



Reality bites for TV-inspired renovators

AUSTRALIA'S obsession with television property shows is driving a surge in demand for increasingly complex renovation jobs, industry sources reveal.

While professionals welcome the boost in business, they are also having to deal with some unrealistic demands from customers hyped up by seemingly instant on-screen transformations.

"These shows drive demand and inquiries. And more ambitious ideas," Sydney designer Amy Morrison, who works on Foxtel's latest foray into the renovation genre, *Love It or List It Australia*, said.

"Part of the job is about managing people's expectations."

Builders report up to a 20% increase in inquiries when renovation shows are running. Data from trade sourcing website hipages shows a lift of up to 10% around shows like Channel 9's *The Block* and Channel 7's *House Rules*, which regularly draw more than one million viewers per episode.

Neale Whitaker is co-host of *Love It or List It*, where he battles

with fellow host Andrew Winter to either convince home owners to stay and renovate or cut their losses and put it on the market.

After more than a decade working on *The Block*, Whitaker said it was clear in his mind how renovation shows were driving our continued interest in renovation.

"There's no doubt that a big percentage of people have been galvanised into doing their own renovations (after watching)," he said.

For tradies and builders, this increase in demand has its pros and cons.

"We have all heard about the backlash from the renovation shows from the trades that they set unrealistic expectations of how long it takes to get the job done," Whitaker said.

"And that's a genuine concern but, at the same time, those trades are busier now than they've ever been."

— Robyn Willis, News Corp Australia Network

Love It Or List It Australia airs on Foxtel Lifestyle.



► Neale Whitaker and Andrew Winter host the new TV series *Love It or List It Australia*.

PHOTO: NICK WILSON/FOXTEL