



## How equity helped Mark improve his home

**With a Home Equity Loan and lots of hard work, HomeStart customer Mark has transformed the house he bought 2½ years ago into a home that suits his family's lifestyle and needs.**

When Mark took out a Home Equity Loan, his first priority was to upgrade his car.

"The new car was definitely one of the best things, having a reliable car is essential for me – and I just love driving it," said Mark.

With this priority met, Mark turned his attention to improving his home. The plan was to make changes that would not only increase the home's value, but transform it into a space that suited his family's needs.

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To Mark, having a home that was secure, low-maintenance and modern meant he and his family would have more time to enjoy life.

Mark has made significant improvements both inside and outside the home, giving it a whole new look and feel. He re-landscaped the front and back yards, laid new lawns and paving, put in a pergola, added roller shutters, planted palm trees, and a new shed is on its way.

"I'm not big on gardening, so the idea was to modernise the garden, to make it easy to maintain," Mark said.

Mark has also made a number of improvements inside the home, which have added to the home's value and will

offer his family modern living for many years to come.

"We have redone the flooring – floating floorboards throughout the house, and new cabinets and stainless steel bench tops for the kitchen," said Mark.

"The bathroom and laundry have also been updated with fresh paint and tiling."

Mark is thrilled to have been able to use his home equity to buy the car he wanted and make changes to his home that offer both financial and lifestyle benefits.

"There's just a few more things to do, and then we can sit back and relax," he said.

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## Spring into the garden!



*Melissa King is a horticulturist and author of Garden Feast.*

**In this edition of Smile, Melissa King – one of the stars of Channel 9's new show Battle Fronts – shares a few tips about how to make the most of your garden for spring.**

### **Fruit and veggies for your table**

Nothing beats vine-ripened tomatoes or juicy peaches picked straight from the tree and spring is the perfect time to start your own kitchen garden. You don't need loads of space and there are lots of compact fruit and vegetable varieties that can be grown in pots on your patio or balcony.

Leafy greens like lettuce and silverbeet are a great choice. They grow at Ferrari pace and can be planted and harvested year round in most climates. Simply nip out and harvest them leaf by leaf as you need them for fresh salads and stir-fries. Grow a combination of Cos, Mignonette and Butterhead lettuces, so there's plenty of colour and interest in your containers and the salad bowl.

I'm also particularly fond of 'Rainbow' Silverbeet, with orange, gold, white and red stems which provide vibrant colour in the garden and on the plate.

### **Fantastic flowers**

Spring signals the start of warmer weather and more time in the garden, so why not spruce up your outdoor entertaining areas with colourful annuals. This season it's all about Petunias, Snapdragons, Marigolds and Impatiens. They take just 6-8 weeks to flower from seedlings and provide vibrant displays throughout the warmer months.

Look out for Petunia 'Plum Crazy', with flowers in all the rich berry shades, or the aptly named 'Scarlet O'Hara' with a combination of rich red and deep blue blooms.

Impatiens 'Strawberry Crush' is another show stopper, in rose, soft pink, cherry and strawberry shades.

Liquid feed regularly and remove spent blooms for months of spectacular colour.

### **New look natives**

Take a fresh look at native plants this season. Thanks to advances in breeding and hybridization, the new generation of Australian Plants is showier, more compact and longer flowering. Plus, they're often tolerant to dry conditions and their nectar-rich flowers attract the birds.

You'll love Banksia 'Birthday Candles' which displays striking golden cone-like flowers on a neat little bush from late summer to winter and looks sensational planted on-mass. Protea 'Little Prince' is another gem, perfect for pots, with bold showy flowers that look striking on the bush and in a vase.

*Battle Fronts screens on Channel 9 at 6.30pm on Sundays.*



# Fixed, split or variable – what keeps your interest?

In this edition of Smile, HomeStart's CEO Gary Storkey discusses the different options available when it comes to how interest is applied to your loan.

At HomeStart, you can choose a variable interest rate, a fixed interest rate, or a split rate – depending on what suits you best.

## If you'd like added security

With most loan types, you can choose to 'fix' the interest rate that applies to your loan for a set term. This could be just one year, or two, three, four or five year terms.

HomeStart's fixed interest rates allow you to know exactly which rate applies to your loan for the period of time that you choose.

