

**AUSTRALIA'S**  
**TOP 10**  
**FRANCHISE**  
**BROKERAGES**

## Top 10 Franchise Brokerages 2013

Doug Lee ...

Macquarie is proud to support the MPA special report on the Top 10 Franchise Brokerages in Australia. We congratulate the successful brokers and acknowledge their achievements and efforts.

Macquarie has always been, and will continue to be, a strong advocate for brokers. We have a single minded vision that our brokers are central to

everything we do. We recognise the important role that they play in the industry and we continually strive to provide solutions which empower engagement between them and their clients.

Our mortgage offering is a key part of our business and we value the support we receive from the intermediaries who work closely with us to continually identify innovations that fit with their business model and provide tailored solutions for their clients. With this in mind, we recently launched a media campaign that put the broker at the centre of our value proposition both in our call to action but also by providing a local broker search function on our campaign website.

Continually building on and exploring new areas to enhance brokers' practices in both the short and long term is integral to Macquarie. It's a pleasure to be associated with a Report that identifies and rewards excellence, commitment and innovation.

Congratulations again to all who have been recognised in this year's Top 10 Franchise Brokerages in Australia. It's a significant accolade and one you should all be very proud of.

Doug Lee

Head of Sales - Mortgages, Macquarie Bank Limited



These brokerages are truly making the most of having the franchise system firmly behind them. What's the secret to their success?

**T**he franchise model is a tried and tested route to running a brokerage that has its obvious appeal: it's a business model that provides established systems and back office support, as well as the consumer appeal that a nationally recognised brand provides.

Sure, it's not for everyone, but numerous brokers nationwide are thriving under the franchise system. And, judging by the quality of submissions to MPA's Top 10 Franchise Brokerages report this year, there are clearly opportunities to build up a solid business under the wing of a franchisor.

Once again, we have approached Australia's franchisors – large and small – and ranked their top-performing brokerages to discover who has reached the top of the pile in terms of loan book, annual volume and customer service.

As was the case last year, we have used a broad brush when using the term 'franchise' so that all of the nation's top mortgage broking brands are represented. While a large number of the companies approached operate a franchise model in its truest sense, others offer a more flexible variation on the franchise theme. The 'branded aggregator' model, for example, is represented – which includes groups that require or license brokers to use a national brand.

## METHODOLOGY

All of Australia's major franchise groups and branded aggregators were approached and asked to nominate up to five brokerages to take part in the report. All of the nominees were then ranked according to the following four criteria:

- Total loan book value
- Settlements for the 2012 calendar year
- Average volume per broker/loan writer
- Conversion rate

The idea of ranking each brokerage using these four varied metrics is to create a level playing field where size – while an element of the scoring system – doesn't override all other considerations. Once its scores for all four categories were totted up, each brokerage came out with an overall score which was then used to determine its rank. The nominees who amassed the top 10 scores overall made it into the report.

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**AUSSIE  
PARRAMATTA**

**LOCATION:**  
Parramatta, NSW

A new entrant to the Top 10 Franchise Brokerages line-up this year, Aussie Parramatta has stormed into 10th place with a solid performance in each of the given categories. Franchisee Ross Le Quesne reveals more.

**What is the secret to a successful brokerage?**

The secret to a successful brokerage is providing an outstanding customer experience right from initial contact. I try to have a thorough understanding of the client's needs and their wealth journey. I have maintained relationships with a number of business partners and customers, which leads to some great referrals that grow my business. Throughout it all though, I really focus on what we can do for the customer and add value to their priorities.

**What are the advantages of being part of a franchise?**

The strength of the brand is powerful in attracting customers. Aussie is a brand they trust, and we have access to Aussie's marketing leading systems and processes – as well as functions like marketing and IT support.

**What trends are you noticing this year so far?**

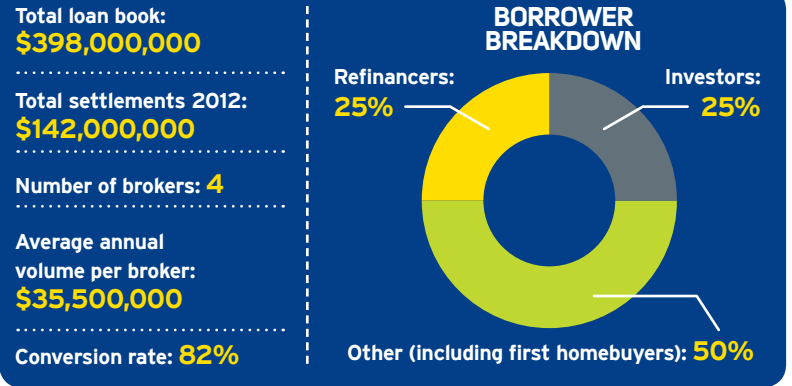
I am seeing many first homebuyers are presenting as investors, and that most of our clients come to us very well informed. There is also a lot more activity in the property investment market with good yields and low rates. With recent changes to superannuation I have also seen more interest in SMSF lending.

