the duvet cover and pillow cases!

## General

- Hide any wires behind bookcases and units.
- Keep remote controls, headphones etc in a drawer when they are not in use.
- Brighten up rooms with a bowl of fresh fruit, or vase of flowers.
- If you have a lot of family photos, put them in storage and replace with reproduction prints, or paint your own canvases!
- Let in as much light as possible. Open curtains as far back as you can, use tie-backs if you have them.
- No-one wants to see your laundry, so make sure any laundry baskets have lids - even if you think they are tucked out of sight!
- Dry-clean, or launder all the curtains
- Hire a carpet cleaner and clean your carpet
- Glue down any wall paper that has lifted at the edges (or been helped along by little fingers!)



\*J. Willard Marriott. Founder of the Marriott Corporation

# Making the Most of it

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Empty rooms often look much smaller than they really are and could prevent you from achieving a great sale.

If you have moved into your new home before putting your previous one on the market, consider leaving some furniture behind for the duration of the sale. You might even be able to borrow items from family and friends.

It is a good idea to put a double bed in the bedrooms wherever possible. Often, if the room is set up as an office, or has a single bed or cot, prospective buyers will not see the room's potential, believing that it is smaller than it really is.

If this is not possible, contact a home staging company. There are several to choose from in the Wellington area, and they will be able to professionally furnish your home, including the smaller, often forgotten items such as fresh flowers, a bowl of fruit or a book on the night stand.

## Rental properties

If the property is dirty and untidy, buyers are less likely to feel at home in it and therefore less likely to choose it. So keeping your tenants on your side with the need to keeping it as attractive as possible will make a big difference to your end result.



Had this room been left empty, it would be difficult to imagine that it would fit a double bed.



Deborah staged this room to give a better indication of space.

Talk to Deborah for advice on staging your home. She has a number of items available to help you furnish a small apartment or spare room.



# Ready for Inspection

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You have done the hard work preparing your home for the market, but don't stop now!

Follow these easy steps to keep it looking great, and to take some last-minute pressure off you before open homes and private viewings.

## Good habits to get into

- Tidy as you go. Wash up/load the dishwasher and wipe down kitchen surfaces as you cook.
- If you use it, put it away as soon as you have finished (Yes! Encourage the children to do this too.)
- Keep toiletries, including toothpaste and toothbrushes in the bathroom cupboard
- If you don't have a lot of time to spend on housework, aim to do one chore per day .



## Each day before going to bed

- Tidy away anything that you have left out during the day
- Wipe down kitchen and bathroom surfaces
- Plump up cushions and arrange them nicely

## Each day before leaving the house

- Fully open all curtains
- Make sure all beds are made and pillows fluffed up
- Wipe kitchen and bathroom surfaces again
- Put the toilet lid down, and close the lid on the washing machine
- Plump up and arrange cushions again

## Before an open home

- Pop a vase of flowers, or bowl of fresh fruit on the dining table, side table or sideboard
- Air the house before the open home. Make sure it is a comfortable temperature, summer or winter
- Mow the lawn
- Run a duster and the vacuum cleaner around
- Put out fresh towels and tea towels
- Check any dirty cups are in the dishwasher or have been washed up
- You might like to put on some light music
- Some vendors like to brew coffee or bake some bread shortly before an open home
- Check that any cables are still tucked out of sight

Deborah often lends her bread-maker out to clients who would like to use it prior to an open home.

# Directory

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The businesses listed below are all in the Wellington area, and have been successfully used by myself or my clients.

## Accountants

*Cathy Tolley, Illumin Ltd*

Website: [www.illum.in.co.nz](http://www.illum.in.co.nz)

*Ben Stockbridge, Long and Cowan*

Website: [www.Longandcowan.co.nz](http://www.Longandcowan.co.nz)

## Architect

*Alex Hills, Greenweaver Architecture*

Website: [www.greenweaver.co.nz](http://www.greenweaver.co.nz)

*Daryl Cockburn, Cockburn Architects*

Website: [www.cockburnarchitects.co.nz](http://www.cockburnarchitects.co.nz)

*Janine Mitchell, Studio8*

Website: [www.Studio8.co.nz](http://www.Studio8.co.nz)

## Builders

*Brent Sarten, Capital Builders Ltd*

Website: [www.Capitalbuilders.co.nz](http://www.Capitalbuilders.co.nz)

*Richard Vidulich*

Ph: 027 452 8195

## Building reports

*Chris Koorneef, NZ House Inspection Company*

Website: [www.nzhouseinspection.co.nz](http://www.nzhouseinspection.co.nz)

*Phil Redican, Inspection plus*

Website: [www.insectionplus.co.nz](http://www.insectionplus.co.nz)