Your repayment amount will typically be adjusted just once a year at a rate based on inflation, and you can make voluntary repayments of up to \$10,000 each year before any fees apply.

## If you want maximum flexibility

If your loan has a variable interest rate, HomeStart's current variable interest rate applies to your loan. The exceptions are the

Low Deposit Loan, which attracts a 1% premium for the first 12 months, the Nunga Loan in some circumstances, and EquityStart Loan and Advantage Loan which attract a lower rate of interest (at a rate based on inflation).

When you have a variable interest rate, you can make as many voluntary repayments as you like, so you can pay off your loan sooner. You can use Redraw to access these extra amounts if you need them at a later stage.

## If you'd like more choice

You can choose to split your loan, so that one portion is 'locked in' at a fixed rate, and the other remains at the current variable rate. This gives you the certainty of knowing which rate will apply to the fixed portion, as well as being able to make as many voluntary repayments as you like to the variable portion. You can also use Redraw on the variable portion.

The interest rate applied to your loan is shown on your loan statement, and you can check it anytime on eHomeStart.

*Terms, conditions and eligibility criteria apply. Fees and charges are payable. Redraw is not available with Advantage or EquityStart Loans.*



# Want to blitz your neighbours in the backyard?

A Home Equity Loan can help fund your spring makeover... so you can get your garden growing.

Contact your Loan Manager to find out more.

*Terms, conditions and eligibility criteria apply.*

*Fees and charges are payable.*



# Wyatt legacy helps keep home ownership dreams alive

HomeStart is delighted to be working with the Wyatt Benevolent Institution to provide extra assistance for lower income South Australians struggling to realise their home ownership dreams.

The Wyatt Benevolent Institution is a philanthropic organisation set up in 1881 by Dr William Wyatt – one of South Australia's first land owners – to provide financial assistance and opportunities to those most in need.

Over its 127-year history, Wyatt has provided more than \$50 million in

financial assistance, helping over 27,000 South Australians stay on their feet.

Wyatt provides financial assistance in the form of grants, scholarships and innovative partnerships with organisations that share similar values and goals to its own.

HomeStart is excited to be one such partner. Together, Wyatt and HomeStart are providing more home ownership opportunities to people on low incomes through the Wyatt Loan.



L-R Bill Fowler, Chairman of the Wyatt Benevolent Institution, Tony Scammel, Deputy Chairman and HomeStart CEO Gary Storkey.

The Wyatt Loan is offered to selected loan applicants who face difficulties saving enough to cover the upfront costs involved with buying a home. This initiative is expected to give up to 300 people over the next five years a real chance to achieve home ownership.

## Spring into action win a \$250 Mitre10 voucher!

Spring is here and it's a great time to spruce up your little patch of the world – so HomeStart is offering two lucky customers the chance to win a \$250 voucher to spend at your local Mitre10.

**To enter, just fill in this entry form and send it to HomeStart Finance 'Spring into action' competition, GPO Box 1266, Adelaide SA 5001, by 14 November 2008.**

You must be an existing HomeStart customer to enter, and you will need to include your current loan number to be eligible.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Loan number \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime phone \_\_\_\_\_

You can find your loan number on your HomeStart loan statement

### Conditions of entry

The competition commences on 7 October 2008 and ends on 14 November 2008. Total prize value is a maximum of \$500. The draw will be conducted at HomeStart Finance, 153 Flinders Street, Adelaide on 17 November 2008 at 12 noon. There will be two winners and they will be notified by phone.



## Login to eHomeStart and win a laptop!

Like looking after your loan when you want...would a laptop computer make it easier? Access eHomeStart during October, check your personal details to make sure they're up-to-date – and you'll be automatically entered into the draw to win a Toshiba Satellite Pro 2000 laptop worth over \$800. It's that easy!

Registering for eHomeStart is simple – just login to [homestart.com.au](http://homestart.com.au) and select the 'register' button. If you've forgotten your password, select 'Login' and follow the prompts.

Terms and conditions: The competition commences on 7 October 2008 and ends on 3 November 2008. Total prize value is a maximum of \$825. You must be an existing HomeStart customer, access eHomeStart and visit the personal details page to be entered in the draw. The draw will be conducted at HomeStart Finance, 153 Flinders Street, Adelaide on 4 November 2008 at 12 noon. There will be one winner and they will be notified by phone.