

Property news

Drones give vendors an edge



OWEN ROBERTS

Home buyers are getting a bird's eye view when looking at potential purchases, thanks to an increase in the use of drone photography in real estate marketing. But industry insiders say aerial photographs are only the tip of the iceberg.

Aerial photography was previously seen as a luxury in real estate marketing, with drone photos costing \$1500 and videos \$5000. Now though, falling prices have made it an accessible tool for vendors all across Australia.

Measure Australia, in partnership with DIAKRIT, offers drone photography packages for approximately \$400, which fits well into an average marketing budget for a listed property.

Aerial snapshots allow buyers the chance to scope the location of a home and get a grasp of block size and other features; something that Measure Australia spokesman Aonghus Stevens says adds value to the buying experience.

"The role the drone plays is that it gives the vendor a view of the property that exceeds their expectation," Mr Stevens said.

"Shooting a home from the air not only visually improves the home, but it also informs buyers of what they are getting (in a) property."

With the real estate market as competitive as ever, drone photographs are a market differentiator, something that according to Mr Stevens, makes the property more appealing than its competitors.

"You expect to only see the front of the property, but what drone images do is give you a view of the house which is different, attractive and places the property in its own space and environment," Mr Stevens said.

The Property Agency's Carl Mogridge said it was an exciting development for buyers, as it allowed them to become more informed about properties they were interested in.

"Drone photography and video has allowed buyers the ability to educate themselves before picking up the phone or contacting an agent online," Mr Mogridge said.

Currently, only 5 per cent of listed homes have drone photos. However, demand is doubling month on month with the majority of homes on the market



Aonghus Stevens with his father Mark in their office at North Sydney.
Picture: John Fotiadis

expected to have drone photos in the next five years. Drones have also impacted the way agents market houses, according to Ray White agent Gavin Rubinstein.

"Drones add a whole new perspective to the properties I'm selling. Measure Australia has added significantly to my marketing campaigns, allowing me to achieve outstanding results for my vendors," Mr Rubinstein said.

Photography only scratches the surface of what is made possible by drone technology in real estate. Virtual reality and 3D images of properties are two other

examples. This technology will soon allow buyers to interactively view properties from their own homes.

"I think the market is moving towards virtual reality allowing potential buyers to view the property both inside and out," Mr Stevens said.

"Drones are critically important as they place the property in its environment first, before going into the property and viewing the lifestyle you would have if you lived there. If you can do 30 open houses sitting in your house on a Thursday evening, then that saves you a massive amount of time."

Images such as these (above and below) captured using drones are being used to market real estate.



OPTIMISING THE USE OF DATA

AONGHUS Stevens started a drone business from his bedroom at age 15. Since then, he has seen many weird and wonderful uses for the machines.

"The fires over in WA were very interesting as you could see the whole place had been entirely decimated," Aonghus said. "The most left of field situation we encountered (was) the insurance job at the meat factory. We used drones to access parts of the collapsed building to assess the damage that had occurred and see what was still intact."

Aonghus teamed up with his father Mark to create Measure Australia, which uses drones to provide industries with data driven insights.

Drone camera technology was first introduced by U.S. forces during the Vietnam War, but has since evolved to be used commercially, bringing data to the infrastructure, real estate and agriculture industries.

"All people really care about is data. For us it was about optimising that process," Aonghus said.

In real estate, photos and videos are used to show the location and size of a property. In agriculture, they can count and place cattle across large tracts of land.

The Stevens' recently struck up a partnership with DIAKRIT, a global leader in 3D visualisation products and services in the real estate industry.

The deal will see Measure Australia become DIAKRIT's exclusive national operating partner for drones. Despite significant recent progress, the drone concept is still raw, with the full scope of technology yet to be realised.

"We see demand doubling month on month but the whole idea of collecting data with drones is still all very new," Mark said.