

Note to Self

17th July 2011

Dear Owners and Investors,

Before I start I have to tell you about a unit I saw that has just come up for sale. It is located at 93 Birch Street, Manunda which is Scotsdale. It is a two bedroom unit on the top floor at the rear of the complex. The link is not up as yet, but it is the same unit as this one.

<http://www.realestate.com.au/property-unit-qld-manunda-107547967>

The difference is this is listed for \$179K and the other one is listed for \$149K. This is a great buy and the best we have seen in the block. Does this mean that all the two bedroom units are worth this now - only if you want to sell them. When you consider these were easily selling for \$220K this is a great buy if you can hold it through until the market goes through its cycle. Let me know if you would like more information on this.

Now for the fun part. I am sure that some of you think - oh she is making it up. All that stuff simply cannot happen - I wish I had time to sit and make up stories! I am not sure if the tenants know I write about them, and they try to make my life even more interesting, or if I am taking more notes on what actually happens in my day.

This was my Friday.

You all know now I am rubbish first thing in the morning, by 10am the brain cells start to kick in. Got a text message before the 10am mark from a tenant to demand why her toilet had not been fixed, others would not put up with this and she will go and get a plumber to fix it and send me the bill. We pride ourselves on not being slum landlords and fix things - this is the tenant that had the win and we were getting her a new toilet cistern installed. It is on the list but now she knows she is getting one (yes she has already won and got a new vanity and new fans), she tried to push my buttons. I was straight on the phone and told her what for - I thought it had been done, and I don't appreciate that sort of message. There is a right way and a wrong way to tackle me - particularly before 10am. About 30 minutes later I get the sorry text - luckily she is a good tenant that does look after the property. Her cistern is lined up to be installed on Tuesday - happy tenant.

Get a phone call from Bart to say that the tenants at Joan Street have called to say they have no hot water. He went through the whole list of questions and it sounds like it is a short. He goes over to confirm it - call to the MDE (Modern Day Electrician) to get him out to fix it so we have a happy tenant again.

We drive in to put in a new tenant at Robert Road. Ramon showed her through and she is a nice lady, but not the pick of the bunch. Sadly I don't get a lot of choice of good tenants at the moment and even fewer for this unit. Ramon did a fantastic job at renovating the bathroom, but the rest of the place makes me cringe. We are holding off renovating it until the market picks up as this will be one of the first ones we sell off. For now we soldier on and put the best possible tenants in that we can. She is currently living in a hotel and is desperate to get out. We need to rent the unit, she checks out and so in she goes. Another happy tenant.

I get a call from an owner occupier from Tropic Gardens. I have put in a tenant recently at one of the units, it was a moment of weakness and my good side over took the logic side.

The lady was living at the Salvos with her three children after leaving her husband. It was a domestic violence situation, and she is a nice person but without wanting to sound mean she has even less Mummy genes in her DNA than I do. I have worked with her case worker over the past few months but it isn't getting better. Some people just can't seem to be able to live in a community environment - they need space. Yes, Ramon and I live on 5 acres and I can yell all I like at him and no one can hear!

I had to arrange to meet her case worker on Monday to go and see her again. It will be her second breach notice, and although I feel for her I really don't seem to be able to make this one happen. In all probability I will have to evict her and she will end up at the Salvos again. It will crush me, but I know I have given her a chance and she hasn't been able to take it. I feel so badly for those three boys but I have a responsibility to the owner, the other occupiers and the body corporate to enforce the bylaws. This one is not a happy tenant.

We get a call from one of our tenants at Grafton Street to say the water is leaking from the toilet on to the floor at the back. I ask a few questions in my pigeon English Korean and work out that it is going to be the rear seal that has split. I know too much useless information for a girl. I send off Ramon to go and fix it. He comes back to say all done but we have a broken light in the laundry room. On the way home he takes a spare fluoro batten and a starter - hoping it will be that rather than the capacitor inside and it need a whole new fitting. When he comes back he can't believe some bugger has gone into the laundry room, stood on the table, taken out the fluoro batten and then stolen the starter, then put the batten back as they didn't need that. All that rather than going to the shop and buying one!

We are just about to finish a renovation on a unit at Buchan Street and now that we have repainted and put new furniture in, you simply can't put the old curtains back up as they are just awful. I am very conscious of spending money on things for our clients - and you all know how much I LOOOOVE curtain shopping. It must have been my lucky day as I found good quality thermal backed curtains at the Towel Man. I got five pairs of curtains for \$150! I then went to Spotlight and luck was still on my side, I got a roll down blind for the kitchen half price at \$29! Bart has made Ramon's day and said he will put them up for me. Did I mention that Ramon just loves putting up curtains, nearly as much as I love painting?

