

Note to Self

17th January 2012

Dear Owners and Investors,

There are many of you on my list now. If at any time you wish to come off the list, please simply send me an email and I will take you off. I do try to keep you informed of the market, but give you a laugh at the same time. Over the past couple of months there have been many of you that have taken the time to let me know you enjoy my emails. I am glad that I can bring a smile to your face, and share my tenant stories. I have a couple of clangers for you.

We have a small house in Manunda that has just come up for rent. On Sunday I received a call from Miss M who has been a tenant of ours at two other properties. You will know that I am a bit blonde, and over the years have heard so many stories and many of them I have believed - can't tell you how many funerals some tenants have. The family pop off about the same time their rent is behind. When I first met Miss M, she applied for a one bedroom unit in Manoora. I had to go to her place of work where she was a cleaner, but they paid really well because it wasn't a job that many wanted to do. It was actually the legal brothel in the city. Now, I have never been in a brothel before so I didn't know what to expect! Yes, I truly believed she was a cleaner - I know how blonde can one be.

She left that property and then came back a few years later to a two bedroom unit we had. If she was "working", she never told me. Her references said she was waitressing and I had that confirmed. Towards the end she had a boyfriend and left to live happily ever after. A few months later there she was in the paper in a wedding dress - with a surprisingly larger top section than I remember!

On Sunday she called to ask if I remembered her? How can one ever forget the tenant that gets you to come pick up the bond and two weeks in advance and sign the papers from a brothel? She is now getting divorced and looking for a place. The plan was she was going to be sharing with another girl. All was going to plan until this morning when she called back. The friend (who was going to put up the bond) had backed out and now she was stuck. She really wanted the property but didn't have the bond. No wait, you will want to hear this... she said "I could always go back to my old profession and I should have the money by Monday!" What can I say?

On Christmas Eve, Ramon and I were up at the neighbour's house. They were away and in return for looking after the house and the two dogs, we got to swim in their pool. It has to be really, really hot for me to want to swim - it was sweltering. We decided to take lunch and a bottle of champagne up and enjoy the fabulous view from the pool. There I was swimming about in the water, when the dreaded tenant ring goes off. I was almost tempted not to answer, but that isn't the way we do things. It was a tenant to say he was locked out of the unit - he had the keys but couldn't get in. First of all I had to ask did he actually have the right set of keys. He assured me not only did he have his set, but his wife's as well.

They could get the screen door open, but the wooden door just wouldn't click open. This does happen sometimes and it can be the lock broken inside, or dirt built up and not clicking the lock thingy internally. I said I would call around to see if anyone was in town and able to come over and sort it out. All our handy men were smarter than I and didn't answer. As I am cussing, I called him back and said "I can't get any one else to come out, if I come there and walk up and unlock the door I tell you now I will be really, really cranky."

He said to give him five minutes to try again and then call back. One more dip in the pool and then I called back - surprise, surprise what tenants can achieve when they are faced with the prospect of me being cranky. I told him to spray WD40 into the lock, and lock and unlock with the key lots and this should free it all up - haven't heard from him since!

We have a tenant that is a single young man and he lives in a bedsit at Palm Trees. He has gotten behind, which has not happened since he moved in about 18 months ago. I knew that something had gone wrong so I called him. He was actually down in Mackay as his Dad had gotten sick. Because of this his Centrelink payments got mixed up and he was sorting it out. I therefore knew he was not in Cairns. My little network of spies called me last week to say that there had been heaps of commotion the day before. Police and Ambulance were buzzing all over the complex and then headed up to his unit.

They broke down the door to gain entry to the unit. As soon as I heard this I called him straight away to find out what was going on. I asked if he had any one staying there and explained what happened. He was shocked as no one had the keys and he didn't understand what was going on. I asked for permission to go into his unit to check that everything was alright. It was like he had just gone to work for the day inside, everything in its place and no sign of any one staying there. The door was well and truly broken, but they had patched it enough to secure the premises. I called the Ambulance and this is what we think happened. The tenant had lost his mobile phone and never found it. Someone has picked it up and started to use it. They got into trouble and called 000. The Ambulance traced the phone records and showed the owner as living in the unit - a team was sent out along with Police as the report was very serious. They broke down the door to find no one home. Ah life is never dull and boring in property management.

I have karma tenant story - you know where you go out of your way to help someone and the big guy in the sky puts another gold star on your chart. Do you remember my African tenant that said "Linda, your presence drives me crazy." He fell so far behind I was at the point where I had no choice but to evict him if we couldn't get money out of him to pay the rent. I put him onto the fantastic team at Oz Care and they worked with him. Through the charities we have here, they arranged to have his arrears paid and then Centrepay set up so he wouldn't ever fall behind.

He was in Perth with his family and girlfriend at Christmas. They were being driven back to the air port by a learner driver, who over took a truck on a double white line, on a bend and straight into oncoming traffic. He has been hurt pretty badly, and sadly the girlfriend passed away. He is still in hospital in Perth and when I heard I gave him a call. I have been working with the team at Oz Care and they are helping to arrange carers and assistance for when he comes home. It is nice when something nice happens, even if I wasn't actually part of it.

I am not sure if 2012 is going to be the start of things getting slightly better in Cairns, or it is just the rush of interest with people moving up for transfers, but I have to tell you every property I have rented in 2012 has been at a higher rent than the last tenant paid. One was for \$5 per week but the others have been \$20 and over. I have two that if they come off will be \$25 per week more! I have one tenant that is on a one bedroom on Buchan Street and he mentioned that he may want to go to a two bedroom. One came up this week in the same block so I gave him a call. He was thrilled he wouldn't have to move far, and was even happier when I told him it was \$220 per week. The owner will be even happier as this is \$20 per week more than the last tenants were paying.

Late last year I started to send you out the Tuck Mail from our sailing trip. Attached is the latest instalment and photos.

Hope you are all happy and well in your world.

Linda

TUCK MAIL AND PHOTO