

Media Release – 5 September 2016

AGENT FINDER WEBSITES ‘A RAW DEAL’

A range of real estate agent finder websites are misleading consumers, hounding agents, and potentially driving up the cost of vendors' selling fees says the chief executive of Australia's largest network of independents, First National Real Estate.

'There are a variety of agent finder websites that have inserted themselves as middlemen in the marketplace, claiming to connect consumers with the best local agents for free, but charging agents a 20 per cent referral fee' said First National's chief executive, Mr Ray Ellis.

'Consumers don't understand that some of these services simply pay salespeople to find whichever agent is willing to pay a 20 per cent referral fee. If the best agent in an area refuses, as is often the case, they call lesser agents until they find one who will pay the fee. We've had reports of agents being hounded with up to five phone calls demanding they accept the referral of a listing.

'That's not helping people find the best agent; it's most likely helping them find an agent who will charge a higher fee in order to cover the cost imposed by them.'

Major websites such as realestate.com.au, domain.com.au and ratemyagent.com.au are chiefly the portals offering agent ratings and reviews without a vested interest. In less than two minutes, consumers gain insight into the agents who are the most active and successful in any suburb, without having to hand over personal information to a middleman.

'Agents are commercially competitive by nature when it comes to fees. Even the best agents, those who have worked long and hard to establish their credentials, expect to compete for listings. However, in the same way that you don't expect the best agents to easily reduce the price of your house, they're not inclined to give away part of their fee to somebody who does nothing' said Mr Ellis.

- Copy ends –

Issued by: First National Real Estate

Stewart Bunn, National Communications Manager, First National Real Estate, on 1800 032 332 or 0413 624 317