**What are your goals for the year?**

I have set myself a target of 15% growth settling \$160m a year and portfolio growth of 25%. I would also like to see my two new brokers hit the ground running and settle \$3m a month.

**How do you market your business and generate leads?**

Business alliance partners, database marketing, existing customer referrals and shopfront presence in a high foot traffic location.



**How important are referrals to you, and what is your strategy for increasing referral business?**

Referrals are critical to our success, and to generate those I always ensure Aussie Parramatta embraces our systematic sales process. I also think it is crucial that you always do what you say you are going to do. I really have a 'give your best to your best' mentality when it comes to referral business, and this keeps the referrals coming in.

**Have you diversified into other income streams? If so, what is your strategy for diversification?**

No, we focus on being the best at what we do and partner with other likeminded professionals.

**What's the most important thing a broker can do to grow their business?**

Be flexible to change and look for opportunities; become a passionate learner about lending, property, business and investment; and align yourself with likeminded professionals who have the sort of success that you wish to achieve.

# 9

## LOAN MARKET OAKLEIGH

**LOCATION:**  
Oakleigh, VIC

Another new entrant in this year's Top 10, Alex Shumsky's Loan Market Oakleigh outfit is writing some tidy business for a three-broker team. Shumsky explains to MPA that a bit of good old fashioned hard work goes a long way.

### What is the secret to a successful brokerage?

Like any business, success is built upon a foundation of hard work, dedication and structures. It's also incredibly important to have the right staff and brokers working with you. Without the support of my team our brokerage wouldn't be able to provide the great service that it does.

### What are the advantages of being part of a branded aggregator?

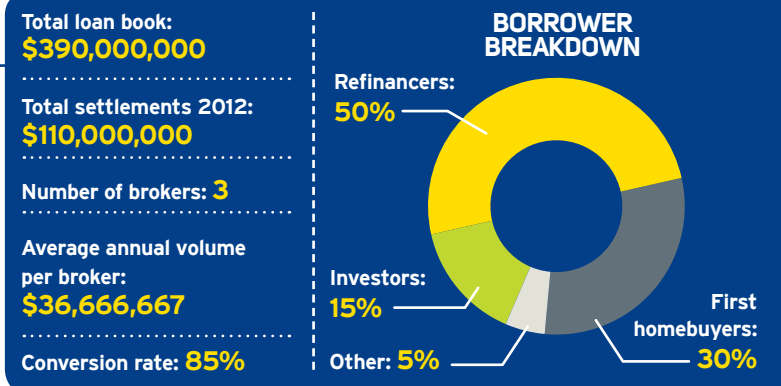
Loan Market offers my business several resources and advantages that allow me to focus on writing loans while knowing my brokerage is supported by a strong brand that's heavily marketed in the right way. In the past year alone we've had a national television commercial expose our brand on a national level. We also have some of the best editorial publicity in the country.

### What trends are you noticing this year so far?

This year is all about the return of confidence into the economy and housing market. Auction clearance rates are up, sales are up and there's a strong feeling of optimism about the housing market. We're at or near the bottom of the interest rate cycle which is helping encourage many buyers get into the market. While the RBA is unlikely to drop rates much further this year that does indicate our economy is strong and that consumers aren't going to need lower rates to start spending again. To start the year I've seen an uplift in enquiries from first homebuyers.

### What are your goals for the year?

I'd like to grow my volumes by 25% and continue my strong relationships with my referral partners. With the market always evolving I want to make sure my referral partners know how I can help their clients achieve their financial goals. I'm also highly dedicated to helping the other brokers in my business achieve success and am going to work hard to ensure they all increase their volumes.



### How do you market your business and generate leads?

Besides the marketing initiatives taken by Loan Market at a national level, I market myself through the Ray White offices I'm in partnership with. I generate the majority of my leads through referrals from past clients and their family and friends.

### How important are referrals to you, and what is your strategy for increasing referral business?

The word-of-mouth referrals will always be an important part of my business, but I find they're even more important for the newer brokers in my team who are working hard to grow their businesses. Having the right systems and procedures in place for my team to properly service the referrals has been the key to making sure our referrals are always coming in.

