

Need a Holiday?

As you know, here at Catalyst, we're not just about providing you with the very best finance options – we like to offer our clients additional benefits.

So it gives us great pleasure to mention we've recently purchased a Catalyst Finance Holiday Home which we'd like to extend the use of to our clients.

Located in beautiful Hamelin Bay, just minutes from Margaret River and Augusta, the property offers all the creature comforts of home, in a beautiful bushland setting.

If you're keen to book in a well earned break, give Cassie Rigby a call on 0410 655 078 or email her on cassie@catalystfinance.com.au

Catalyst clients are not only happy clients, they're relaxed clients too!



Christmas Trivia

Keep your friends and family entertained over Christmas lunch with these interesting bits of trivia:

- The 25th of December is celebrated as the birth date of Jesus Christ yet the Bible does not mention Christmas and early Christians did not observe the birthday of Christ. Christmas as we know it became widely popular only in the 19th Century.
- The concept of "Peace and Joy" over the Christmas season originates from the pagan believe in the magical powers of mistletoe. Enemies meeting under mistletoe had to call truce until the following day.
- Christmas starts on 25 December and ends 12 days later on 6 January with the Feast of Epiphany also called "The Adoration of the Magi" or "The Manifestation of God."
- During the Middle Ages, many churches were built in honour of Saint Nicholas, the patron saint of children. Wearing his red and white bishop's robes, he would ride on a donkey to deliver gifts to children. In 1860, illustrator Thomas Nast introduced Santa Claus in the fashion we now know him.

- The first Christmas cards were printed in 1843 in lithography by Jobbins of Warwick Court, Holborn, London, and hand-coloured by an artist named Mason. They were lithographed on stiff cardboard, with the greeting, "A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to You."
- Evergreens and trees were cherished at winter solstice in the northern hemisphere as a natural symbol of rebirth and life amid winter whiteness. This tree festival was eventually adopted as use for the Christmas tree.
- The word "carol" is derived from the old French word caroller, which means dancing around in a circle. It was derived from the Latin choraula, which in turn was derived from the Greek chorales.
- Silent Night, Holy Night was written in 1818 by Austrian priest Joseph Mohr. Today it is sung in over 180 languages.
- The Chinese New Year fortune cookies gave Tom Smith, the inventor of the Christmas cracker, the idea of putting a love motto in the wrapping. Later he added small toys.

Got Something to Post to Us?

Unfortunately we don't have a mail box at our street address so if you need to post documents to Catalyst Finance, please ensure you post it to PO Box 59 Cloverdale WA 6985.

We don't want your important documents going astray!



Remember if any of your details have changed or you're planning on moving in the future, please let us know so we can amend our database. If you no longer wish to receive our newsletters please let Marnie know and she'll remove you from our mailing list.



A Client for Life...

Catalyst Finance Beats the "Big Boys" of Australian Broking

As you know, we've never been big on tooting our own trumpet but it seems our little group of Catalyst 'quiet achievers' are making a few waves within the finance industry!

At the recent PLAN Australia Annual Awards Night, Catalyst Finance placed an incredible **SIXTH IN AUSTRALIA**, and our staff also

won a multitude of awards too. That's quite an achievement for a boutique brokerage! We're very proud of our success and owe it all to the fantastic support we receive from you, our valued clients...so thank you very much from all of us.

Help Us Update and Win

As 2006 comes to a close and the New Year looms on the horizon, we thought we'd keep with the 'out with the old, in with the new' theme and freshen up our database...but we need your help.

As you know, part of our *Client For Life* philosophy means we like to stay in contact with you, but to do so, we need to know your current details.

As an incentive for your participation in our information 'update-a-thon' you'll go into the draw to win 2 movie passes. The winner will be advised on January 31 and will appear in our Autumn edition Newsletter.

So if you've changed your old contact details, have new ones or are planning to change them in the near future (i.e. phone, mobile, fax, email, address, etc) let Marnie know and you could be rewarded!

Email Marnie your details to marnie@catalystfinance.com.au or call her on 9477 4188 for a friendly chat!

