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A Practical Guide to Finding the Right Mortgage Broker in Melbourne

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Buying a home in Melbourne can feel overwhelming, especially if your income does not follow a standard payslip pattern. Freelancers, creatives, educators on contract, and sole traders often face extra questions when applying for a home loan. A good mortgage broker can help you work through those questions, but it is still important to choose carefully.

This guide is a practical checklist for first-home buyers in Melbourne and Victoria. It covers how to verify a broker, what to ask in your first meeting, and which state-specific programs to raise before you sign anything.

Key Takeaways

- Check licence status and pay structure. Confirm your broker holds a credit licence or is an authorised representative of a licensee, and ask upfront how they are paid.
- Expect a Best Interests Duty. Under Australian law, mortgage brokers must act in your best interests and explain why a recommended loan suits your situation.
- Know Victoria's first-home settings. Stamp duty exemptions, concessions, and the First Home Owner Grant have specific thresholds. Confirm current figures on SRO Victoria before making decisions.
- Pre-approval is time-limited. Many lenders issue pre-approvals for about three to six months, so plan your property search around that window.

What a Broker Does Under Australian Rules

A mortgage broker acts as a go-between for you and a panel of lenders. They compare loan options, manage the application process, and help you understand costs and features. Most brokers are not tied to one bank, though their lender panels vary in size and mix. If you want local support, **Melbourne mortgage specialists** can guide first-home buyers and self-employed borrowers through loan options and explain their lender panel and fees before you commit.

In Australia, anyone engaging in credit activities must hold a credit licence or be authorised by a credit licensee. Brokers also owe a statutory Best Interests Duty under the National Consumer Credit Protection Act. In practical terms, this means they must recommend a loan that suits your circumstances, not just one that pays a higher commission. ASIC's Regulatory Guide 273 explains how this duty is assessed.

You should expect more than one option, a clear explanation of why each was recommended, and upfront disclosure of commissions or fees. You can verify a broker's credentials on ASIC's Professional Registers. If a dispute cannot be resolved directly, the Australian Financial Complaints Authority (AFCA) provides free external dispute resolution for eligible complaints.

How to Shortlist and Verify a Melbourne Broker

Start with personal recommendations from friends, colleagues, or your accountant. Professional directories, such as the MFAA's Find a Broker tool, let you search by suburb or speciality and can help you find someone familiar with your situation.

Once you have a shortlist, verify each broker on ASIC's Professional Registers. Look for a current credit licence or credit representative entry.

In your first conversation, ask about their lender panel and whether they have experience with:

- First-home buyers in Victoria
- Auction purchases and off-the-plan contracts
- Self-employed, ABN, or gig-worker income
- Family guarantee arrangements

Request the broker's Credit Guide early. This document outlines who they are, how they are paid, and how complaints are handled. Later, before you proceed with a loan, they should provide a written proposal or quote detailing fees and remuneration.

Red flags to watch for: a push toward a single lender with no clear reason, vague answers about payment, or any suggestion to overstate your income or understate your expenses.

Costs and Conflicts: How Brokers Get Paid

Most brokers are paid commissions by the lender once your loan settles. Some also charge a separate fee to you. Both must be disclosed before you commit.

When reviewing a proposal, ask your broker to explain why a particular loan was recommended over others on their panel. You are entitled to a written rationale. Keep in mind that no broker covers the entire market. Their recommendations are drawn from the lenders on their panel, not every product available in Australia.

If fees or commissions are unclear at any point, ask again. Transparency is a legal requirement, not a favour.

Melbourne and Victoria Specifics to Raise in Your First Chat

Victoria offers several programs for eligible first-home buyers that can affect your budget.

If you are selling, downsizing, or moving suburbs at the same time, allow for **hidden moving costs** such as removalist fees, storage, and timing gaps so your deposit and settlement budget is realistic.

Stamp duty relief: Eligible first-home buyers pay no duty on properties up to \$600,000 and receive a sliding concession for properties valued between \$600,001 and \$750,000, according to SRO

Victoria information updated May 21, 2026. Raise this early so your broker can factor any saving into affordability calculations.

First Home Owner Grant: A \$10,000 one-off payment is available for eligible buyers of new homes valued up to \$750,000, according to SRO Victoria information updated May 21, 2026. This applies to new builds and substantially renovated homes, not established properties.

Pre-approval timing: A typical pre-approval lasts about three to six months. If you plan to buy at auction, where cooling-off periods generally do not apply, discuss turnaround expectations with your broker so the approval stays current while you search.

Loan structure: Ask your broker to walk through fixed, variable, and split-rate options. Moneysmart outlines the key trade-offs clearly. Features like offset accounts and redraw facilities can be useful, but only if they suit your cash flow. A freelancer with lumpy quarterly income, for example, may need different features from someone on a regular salary.

Programs and thresholds change. Always confirm the latest figures directly on the SRO Victoria website before making decisions.



Questions to Ask Your Broker

- How many lenders are on your panel, and do any specialise in non-traditional income?
- Have you helped creatives or ABN holders with irregular income before?
- What documents will I need? For self-employed borrowers, this often includes BAS statements, Notices of Assessment, tax returns, and copies of contracts.
- What is the total cost of the loan, including fees, and at what deposit threshold does Lenders Mortgage Insurance apply?
- What are the practical pros and cons of fixed versus variable rates for my situation?
- How did you assess that this loan is in my best interests?

- What is your expected turnaround time from application to pre-approval?
- How will you support me if I am buying at auction?
- If I have a complaint, what is the process, and how do I escalate to AFCA?

A Simple Timeline You Can Follow

1. Shortlist and verify. Check credentials on ASIC's Professional Registers. Meet two or three brokers before choosing one.
2. Provide documents and assess borrowing capacity. Gather payslips or BAS statements, tax returns, bank statements, and ID. Your broker will outline how much you may be able to borrow.
3. Secure pre-approval. Note the validity period and plan your property search accordingly.
4. Search for a property. Whether you buy at auction or by private treaty, ask your broker for a written comparison summary of the loan options they recommend.
5. Move to unconditional approval and settlement. A valuation is ordered, final approval is issued, and settlement is booked. Keep written records at each stage so you can see how decisions were made.

Where to Find Local Help in Melbourne

As you compare options, a local broker can be one source of step-by-step guides, calculators, and first-home buyer information, alongside official resources and other brokers. The main goal is to understand your options before you commit to a loan or sign a contract.

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