### Have you diversified into other income streams? If so, what is your strategy for diversification?

This year I've begun to offer financial planning and risk product sales. I think it's important we continue to find ways to add value to our clients and make sure that we're offering them the best service we can.

### What's the most important thing a broker can do to grow their business?

The most important things an office can do to grow include: having a clear structure in the office that highlights the strengths of individual team members; having a strong work ethic and the expertise to be able to fully understand your clients' financial situation and what loan product will be right for their personal circumstances.



JOINT

7

**CLUB  
FINANCIAL  
SERVICES  
GIPPSLAND****LOCATION:  
Traralgon, VIC**

Coming in equal seventh, new entrant Club Financial Services Gippsland has been bringing in some phenomenal figures for a regional outfit. No doubt Rob Egan and his team's customer focus has played no small part in their success.

**What is the secret to a successful brokerage?**

There is no secret to a successful brokerage or any successful business for that matter without the customer being the prime focus. We pride ourselves on being able to cater to our customers' needs. Finding the right lender and product is paramount. Partnerships with our third-party lenders are also built on mutual respect. And last, but certainly not least, having a great team is essential – and I am extremely lucky to be surrounded by a very loyal and dedicated team.

**What are the advantages of being part of a franchise?**

A good franchisor actively promotes themselves to help build the brand and provide the right tools for you to work with. By being part of a group we can measure ourselves against other franchisees and look at ways in which to improve and share information. The franchisor also assists with staff development and training and ensures you meet regulatory requirements.

**What trends are you noticing this year so far?**

We have seen a decline in first homebuyers and construction loans, but an increase in property investment and refinancing. We have embraced the trend for diversification into more financial products to better serve our clients, but without losing focus of our core business.

**What are your goals for the year?**

Streamline our office procedures by utilising as much electronic means as possible. Specifically target our database to generate cross-sell opportunities for vehicle and equipment finance, as well as insurance and wealth creation with our in-house financial planner.

**How do you market your business & generate leads?**

Almost all of our business comes from our existing clients who are either buying, selling, refinancing or referring



Rob Egan

Total loan book:  
**\$330,251,042**

Total settlements 2012:  
**\$84,378,053**

Number of brokers: **2**

Average annual  
volume per broker:  
**\$42,189,027**

Conversion rate: **92%**

their family, friends and work colleagues to us. We have also built respectful relationships with likeminded businesspeople – many of whom are our clients also. We keep ourselves in the public eye by placing a weekly ad in the local paper, and on occasions run radio campaigns targeting a specific audience – ie first homebuyers, etc. We sponsor numerous sporting clubs where we get exposure from our signage all year round, where we attend as many games and events as possible. We send out a quarterly newsletter, birthday cards, Christmas cards, yearly calendars and milestone event cards also.

**How important are referrals to you, and what is your strategy for increasing referral business?**

Referrals are most important to any business, word of mouth referrals best of all. A happy client is the best source of referral because they continue to refer their family, friends and colleagues. We don't receive, nor have we ever paid referral fees to anyone. All our referrals are above reproach and we are respected for this attitude. We are also in the early stages of trying to get a BNI (Business Network International) up and running in our town.

**Have you diversified into other income streams? If so, what is your strategy for diversification?**

Diversifying income sources has become very important in our business, largely due to the reduction of commissions in recent years. We have started a financial planning business and have commenced providing vehicle finance, which we hope will evolve into equipment finance as well. We also have a general insurance referral arrangement in place. All of these new ventures are providing our clients with more choice; they have embraced these services and are providing us with a new revenue stream without a lot of effort or cost. My strategy is to get our clients, new and existing, to always think of us first for all their financial needs.

# JOINT 7

## LOAN MARKET EARLWOOD

**LOCATION:**  
Earlwood, NSW

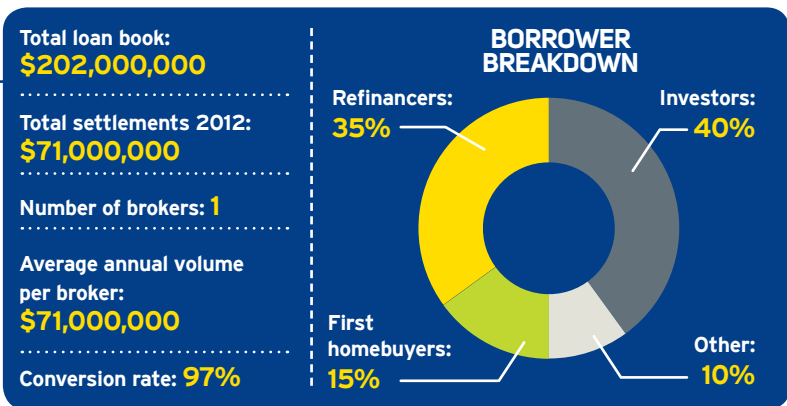
Jason Basseal has made an impressive entry into this year's Top 10 with some solid numbers and a near perfect conversion rate. He tells MPA why every successful broker needs to have a quality team by their side.

