

## Media release

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### TRADEMARK GRAB THREATENS REAL ESTATE PROFESSION

The Real Estate Institute of Australia has asked REA Group to withdraw their trademark application for “realestate.com.au” which, if granted, could jeopardise the use of the term “real estate” by other businesses and professional bodies.

“Given recent media reports about REA Group, their timing with this latest move to register realestate.com.au could hardly have been worse,” REIA President, Peter Bushby said today.

“REIA encourages competition through quality service delivery. REA once again appears to be making a technical grab for control of those things that belong to the industry at large. It has in the past tried to prohibit others from using the words “real estate” in their domain names.”

“Our members already feel they are being squeezed by this company’s tactics. You really have to question their corporate strategy.”

Mr Bushby said that there are concerns for the potential for REA, once they own the term “real estate”, to oppose a number of other trade mark applications or signs of competitor businesses.

“This is a plausible scenario when we know that REA Group brought legal proceeding against Real Estate 1 Ltd in October 2010 against their use of the domain and trading name realestate1.com.au.”

Mr Bushby said because the term realestate.com.au was so generic and descriptive of the entire profession, its lack of distinctiveness was the primary ground of opposition by REIA and others in 2008, and the trademark application was subsequently withdrawn in June 2009.

“This is true particularly given the size of the real estate industry and the number of businesses operating with the term realestate.com.au either in their business or domain name.”

“Data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics shows that as at June 2013 there were 35,019 real estate services businesses operating in Australia. A substantial proportion of those businesses use the phrase “real estate” as part of their branding to assist consumers identify the industry and range of services that those businesses provide.”

“Many also use a phrase that includes or is similar to realestate.com.au as part of their URL for the online delivery of their services,” he concluded.

**The Real Estate Institute of Australia (REIA) is the national professional association for real estate agents in Australia. For further information or interview opportunities, please contact:**

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