



How LMI CAN HELP YOU GET INTO YOUR OWN HOME SOONER

Georgette Nicholas, Chief Executive Officer & Managing Director at Genworth explains one way of getting into your own home sooner.

Rising property prices in many locations, combined with cost of living pressures and the everyday stresses of life, mean that it is as difficult as ever to save a deposit to buy a home.

SO WHAT IS LENDERS MORTGAGE INSURANCE?

Lenders mortgage insurance, or LMI, makes it possible to buy a home in a safe way without having to save a 20 per cent deposit. It may also enable you to borrow at a more competitive interest rate that is comparable to a borrower who has a larger deposit. Simply put, the realities of the Australian housing market mean that without LMI many first homebuyers would not be able to purchase their own homes.

LMI is insurance that protects the lender – though the cost is borne by the

borrower – in the event that you default on your home loan, reducing the risk to the lender which has passed that risk on to the LMI provider. As the lender has reduced its risk, it is more willing to lend the funds for a property to a borrower with a smaller deposit – sometimes as low as five per cent of the value of the property.

Let's be very clear – lenders mortgage insurance is not Mortgage Protection Insurance. LMI is explicitly designed to help you secure your own home sooner while Mortgage Protection Insurance covers your mortgage in the event of death, sickness, unemployment or disability. With both products, it is the borrower who covers the cost of the premiums, rather than the lender. The LMI premium can usually be added to your home loan.

THE NUMBERS

Paying for the lender to take out LMI means that a homebuyer who is interested in a \$720,000 property and facing the prospect of saving a \$144,000

(20 per cent) deposit could potentially only have to save \$36,000 (five per cent). This means they can get into their home sooner, begin paying off their home loan and potentially start building equity.

LMI premiums are based on a combination of factors that influence the risk of a borrower defaulting on their loan, but the key drivers are the amount of the loan and the value of the security (eg premiums are more expensive for larger loans with smaller deposits). As an example, for a first homebuyer who wishes to purchase a \$720,000 property and has a \$72,000 deposit, Genworth's LMI Premium Estimator returns an indicative LMI premium of \$15,811 – a small proportion of the overall cost that will help you enter the market months, or years, earlier than if you had to save that additional \$72,000 (check out the *Buy or Rent* article on page 46).

OTHER OPTIONS

It may be suggested by some lenders or brokers that there are better options than paying for LMI.



Some parents may offer to use the equity in their own home to provide a supporting mortgage and/or guarantee. At a time when house price growth appears to be slowing, this requires serious consideration. And of course, not everyone's parents are in the position to be able to assist in this manner.

Another suggestion is to borrow the deposit shortfall as an unsecured personal loan or to obtain a cash advance on a credit card. Whilst this can be a short-term fix, most lenders will not accept borrowed funds as a source of the deposit or if they do, you will be required to list as a liability, potentially decreasing the amount you can borrow anyway. Longer term, the higher interest rates on credit cards and personal loans can result in financial stress, when the repayments need to be paid on top of your new home loan repayment.

If parents want to assist their children buy their first home, covering the cost of their LMI premium, instead of guaranteeing the loan, is a way they can help their children without putting

Genworth is the leading provider of LMI in Australia. LMI has been an important part of the Australian residential mortgage lending market since it was introduced by the Australian Government in 1965 to help support homeownership.

Independent information on lenders mortgage insurance can be found on the Insurance Council of Australia's website. Download the LMI Fact Sheet at [understandinsurance.com.au/types-of-insurance/lenders-mortgage-insurance](https://www.understandinsurance.com.au/types-of-insurance/lenders-mortgage-insurance)

themselves in a potential position of undue financial risk. Covering the cost of LMI is an affordable and safe alternative, and means that if their children default on the mortgage, the parents are not at risk of having to repay the full remaining loan amount.

HERE TO HELP

Being a part of Genworth, Australia's leading provider of LMI, has allowed me to see firsthand the difference LMI can make to the lives of Australians, by helping them get into homes sooner in a safe way and reducing the stress associated with saving the traditional 20 per cent deposit.

Genworth also understands that borrowers might encounter financial difficulty, so we established a hardship program, which assists borrowers struggling with their loan repayments. To date, Genworth has helped over 73,000 borrowers through this program, by supporting lenders to offer deferred and/or reduced repayments, and even loan term extensions.

I would encourage anyone struggling to save a deposit to speak to their lender or broker about LMI and find out how it can help you get into your own home sooner.

For more information on LMI, please visit [genworth.com.au/lmitoolkit](https://www.genworth.com.au/lmitoolkit)

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