### What is the secret to a successful brokerage?

Communication with your clients is a key aspect of any successful brokerage. Successful offices make sure that their clients are fully informed through the whole process and that they're also confident in the product they've chosen. Strong partnership with lenders is also a critical part of being able to provide a service level above other options a customer has, when looking at a home loan. However, the biggest secret comes down to the team you work with. Without the dedication, support and excellent customer service of the staff in my office, we wouldn't be achieving the results we are. Each steps of the home loan process is delegated to someone in my office who has the expertise to confidently guide the client through their journey.

### What are the advantages of being part of a branded aggregator?

Being part of an aggregator that offers the right marketing support is a huge advantage for my business. Loan Market puts a significant amount of effort in to



make sure our brokers are well represented on television, in newspapers and on the internet. Being part of a well-known brand gives me the confidence to focus on the areas of my business that I specialise in while knowing I'm being supported by the marketing efforts of my aggregator.

### What are your goals for the year?

Last year was a huge year for my business – we increased our volumes by 110%. This year I'm aiming to maintain consistency from last year's results but still achieve areas of growth with certain types of borrowers and properties. I also want to continue to mentor my team and help them achieve their professional and personal goals. The success of my business largely depends on supporting and encouraging them to be the best they can be.

### How do you market your business and generate leads?

I generate leads through my existing database and client referrals. We have a very organised back-end process. I rely heavily on Loan Market to support me in marketing myself online. I have a webpage which is fully optimised for my local area and the key words I am going after. I'm finding many of my referral clients will look at my website before contacting me so it's been incredibly important to have this great tool.

### How important are referrals to you, and what is your strategy for increasing referral business?

Referrals are extremely important to my business. My strategy to increase the number of referrals starts with being in systematic contact with my database and providing valuable insights and considerations for their home finance needs. From there it's all about making sure I'm at the top of my client's mind whenever they – or anyone they know – are considering their home loan options.



Jason Basseal

## 6

**MORTGAGE  
CHOICE NORTH  
AND WEST  
BRISBANE  
(AND OTHERS)**

**LOCATION:**  
North Brisbane, West  
Brisbane, Townsville,  
Mt Gravatt (all QLD)

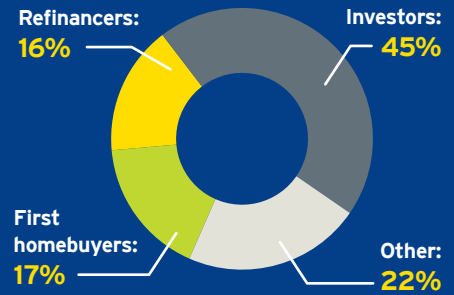
Total loan book:  
**\$1,090,297,961**

Total settlements 2012:  
**\$227,199,496**

Number of brokers: **7**

Average annual volume  
per broker:  
**\$32,457,071**

Conversion rate: **72%**

**BORROWER  
BREAKDOWN**


Chris and Letitia Vitale have established a strong foothold in the Queensland market, with a franchise spanning three offices in the Brisbane vicinity and one in Townsville. The seven-broker team has now built up a total loan book of more than \$1bn, and shows no signs of stopping there.

**What is the secret to a successful brokerage?**

The secret to success comes down to hard work, great staff and a culture based around being the best we can be.

*“We assist with meeting our clients’ full needs, whether it is by sourcing commercial finance or by putting them in contact with a quality financial planner”*

**What are the advantages of being part of a franchise?**

The support of the franchisor team and the credibility that comes with the brand.

**What trends are you noticing this year so far?**

From what we are experiencing, the market is looking up. There are more client enquiries coming through with people investigating fixed interest rates and investment property purchases.

**What are your goals for the year?**

The overarching goal is to see our business write \$300m in settlements this year.

**How do you market your business and generate leads?**

In addition to traditional marketing activities, we are very focused on building strong relationships with our referral partners.

**How important are referrals to you, and what is your strategy for increasing referral business?**

Referrals are a very importance aspect of our business. In fact, 70% of our business comes from referrals. We foster our referral relationships with open dialogue and 24/7 availability.