It is now almost 5pm and I am sitting at my desk at the office trying to get through paperwork. The mobile rings and it is the tenant ring - it is one of the ladies from Scotsdale. She is saying that a smoke alarm is going off and has been for the past ten minutes. As we are talking she is telling me she can smell plastic.

At this stage she is panicking and I am trying to work through it all with her on the phone. I am trying to work out which unit it is, and if it is really on fire - time is of the essence here so, I'm calmly talking her through it. We now have worked out it is the unit next door and as she walks through to the back she sees the smoke coming from the window. With the mobile in the left hand I am calling Bart to see if he can go back there immediately, and I have the office phone in the right hand calling 000. Luckily Bart is just around the corner and the unit is master keyed.

The next call is to find out where the hell the tenant is and what they have done. It is all systems go in the office as I wait to find out what is happening. Bart pulls into the driveway with the fire truck right behind him, just in front of him is the tenant about to open the door. Again luck is on my side today - the fire brigade don't have to smash in the security screen door and the wooden door, and the fire hasn't started just yet.

There is no smoke damage or any other damage - oh other than the plastic rubbish bin lid that the tenant left on top of the stove and as she walked out she accidentally bumped the knob and the stove turned on. Yep, and other happy tenant - although her ears were still ringing with the dressing down I gave her.

We have started to convert all our properties to a new lock system. This means that all the locks in the unit are exactly the same and the tenant gets just one key to unlock each and every one of them. Each unit has a different key but they are all keyed back to a master key which I have as well as our handy man. In this case it was lucky the tenant wasn't too far away, but if she wasn't then Bart was there to open up the door - without the need to race back to the office, find the key and then drive back. If the tenant wasn't and Bart wasn't then I would now have to be getting new doors - as well as possibly working out what to do with a burnt unit!

You would think that would be enough excitement for the day - oh no. I am still trying to work through the mountain of papers on my desk when the mobile goes off with the tenant ring. Eyes roll back and wonder what on earth it can be at 6.30pm on a Friday night. It is someone in City Park telling me that his neighbour has 4 big islanders bashing at his front door and then going around to the back. The neighbour is in, but is pretending to not be home. Remember that barrel; well this is a tenant I found in there. He is a nice enough lad, but he is not just one or two eggs short of the dozen but about six.

I have to be very clear and concise when I am taking on new tenants, and in his case I was even more thorough. They know the rules, and if they don't follow them, they are fully aware I will do what I need to do to move them on. He had only just moved in a few days before and I remember saying to Ramon this one is either going to be one that we never hear from and he is no bother or he is going to be a problem because people will take advantage of him. I called his Mum and told her what was going on, she said he was scared of them and he wouldn't call the Police but if I could. Phone call number one to the Police for the evening.

About ten minutes later I get a message from the neighbour to say the young lad has let the people in, and then a few minutes later his Mum turned up. He wouldn't let her in, and wouldn't open the door and kept yelling for her to go away. She left and a few minutes later the Police turn up to see what is going on. They knock on his door and he opens up. On the security screen door there is material so even though the wooden door is open, you can't actually see inside. He tells the Police they aren't there, and there is no problem. They have to do their job and ask that the comes outside and if they can come in and have a look for themselves. This is where even I didn't see this one coming.

He comes out wearing a laced up black corset, fish net stockings, huge amounts of eye liner and red lipstick - just like something out of Rocky Horror. When I got the message from the neighbour, I couldn't stop laughing - oh my life is never dull. Luckily this quietens down, but now I know I have to go there in the morning and tell him it is strike one for him. Ten years ago I couldn't do this confrontation, but now let me at them I will tell them the way it is - scary what ten years in property management can do.

So now we are at home, and I get an email from an owner asking which unit a stove he bought went into. This was an easy one and I remember it well. I am now in the girlie girl phase and love wearing nice clothes and high heels, but sadly I still get to do all the other things I used to do. The reason I remember it well is it isn't easy walking up stairs backwards, whilst carrying a stove and in high heels!

You would think that would be the end of my day, but no! It is now 11.35pm and the mobile rings - the dreaded tenant ring. It is another tenant from City Park and he has had enough of the people upstairs. They are partying and it is getting worse. I get to make the second phone call to the Police that night. Whilst I am outside in the dark I look up and think, it is pretty bright out here tonight - then the penny drops it must be close to a full moon.

Yep, that was Friday! Even I have had to shake my head in disbelief after that. It is lucky I have a warped (no not the Time Warp, it's just a jump to the left and a step to the right) sense of humour and love doing what I do. Thank you to all of you that have written to let me know you enjoy my notes. Being a property investor would be oh so easy if we didn't have to rely on tenants to pay the rent so we could pay the mortgage!

Our July newsletter will be out this week, I hope you enjoy it. Hope all is well in your world.

Linda