Melbourne Cup Client Sweep Winners – Matt's Clients Win Trifecta!

Talk about luck! It seems Matt Rigby is blessed with the stuff as three of his clients made up the winning trifecta in our recent Melbourne Cup Client Sweep, with Jason Cheetham's clients completing the winning circle, picking up the wooden spoon prize.

The lucky winners were:

Kylie & Gavin Paterson - 1st prize of a \$250 voucher to Abundance @ Eagle Bay.

Martin & Maria Gibbs - 2nd prize: \$100 Liquor Baron's Voucher.

Eamon Dooley - 3rd prize: \$50 Bunnings Voucher.

Neil & Wendy Grafton - Last place prize: \$50 Bunnings Voucher.

Congratulations to you all! We hope you enjoy your prizes.

Christmas Office Closure

Being such a festive bunch, we've decided to close our doors over Christmas / New Year so our staff can enjoy some well deserved time with their families.

Our office will be closed from Wednesday 27th December to Friday 30th December, reopening on Tuesday 2nd January 2006 after the New Years Day festivities.

From all of us at Catalyst Finance, we thank you for your support in 2006. We hope you have a wonderfully enjoyable Christmas and New Year and we look forward to catching up with you again in 2007.



Christmas Word Sleuth

We thought we'd do something a little more festive with our puzzler this edition, so to get you into the Christmas Spirit, complete the word sleuth, find the hidden festive message and email your answer to marnie@catalystfinance.com.au. The first correct answer will win a fabulous Christmas food basket valued at \$50.

The solutions run across, down and on the diagonal

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A huge congratulations to our **Spring Edition Winner Julia Bamman**, who was very quick to email Marnie with the correct answer to our little riddle about the mysterious thing that lived above a star but didn't burn, had 11 neighbours but didn't turn, was visited in sequence, first last or in between, and had the initials PRS and sometimes Q...And for those of you who weren't too sure of the answer – it was the number 7 on your phone pad.

Important News for First Home Buyers; Government Offers Even More Assistance

Taken from www.reba.wa.gov.au

We find many of our happy clients are referring their sons, daughters and young friends to us when they set out to search for, and finance, their very first home.

As you know, in the current Perth market, purchasing your first home can be a real struggle. What you may not know is, along with the Government's First Home Owners Grant, there is also an additional \$2,000 grant available.

First Home Buyers Assistance Fund

The Home Buyers Assistance Fund was established to provide first home buyers with additional financial support, in the form of a grant of up to \$2,000 for the incidental expenses associated with the purchase of an established or partially built home via a licensed real estate agent. Homes sold by private sale are not eligible under this scheme.

The grant can be used for registration fees, solicitor and/or conveyancing fees, valuation fees, inspection fees, establishment fees, mortgage insurance premiums and lending institution fees associated with lodging the application.

Current criteria are:

- Applicants must be buying their first home, which is established or partially built (not vacant land, a plan or a 'house and land' package);
- The applicant, spouse or partner of the applicant must not own or have owned any property in the State of Western Australia before (if one of the people the applicant is buying a home with, owns or has owned a home in Western Australia before, then the applicant can apply for a partial grant based on the percentage of their ownership of the home);
- The applicant must live in the home for at least the first 12 months;
- The applicant must purchase the home

through a licensed real estate agent;

- The application must be lodged with the Registrar of the Real Estate and Business Agents Supervisory Board no more than 90 days after the date that the offer and acceptance contract to buy the home is accepted (in exceptional circumstances, a short extension of time for lodgment may be granted by the Registrar if reasonable grounds exist);
- The home loan must be financed through an authorised lending institution (such as a bank, building society or credit union); and
- The purchase price of the home is \$400,000 or less.

For a copy of the application form or more information, give your Catalyst Finance Solutions Broker a buzz on 9477 4188 or you can contact the Homebuyers Assistance Scheme Hotline on (08) 9282 0836.

Mini Pudding Truffles

These little gems make fantastic edible gifts and look great atop a festive platter, just perfect for your afternoon Christmas coffee break.