**Have you diversified into other income streams? If so, what is your strategy for diversification?**

We assist with meeting our clients’ full needs, whether it is by sourcing commercial finance or by putting them in contact with a quality financial planner.

**What’s the most important thing a broker can do to grow their business?**

Meet with every lead you receive and build rapport with them from day one.



Letitia Vitale



Chris Vitale



# A Macquarie mortgage helps you grow your business



**A mortgage is one of the biggest investments your clients will ever make. Who better to get a mortgage from than the bank that understands investment.**

Macquarie offers a suite of mortgage solutions that allows you, the mortgage broker or financial adviser, to maintain a long-term relationship with your clients through several property transactions and further grow your business.

Macquarie has introduced a search function on its website to help potential clients find their local, Macquarie accredited broker, actively directing mortgage traffic to your business.

You will also have access to the tools and intelligence you need to enhance your clients' portfolios through Macquarie's traditional strength as the bank for financial service professionals.

**Trade up to the mortgage that gives you and your clients more. Talk to a Macquarie BDM or visit [macquarie.com.au/mortgagesolutions](http://macquarie.com.au/mortgagesolutions) to find out more.**

**FORWARD** thinking

5

**MORTGAGE CHOICE CHELTENHAM**

**LOCATION:**  
Cheltenham, VIC

**What is the secret to a successful brokerage?**

It's like the 'secret' to weight loss: eat less and move more. Everybody knows what they need to do, but it's the doing part that is the hardest. It's much easier to try and find a miracle solution. Broking is the same; there are no magic bullets (well I haven't found one yet). We all know what we need to do to be better. For many, it's striving to maintain the discipline that is the greatest challenge.

**What are the advantages of being part of a franchise?**

The backing of the brand and support of the team.

**What trends are you noticing this year so far?**

The property market seems stronger particularly in Perth, Brisbane and Melbourne. First homebuyers are beginning to re-emerge and the fixed loans price war has resulted in an increased number of customers choosing to fix their loans.

**What are your goals for the year?**

We have 10 business goals that we focus on all year ranging from financial and sales targets, to staff retention, training and community contribution. They are reviewed and tracked every week by the team.

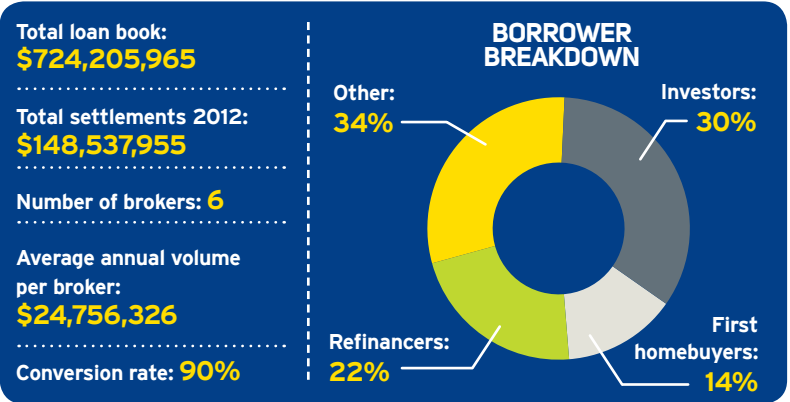
**How do you market your business and generate leads?**

We have a strong online presence, which leverages off the Mortgage Choice brand. This generates our new flow of business. The rest of the marketing budget is spent on our client retention program to gain referrals and earn the repeat business.

**How important are referrals to you, and what is your strategy for increasing referral business?**

All well-established broking businesses need a constant stream of referrals. Our strategy is simple: provide excellent lending solutions that are backed by good customer service and maintain contact with clients. The repeats and referrals flow from that.

**Have you diversified into other income streams? If so, what is your strategy for diversification?**



“The secret to a successful brokerage is like the ‘secret’ to weight loss: eat less and move more. Everybody knows what they need to do, but it’s the doing part that is the hardest. It’s much easier to try and find a miracle solution”

We support Mortgage Choice’s move from a mortgage broker to a full financial services provider. It is what is required to be successful in the future. Our strategy has been to implement the offering of the diversified range of products into our normal process, rather than offering them as an afterthought.

**What’s the most important thing a broker can do to grow their business?**

It’s pretty simple really; provide good service, offer excellent lending solutions and stay in touch with your database. This will result in repeat business and, the lifeline of all service businesses, lots of referrals.

