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Queensland joins PEXA's e-conveyancing platform

Buying and selling property has just got a whole lot easier in Queensland as property transfers can now be made online through Property Exchange Australia (PEXA).

The roll-out of PEXA's online service will allow property lawyers and conveyancers to finalise all property transfers, including lodgement and financial settlement, online.

Queensland is now a part of the digital change that is bringing the legal industry, the banks and the land registry together so that they can interact virtually.

Properties are exchanged via a secure platform with final funds settling through the Reserve Bank of Australia.

PEXA is supported by the Queensland local government with direct transaction participation by the Land Titles Office and Office of State Revenue.

Established in 2010 to fulfill an agenda set by the Council of Australian Governments - to deliver a national e-conveyancing solution - PEXA's platform has been built in New South Wales, Victoria, Western Australia and now in the Sunshine state.

The remaining states are expected to join up from 2016 onward.

Backed by the Big Four

In addition to the four state governments, PEXA is backed by the big four banks and Macquarie Bank, as well as by 25 other smaller lenders.

So far, \$8 billion dollars' worth of property has been bought and sold on the platform.

PEXA chief executive, Marcus Price, said the \$6 trillion residential property market is Australia's largest single asset class and too important to be held back from going digital.

"Many lawyers undertaking conveyancing are already scanning documents and deploying practice software and other online solutions," he added.

"PEXA is helping businesses to build their online presence with the necessary training to confidently use the network. Over coming months we expect many firms will modernise their practice by turning to e-conveyancing."

The national roll out of the e-conveyancing platform will reduce a ton of stress for consumers who may also benefit from cost savings passed on from lawyers, conveyancers and banks, according to a recent survey by consultant PwC.

One in three consumers find transferring property difficult and stressful, with half of those surveyed pointing to settlement delays as the reason, the survey found.

Benefit the nation?

Where the settlement of a property is delayed the median delay was seven days and affected, on average, three people for each delay.

"This delay had financial and emotional repercussions with respondents, especially where the vendor subsequently had to delay another property settlement until funds were received creating a knock on effect," PwC said in the report.

Thus, the cycle continued with multiple property settlements hindered over and above the initial settlement delay.

Back-of-an-envelope calculations, by the advisory firm, put potential cost savings at around \$75 per consumer transaction.

The consultant's conclusion: given the ubiquity of land, a national e-conveyancing system will benefit the nation.

"The streamlining and automation of property settlement activities delivers benefits to the financial and business sectors, but also exerts a strong 'pull' across all sectors, increasing total activity in the economy as a whole," PwC argued.

These benefits are expected to accrue fully when PEXA is at its optimal operating level in 2017/18, when more states come on board.

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