## Carpeting and mats

*Graeme Pledger, The Mat Shop*

Website: [www.thematshop.co.nz](http://www.thematshop.co.nz)

*A to Z Flooring*

Website: [www.azflooring.co.nz](http://www.azflooring.co.nz)

## De-Clutter

*Jenny Alexander, The Chameleon Project*

Website: [www.thechameleonproject.co.nz](http://www.thechameleonproject.co.nz)

## Electricians

*Dave Brown, Dave Brown Electrical Services*

Website: [www.ecanz.org.nz](http://www.ecanz.org.nz)

## Floor Polishing

*Ken Bull, Kelburn Floors Ltd*

Website: [www.kelburnfloors.co.nz](http://www.kelburnfloors.co.nz)

## Garage Doors

Updown Doors

Ph: 04 939 4443 / email: [updowndoors@hotmail.com](mailto:updowndoors@hotmail.com)

*Fred Chapman's Garage Doors*

Website: [www.garagedoorswellington.co.nz](http://www.garagedoorswellington.co.nz)

## Garden Clearance

*Wayne Chiles*

Ph: 021 256 5985

## Heat pumps

*Alister Brown, Maxas Ltd*

Ph: 045702535 / email: [alister.brown@maxas.co.nz](mailto:alister.brown@maxas.co.nz)

## Home make-over

*Bobi Pete*

Email: [newzealandpeeete@aol.com](mailto:newzealandpeeete@aol.com)

## Insurance

*Gina McLaughlan*

Website: [www.crombielockwood.co.nz](http://www.crombielockwood.co.nz)

*Speros Macris, Macris Financial Solutions*

Website: [www.macris.co.nz](http://www.macris.co.nz)

**Lawyers**

*Clara Matthews, Clara Matthews Law*

Website: [www.cmatthewslaw.co.nz](http://www.cmatthewslaw.co.nz)

*Helen Croft*

Email: [helencroft@xtra.co.nz](mailto:helencroft@xtra.co.nz)

*Andrea Coop*

Email: [Andrea.Coop@brandons.co.nz](mailto:Andrea.Coop@brandons.co.nz)

**Mortgage Brokers**

*Gaye Fisher, New Zealand Home Loans*

Website: [www.nzhomeloans.co.nz](http://www.nzhomeloans.co.nz)

*Kieran Calderwood, A better mortgage*

Website: [www.abettermortgage.co.nz](http://www.abettermortgage.co.nz)

*Matthew Mearns, BNZ Wellington*

Email: [matthew\\_mearns@bnz.co.nz](mailto:matthew_mearns@bnz.co.nz)

*Steven Hogg, Westpac*

Email: [steven\\_hogg@westpac.co.nz](mailto:steven_hogg@westpac.co.nz)

**Painters**

*Henk, Paragon Painters Ltd*

Website: [www.paragonpainters.com](http://www.paragonpainters.com)

*Henri Janssen, Painting and decorating*

Website: [www.janssenpainters.co.nz](http://www.janssenpainters.co.nz)

**Plumber**

*Gary Adams, Gary Adams Ltd*

Ph: 04 939 4542 / email: [gary@flood.net.nz](mailto:gary@flood.net.nz)

**Re-piler**

*John Wilson*

Ph: 04 475 8272

**Removals**

*Current clients can use Deborah's van for free, others can borrow it for a donation to charity.*

*Wayne Chiles, Cheap Moves*

Ph: 021 256 5985

*Cool Moves*

Website: [www.coolmoves.co.nz](http://www.coolmoves.co.nz)

**Roofer**

*Roy Krebs, Wellington Roofing Company*

Website: [www.wellingtonroofingcompany.co.nz](http://www.wellingtonroofingcompany.co.nz)

**Storage**

*Storage King*

Website: [www.storageking.co.nz](http://www.storageking.co.nz)

*Kiwi Self Storage*

Website: [www.kiwiselfstorage.co.nz](http://www.kiwiselfstorage.co.nz)

**Thermography (Checking for leaks)**

*Matt Farr, Seek-a-leak*

Ph: 021 403 666 / email: [info@seekaleak.co.nz](mailto:info@seekaleak.co.nz)

**Valuers**

*Peter Kavanagh, AKR Valuers*

Ph: 04 801 9876 / email: [akrvaluers@xtra.co.nz](mailto:akrvaluers@xtra.co.nz)

*Ginny McCarty*

Ph: 021 1450 398 / email: [mccarty@paradise.net.nz](mailto:mccarty@paradise.net.nz)

**Water blasting**

*James Butler, Clear Water Blasting*

Website: [www.clearwaterblasting.co.nz](http://www.clearwaterblasting.co.nz)

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