# 4

## MORTGAGE CHOICE CBD ADELAIDE (AND OTHERS)

**LOCATION:**  
Adelaide, Prospect and Blackwood (SA),  
Central Northern WA,

CBD and South East Metro Perth, North Suburbs WA, Miranda, Cronulla and Sutherland (NSW)

This multi-state Mortgage Choice franchise has leapt up the ranks to jump from eighth spot last year to fourth place in this year's Top 10, thanks in part to its \$1.1bn loan book and 2012 settlements of almost \$200m. Franchise owners Richard Crommelin, Michelle Towner and Dennis Aplin talk *MPA* though their business plan.

### What is the secret to a successful brokerage?

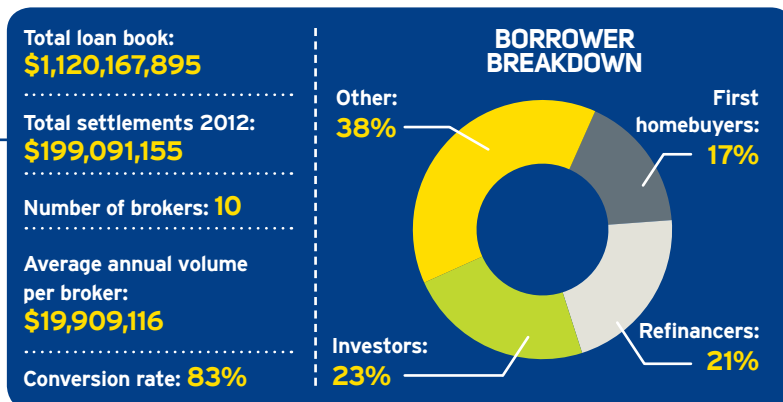
The secret to success is having documented procedures for lead and application management. This ensures the customer experience is of a consistently high standard. It is also having a good team of brokers and support staff who are well trained, engaged with the business and focused on the company's direction. Your team should be attentive to customers' needs and maintain constant communication with customers through all stages of the application process, through to settlement and beyond.

### What are the advantages of being part of a franchise?

The advantages to being part of a franchise are the benefits of being associated with a corporate brand that has a strong, positive image. The network of franchisees operating under the brand provides the ability to benchmark yourself against other similar businesses and to share and learn from the group. There is also the full suite of business component support that the franchisor offers, which may not be accessible to SMEs. These support services include marketing and public relations support, IT assistance and operational guidance and development. The franchisor is often an objective observer and counsellor to your business and its performance.

### What trends are you noticing this year so far?

Property buyers who are dissatisfied with dealing direct with lenders appear more willing to engage brokers. In terms of lending, we are seeing an increase in owner-occupied purchases and a return of land and construction purchases, especially in WA. Clients are talking to us much earlier in the home loan thought



process, meaning there is a longer gestation period of a lead before it turns into an application.

### What are your goals for the year?

Our business goals for the year are to improve productivity and grow our business, successfully integrate the purchase of our Mortgage Choice Financial Planning business into our mortgage broking business, and to refine our process and structure to give brokers more time to do what they are best at – sitting in front of customers, telling our story.

### How do you market your business & generate leads?

Following on from Mortgage Choice television, radio and web-based advertising, we do database calling to our customers on a regular basis, actively seek regular advice about website optimisation, ask for customer referrals and reward our customers for providing referrals, and we work closely with our business alliance partners to promote our services.

### Have you diversified into other income streams?

We have diversified into other income streams. We do insurance, commercial and vehicle finance. Our strategy is to educate our brokers and our clients about the diversified products we offer. We are standardising the process for how these leads are identified so we can maximise on all opportunities with our existing and new clients.

JOINT  
2THE MORTGAGE  
GALLERY  
JOONDALUPLOCATION:  
Joondalup, WA

New to the Top 10 Franchise Brokerages report this year, The Mortgage Gallery Joondalup has benefitted from being part of a large franchise, the Smartline group, says Dave Urquhart.

### What is the secret to a successful brokerage?

People and systems are two key elements that are vital to success. The existence of the business and its associated success lies within having the right people and processes in place. Getting the right people is difficult but you learn as you go. In those instances where people have not stayed with us, it's generally been because their main focus (largely money) was not a key principle of our business and did not support our value of 'focus on the right activities and the results will look after themselves'. Systems are vital so that everyone is clear on what needs to be done. This is how we work in The Mortgage Gallery Joondalup – the client experience is at the forefront of all we do. I have the personal view that if McDonald's can train a 14-year-old to follow a system and cross-sell and up-sell, there is absolutely no reason why we can't do the same. For the above to occur there need to be founding principles of why you exist, with a clearly articulated mission and vision statement with key values aligned to these to support everyday actions. The Joondalup team went through the process of creating the above with the use of an external facilitator which has resulted in a common consensus of why we exist, the values we hold dear to our heart and



