

Where experts are buying now

We asked our experts where they would be putting their money in the year ahead and where they would avoid



Cate Bakos, buyers' agent, property investment advisor and licensed real estate agent with Empower Wealth Group

Where I would invest

■ **Hawthorn/Glenferrie:** This is a wonderful little mecca that is sought after, convenient, affordable in the \$500,000 range, and still offers some fantastic older apartments in pretty streets. The historical growth of this area puts it in the 'evergreen' status for me.

■ **West Footscray:** Only 8km from the city and appealing to families and first home buyers, this secret can't last long. Where else can you buy a three-bedroom house for under \$600,000 near rail services and so close to the city?

■ **Spotswood:** Spotswood is on the move with some exciting new developments being talked about in property circles. At the base of the Westgate and wedged nicely between Yarraville and Newport, this teeny-tiny suburb is growing into its name.

■ **Carnegie:** Featuring a Zone 1 rail station and a great shopping precinct, with easy access to arterials into the city and just moments away from other nice suburbs such as Bentleigh, Ormond and Glen Huntly, this one is next in line for growth.

■ **Geelong West:** With the manufacturing industry downturn having a tough effect on parts of Geelong, this lush little pocket has held firm and there are no surprises why. Trendy Pakington Street encapsulates Geelong West, which is just a short walk to the city, train station, or waterfront, the galleries, and all that Geelong has to offer. For \$500,000, a homeowner can buy a period house in amongst all of this and commute to work in Melbourne's CBD by train in 50 minutes. This is the

demographic that is largely driving this exciting market.

Areas I would avoid

■ **Southbank/Docklands:** Oversupplied and has static sales results.

■ **South Yarra:** Features a large number of higher-density apartments that are either already available or under construction or in the pipeline. While it will always be popular, investors and first home buyers alike are paying premiums for new off-the-plan apartments, and the sheer number of new apartments are adversely affecting the rental prospects of older established and unrenovated properties.

■ **Collingwood:** With the east-west tunnel talks, this area is earmarked for change, and not necessarily nice change.

■ **Tarneit and Wyndhamvale:** The market is flooded with properties for sale or lease and there are limited growth drivers evident at this time.



Cameron McLellan, Open Wealth Creation

While all boats float on a rising tide, there are always micro markets or suburbs that are positioned for growth ahead of other areas. One of the key factors I keep away from is an abundance of possible supply that may bring stock on to the market in or around the area in consideration. The other factor is infrastructure which adds value. Some of the areas listed are not sexy blue chip areas but they have the strong fundamentals to support long-term growth, which is more important than a nice suburb name.

Where I would invest

■ **Ashburton:** Historically, Ashburton has featured commission housing, predominantly two- and three-bedroom

weatherboard homes originally supplied to returned soldiers. The area is undergoing massive rejuvenation, with blocks being purchased and large family homes being built. Other blocks are being split and medium- to high-quality townhouses of a substantial size are being built. The area has its own shopping village and a cafe culture is emerging.

■ **Greenvale/Craigieburn:** Infrastructure and infill: these two words are music to my ears. While substantial development is occurring in this northern suburb, the Hume growth corridor also has a strong population growth forecast. With many new amenities being built, this area is one of my favourites and is where I've parked some of my own investment funds.

■ **Croydon:** Ringwood is one of Melbourne's activity centres that has already seen growth due to increased infrastructure. The urban growth plan has changed in Croydon, allowing a higher density of living around the shopping village to support the forecast increase in population growth. With good transport in place and the shopping village and amenities being improved, Croydon is a favourite of mine. This is an area to watch.

■ **Footscray:** Footscray has been on a number of lists over the last decade as a micro market that is positioned for growth. The tipping point is yet to be reached in Footscray where the demographic shift will suddenly take place. Similar to what happened to West End in Brisbane, Footscray will suddenly undergo substantial development and price increases once it is seen as a safe area and a variety of high-end cultural restaurants and cafes emerge.

■ **Point Cook:** Development is fast and furious around the Point Cook area. Some development projects are fantastic; some are not. Planning Minister Matthew Guy has committed a \$72m boost to transport and planning infrastructure in the East Werribee and Point Cook area. This is an area investors should take advantage of, but it is important to find a good estate and factor in undercutting prices to obtain a solid tenant.