Most Australian First Home Buyers Now Co-Buy, Yet Few Sign a Co-Ownership Agreement

Co-buying is now the norm for first home buyers, but most skip the co-ownership agreement and title choice that protect them if things go wrong.

Titlespace Founder and Executive Director Daniella Muzitano and NAPP co-host Gianni Musumeci of Leverage Property Advisers recording the Season 2 opening episode of NAPP (Not Another Property Podcast), "Buying Property With Family in Australia.

SYDNEY, NSW, AUSTRALIA, August 19, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- More Australians are buying property with a partner, friend or sibling than ever before, yet the document that protects them if life gets complicated - a written co-ownership agreement, backed by the right title structure - is the one thing most never sign. [Titlespace](), a Sydney-based digital conveyancing firm and incorporated legal practice, is urging co-buyers to sort ownership shares and exit terms in writing before settlement, not after a dispute.

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>
> *Daniella Muzitano*

The scale of the shift is now measurable in 2026. According to Commonwealth Bank customer data, six in 10 (60%) of first home buyers are purchasing with someone else, including spouses, partners, friends or family. That figure is a broad measure - it counts couples and partners, not just friends-and-family arrangements - but the direction is unmistakable: buying solo is no longer the norm for first home buyers.

The friends-and-family slice of that trend is growing fast too. NAB's proprietary lending data showed that joint home loans to friends or family buying together rose more than 33% in the 12 months to July 2025, led by Victoria (up 47%), South Australia (up 37%) and New South Wales (up 34%). Co-buying property with people you are not married to has moved from the fringe to the mainstream.

Sentiment data points the same way, though it should be read with care. A Buxton Real Estate Group "State of Living Index" (13 July 2026) found 70% of Victorians would consider co-ownership and 80% of under-35s are open to buying with friends or family. That survey is small, Victoria-only, agency-commissioned and attitudinal rather than behavioural, so it is best read as a signal of latent demand, not a hard national number - but it lines up with what the lending data already shows.

NAPP co-hosts (left to right): Michael O'Malley (Rate Money Sydney City), Andrew Chan (Phoenix Private Wealth Management), Gianni Musumeci (Leverage Property Advisers) and Daniella Muzitano (Titlespace).

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The risk nobody wants to talk about

The reason a written agreement matters is simple: money and relationships do not always mix well. In an Australian survey of 1,005 people, 61.3% of Australians cited fear of damaging the relationship as the top reason against co-buying. Among people who actually did co-buy, about one in three (roughly 33%) reported some conflict or issue, though the most common was a relationship breakdown unrelated to the property.

The disputes that are property-related, over shares, costs and exits, are largely avoidable. They tend to trace back to questions nobody answered up front: who owns what share, who pays for what, and what happens if one person wants out, loses their job, or dies.

The plain-English fix: get it in writing before you buy

Under general Australian property practice, co-owners typically hold title in one of two ways, and the difference matters. As a matter of general education (not personal legal advice), the two structures are [joint tenants and tenants in common](). Joint tenancy usually carries a right of survivorship, meaning a deceased owner's interest generally passes automatically to the surviving owner. Tenancy in common lets co-owners hold defined, unequal shares that each owner can leave to whomever they choose. The right structure depends on your circumstances and the relevant state property legislation, which is exactly why it is worth advice before you sign.

Alongside the title structure, a written co-ownership agreement (sometimes called a tenants in common agreement) sets out the ownership share of each buyer, how costs are split, and a clear exit or buyout path if someone needs to sell. Titlespace's guidance to co-buyers is to put the hard what-ifs - job loss, relationship breakdown, death - on paper before settlement, while everyone is still on good terms.

"The single most useful conversation co-buyers can have is 'tenants in common vs joint tenants' - and most people have never had it," said Daniella Muzitano, Founder and Executive Director of Titlespace. "The difference between joint tenants and tenants in common isn't just legal jargon; it decides who owns what share and what happens to that share down the track. Pair the right title structure with a written co-ownership agreement that spells out shares, costs and an exit path, and you address most of the common reasons friends and family fall out over property. This is Titlespace's general guidance, not personal legal advice - but as a rule, sort it out before you buy, not after something goes wrong."

Bringing the conversation to a wider audience

To help more Australians understand these choices in plain language, Titlespace, a founding partner behind NAPP (Not Another Property Podcast), helped co-produce the Season 2 opening episode, "Buying Property With Family in Australia," alongside co-hosts from Leverage Property Advisers, Phoenix Private Wealth Management and Rate Money Sydney City. The episode unpacks the co-ownership decisions covered above for a general audience. Readers who want the written version can start with [Titlespace on buying property with family or friends].

Sources

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About Titlespace

Titlespace is a Sydney-based digital conveyancing firm and incorporated legal practice, helping buyers and sellers move through property transactions with fixed fees, clear guidance and no hidden costs. Titlespace combines qualified conveyancing expertise with a plain-language approach that takes the jargon out of buying and selling property in Australia.

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