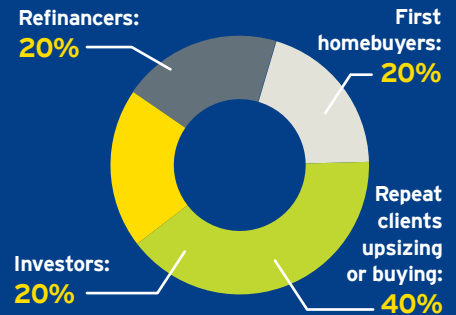
Dave Urquhart

Total loan book:  
\$600,000,000Total settlements 2012:  
\$169,000,000

Number of brokers: 5

Average annual volume  
per broker:  
\$33,800,000

Conversion rate: 100%

BORROWER  
BREAKDOWN

what the client can expect from each and every one of us. Finally, there needs to be a layer of trust between management and employees to ensure that communication is open at all times – this takes time and cannot occur overnight. Communication in all areas of the business is vital. As in a personal relationship, the minute communication falters, issues start to arise.

### What are the advantages of being part of a franchise?

There are many advantages being part of the Smartline group. We have ongoing support with IT, marketing, systems and compliance, which allows us to focus on the client experience and marketing the business. This support is vital and I know as a business owner I can email or call on support at any time and receive assistance when required. The ability to speak to other franchise owners within the group is also a strength. It gives you an opportunity to learn and understand what is working for them and the associated moral support is always appreciated. The fact that Smartline deals with our business partners (the banks) regarding agreements, commissions, etc is also a real bonus.

### What trends are you noticing this year so far?

There has been a lot of interest from clients in fixed rates due to the banks lowering their interest rates which has led to a percentage of people switching internally to these products. The interest rate cuts have encouraged investors and first homebuyers back into the market which has seen an increase in enquiry and applications. The top end of the market (\$1m-plus) is still struggling with turnover in sales, as has been the case for over 12 months. Fly-in fly-out workers from the mines are starting to buy property utilising the surplus cash from their large annual incomes. The increase in enquiry and application is reflected in our office's volume of applications in February – we submitted \$38m for the month. This was the highest since we opened the office eight years ago and is also a Smartline record.

# JOINT 2

## CHOICE HOME LOANS LEEDERVILLE

**LOCATION:**  
Leederville, WA

Total loan book:  
**\$871,023,434**

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Total settlements 2012:  
**\$205,141,368**

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Number of brokers: **11**

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Average annual volume  
per broker:  
**\$18,649,215**

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Conversion rate: **95%**

Last year's first placed brokerage, Choice Home Loans Leederville, has just been pushed into joint second place this year. But that's hardly symptomatic of a business on the wane, as last year's settlement figure of \$205,141,368 is hardly a poor effort for the WA-based brokerage. Director Marco Meloni explains all.

### What is the secret to a successful brokerage?

We believe the secret lies in keeping it simple. The business model involves three key elements: continually looking to improve, being dedicated and working extremely hard, and always putting your client first.

### What are the advantages of being part of a franchise?

Having the strength of the Choice Home Loans brand behind us is a great advantage. Choice also provides our business with industry and client expertise, professionalism and support through a number of different channels. As a Choice franchise, we know we are a valued team member and feel part of the broader Choice family.

### What trends are you noticing this year so far?

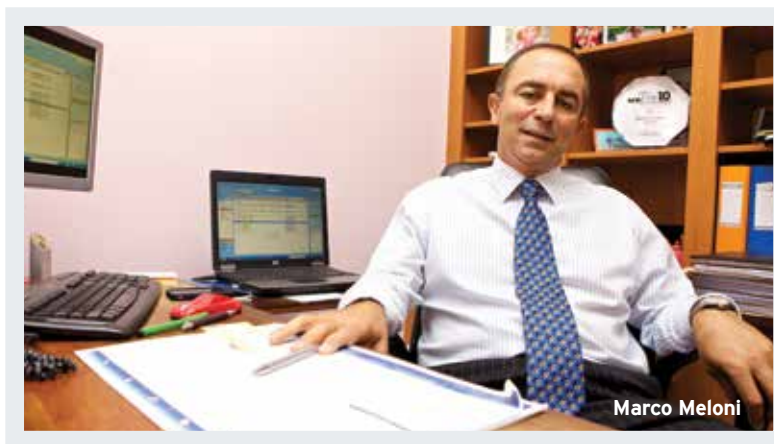
For the first time in a while, there is a positive energy; both the market and the economy are looking healthy. Consumers are regaining confidence and as our clients start to focus on restructuring and rebuilding their investments we will be there to provide advice and support.