Preparation: 30 Mins • Cooking: 5 mins • Makes 16

Ingredients

- 400g fruit cake, crumbled
- 1 tablespoon Muscat liqueur (optional)
- 1 tablespoon instant coffee dissolved in 1 tablespoon boiling water
- 1 tablespoon almond meal



- 1 tablespoon apricot jam
- 20g butter, melted
- 375g milk or dark chocolate
- 200g white chocolate, melted
- Red and green glacé cherries, chopped for decoration

Method

1. Mix fruit cake, Muscat, coffee mixture, almond meal and jam in a bowl, mix well to combine.
2. Roll heaped tablespoons of mixture into balls and place onto a lined tray. Refrigerate until firm.
3. Melt the chocolate in a bowl over a saucepan of simmering water.
4. Using two forks dip each ball into the chocolate to cover. Drain off excess chocolate and place back onto the lined tray and refrigerate until chocolate coating is set.
5. Drizzle the truffles with white chocolate and decorate with glacé cherries to resemble holly.
6. Return to fridge to set completely before serving.

Is it Time to Consider Refinancing? By Jason Cheetham

With the Reserve Bank again increasing the official cash rate during November it is timely to consider whether you can save on your existing mortgage by refinancing it to a lower rate – either fixed or variable.

After the latest rate increase, the average standard variable rate of the major lenders is 8.07%. However there are, and should be, very few people paying this rate.

All lenders now have no frills loans or basic loans which, although they don't offer the full range of features available on a standard variable loan, can save you hundreds of dollars a year in interest. In most cases you'll never need these features anyway, so it could be worthwhile saving on interest charges.

It is also very interesting to compare fixed rates with variable rates. Currently the best variable rate available is around 7.30% but you can obtain a 3 or 5 year fixed rate for around 7.15% (as at end Nov 2006). Depending on whether you believe rates will increase or decrease, if you don't need the flexibility of variable rate then fixing could be a preferred option.

For example: If you have an interest only loan for a residential investment property which you don't make additional repayments on, and you believed interest



rates could remain the same or increase, why wouldn't you fix the loan at a lower rate than your current variable?

You can also opt for a combination or split loan, where you fix the majority of your borrowings at a lower rate but have a smaller variable component for flexibility. Most lenders offer these facilities.

So take a look at your most recent mortgage statements and make sure you are receiving a competitive interest rate. What may have been competitive some

years ago may not be now, due to the level of competition between lenders.

At Catalyst, it's our job to ensure you are not paying too much and to offer to review your situation annually so that you can be comfortable with the finance you have.

If you feel now is a good time to review your debt or to consider consolidating feel free to give us a call as we'd be happy to look at all your options.

Discounted Finance Packages – More Than Meets The Eye

By Kelly Robb

Many people know lenders have a typical "package" on offer – one which, if you borrow over a certain amount, you qualify for a discounted rate, with fee free banking and a credit card with an annual fee charged for the privilege.

But did you know that there are certain lenders who offer discounted rates and a multitude of other benefits without charging annual package fees? These packages are not always known to consumers.

If you belong to particular organisations, societies and/or employer groups (there

are too many to list) or even if you have a Gold American Express (AMEX) card you could be entitled to these packages.

Most lenders will offer a discount of up to 0.7% off the standard variable rate with their standard "professional packages".

Example 1:

With AMP Bank if you have a Gold AMEX card you qualify for 0.75% discount (depending on loan amount), no establishment fees or any fees on further borrowings and a fee-free transaction account with no annual package fee. In addition to this, you can also use ATMs from any lender network without incurring additional fees.

Example 2:

ANZ allows you to choose either the Breakfree Package which incurs an

annual fee but has no establishment fee, or the Professional Benefits Package with an upfront fee but no ongoing fees. The package you choose depends on your circumstances and how often you will alter your borrowings with the lender.

Example 3:

If you are a newly graduated medical practitioner in a particular field, ANZ allows you to borrow up to 95% of the purchase price on your owner occupied home with lender's mortgage insurance waived which can save you thousands!

There are many other lenders who offer finance packages which are not normally promoted so if you're wondering if you're eligible for a better finance package give the team at Catalyst a call.