### What are your goals for the year?

We prefer to take a much more holistic approach in which we focus on our three key elements for a successful brokerage. We continually use our simple yet effective business model that works year on year. We are always looking to improve, we work hard and we always put our clients first.

### How do you market your business & generate leads?

We like to generate most of our leads through word of mouth referrals from our existing clients. As a business if you are doing a good job and looking after your clients, then leads will generate themselves.



Marco Meloni

### How important are referrals to you, and what is your strategy for increasing referral business?

In our business, it is all about referrals, that is what we live and breathe. Word of mouth referrals from existing clients is the biggest compliment any business can receive. I am proud to say that we rely mainly on referrals from our existing clients as opposed to advertising or marketing.

### Have you diversified into other income streams? If so, what is your strategy for diversification?

We are supporting the ALI insurance model for life and income protection insurance and offering our clients a wide range of services through our trusted lender partners. Diversifying income streams is becoming an increasingly important part of our business.

### What's the most important thing a broker can do to grow their business?

Keep it simple and focus on the key relationships in your business. The first is with your clients, brokers must love their clients just like their own family. The second relationship is the one with your partners: aggregators, lenders and BDMs. Our Choice partners provide extensive advice, training and education, expertise and support. Fostering these relationships is the most important thing.

## MORTGAGE CHOICE GLENELG

LOCATION:  
Glenelg, SA

# 1

A well-known name in mortgage broking circles, the indefatigable Wendy Higgins and her team at Mortgage Choice Glenelg have managed to take the top spot in this year's Top 10 Franchise Brokerages report, having been squeezed into second place last year. Higgins speaks about her big plans for the future.

### What is the secret to a successful brokerage?

The four p's: passion, people, persistence and profit.

### What are the advantages of being part of a franchise?

There are numerous advantages of being part of a franchise. Most of these relate to the abundance of support provided, including marketing and public relations, IT, compliance and loan accounting and of course, with Mortgage Choice we receive the support of the brand, which results in group office leads, networking opportunities and a support system of likeminded business owners.

### What trends are you noticing this year so far?

There is a lot more property market activity and from what we are seeing, word of mouth referrals are on the rise. My team and I are being sought after more and more because of our expertise and solid 15-year reputation.



Total loan book:  
**\$1,059,371,332**

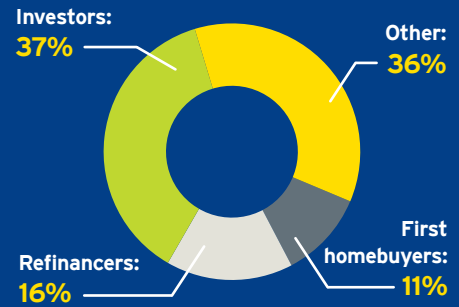
Total settlements 2012:  
**\$198,888,703**

Number of brokers: **5**

Average annual volume per broker:  
**\$39,777,741**

Conversion rate: **92%**

### BORROWER BREAKDOWN



### What are your goals for the year?

Goals for this year are to settle \$20m per month, reach a loan book size of \$1.1bn and to purchase and build our Mortgage Choice Financial Planning franchise.

### How do you market your business and generate leads?

Word of mouth is the best form of local marketing. We add to this by maintaining a very close and strong referral relationship with a real estate office close by and sponsoring and being actively involved with eight sporting clubs. Other ways we market the business are by doing local newspaper wraparounds and engaging local journalists, having six branded cars out on the road, building on our online presence by maintaining our mini-site and social media profiles, conducting free local seminars, getting involved with charity work and by being out and about in our local community.

### How important are referrals to you, and what is your strategy for increasing referral business?

Referrals are gold. We thank our referrers straight away and treat the lead with the utmost respect by acting immediately. We reward our best referral sources with lunches, race days, after hours get-togethers and just a simple thank you works wonders.

### Have you diversified into other income streams?

We have diversified our income stream. We are able to offer our clients personal loans, SMSF loans, commercial lending and general insurance. We are currently focusing on ramping up the building and contents insurance and are in the process of setting up new Mortgage Choice Financial Planning franchise.

### What's the most important thing a broker can do to grow their business?

Look after every client by being professional and very personal, getting to know them, caring about their situation and then getting the job done as you promised.



Wendy Higgins  
MORTGAGE  
CHOICE



MPA *Top 10*  
2020-2021

No. 1

Mortgage Choice  
Overall

