

Note to Self

1st April 2012

Dear Owners and Investors,

You all know, I am not a morning person by any stretch of the imagination so you can imagine how excited I was to have a phone call at 7.15 am this morning from an owner occupier at a complex. Bet he is sorry he called me this morning. Doing what we do is so difficult, because there are so many shades of grey - so to speak. When you have a high density living environment, like it or not noise does travel. You have in this complex 42 units, with somewhere between 100 - 140 people living on the size of what used to be two, possibly three houses.

We recently had a very mature couple buy a two bedroom unit and move in. They complained about one of the tenants that happens to be one of ours. I wouldn't be surprised if it was him having the music a bit too loud, or possibly a few drinks on the balcony on the weekend, but I had to get it confirmed. All the long term tenants work out that I will not let on that it is them that has told me what is going on, and before long they turn into fantastic spies. I get to know everything that is happening in the complex.

In this particular complex we now manage 16 out of 42 - so if there is an issue with this tenant I should know about it by now. When I got the complaint in early March from this new owner, I got Troy the gardener that spies lots for me to find out what he could - nothing of any real significance. I asked the tenant that lives directly above this noisy tenant and no complaints. I did issue a breach notice to cover ourselves and each time I see him I remind him that any parties and he is out.

I then wrote a detailed letter to this owner explaining how it worked, what I need to do as a property manager to get him out legally, and more importantly what he needs to do to help me. If the noise ever got loud he was to call the Police and then call me - irrelevant of the time. I would follow it up with the Police. If they didn't attend in 30 minutes and the music was at unacceptable levels, he was to call the Police again until they came out to quieten it down.

The mature owner told me that the noise started at 8pm last night. I asked why he didn't call me then? Well it was only 8pm so I let it go. I told him anything after 10pm was too loud in the email, so I asked why he didn't call me after 10pm - he didn't want to bother me. I asked when he called the Police and he tells me at 6am.

I did call the Police and he was the only one in the entire block that called and he only called the once. If I were up and annoyed because the music was so loud, I would be calling every 30 minutes to get the Police out and get some sleep instead of pacing up and down for 8 hours - especially after I had told him to do that and then call me. I don't want to repeat what I told him about it not being alright to wake me up on a Sunday morning at 7am when he could have called the night before at 10pm!

I then sent out messages to all the surrounding units to see if it actually did happen. The biggest spy said he didn't hear a thing and he would be no more than 100 metres away.

I called the tenant that lives directly above this noisy unit. He said he wasn't home last night, but when I quizzed him he was out on the town and got home at 2am. I asked if he heard anything at all - he said not a thing that he can remember.

He was very drunk, so I asked if he remembered getting home and if actually he was the one that made the noise. He told me no, he got home (not sure how) and then passed out and didn't hear a thing. He confirmed that in the four months he has been living directly above this guy he has had no reason to complain to me about him.

The best was from Peaceful Lover (you don't want to know why he is called that). He is a bit strange to say the least. I asked him and he said he heard some music and a bit of talking, but it didn't bother him because he just turned his stereo up loud enough not to be able to hear it. He fell asleep at midnight and didn't hear anything after that.

It is difficult to work out exactly what did happen, and how bad it was. I do know something after 10 years though, there are some people that just should not be living in a community environment as they just don't fit in. There will be noise, there will be people that turn up their stereos and do the house cleaning in the afternoon, there will be those that sing really badly over the top of the music and it can be heard throughout the building there will be domestics between partners but this is part of living in a high density environment. It is fortunate we live on 5 acres where I can yell at Ramon and the dogs all I like and no one can hear! I am one of those that shouldn't live in a unit and fortunately we can have our piece of space.

I will probably move this tenant on any way as he is behind in his rent. I just want to be sure when I do it that we will be able to fill it straight away and get more rent for the owner.

The rental market has slowed down a bit in the past two weeks - probably something to do with the metre of rain we received in March as well as the elections for some reason. We are still getting enquiries and filling the units with minimal vacancies. We are narrowing the list down and hopefully by just after Easter we can hang out the NO VACANCY sign!! Will be doing a little dance in the office that day.

I have been busy blogging - actually I cheat and have just been cutting and pasting all my old emails to you. I know I am an old dinosaur that isn't very tech savvy, but I can't believe how many people have read the blog and left comments - people I have no idea who they are or how on earth they found our blog out of the millions on the internet! I am very happy that they have found our blog, but all the technology stuff is still beyond me!!

I try to make these emails a bit more personal, and not just about property. These are things that have happened in my life to make me who I am today. I wrote on Australia Day about my Grandparents making the move to Australia. Yesterday would have been my Grandfather's birthday if he was still around. I have attached a picture of my Dida (Grandfather on the right) and my Uncle Gojko on the left. When I speak to Uncle about the reasons he came to Australia, this is the story he tells me - whether it be true or not I don't know. He along with some other men got into a row boat in the middle of the night. They pushed off and rowed across the sea from Yugoslavia to Italy. They left with five loaves of bread and five litres of wine. They arrived to Italy the next day with five loaves of bread and no wine.

I asked him the reasons for leaving - was it because of the affects after the end of the war, was it communism, was it because they were poor and had no food - no he was supposed to get married and didn't want to so rowing to Italy and ending up in Australia was a better option.

We recently went to Perth and were having lunch at the food hall in Karrinyup Shopping Centre. My parents meet up each week with my Uncle and Aunt who are now in their 80's. As we were leaving the house, Dad yells out to Mum did she remember to bring the flask. I didn't think anything of it.

We get to the food hall and as the food is coming back Dad pulls out his aluminium flask, then so does my Uncle but his is an Iced Tea bottle. I had to squint as the colour wasn't right - they had both snuck in wine! I laughed and my Uncle said "Who is going to ask an old man if that is Iced Tea or not!"

Being a wog is difficult to explain, especially when it comes to property. My Grandfathers form of gardening is to cut everything down - unless it is a rose bush, and concrete everything. There is no lawn to worry about, no weeds - nothing. Ramon and I were helping out one day at the rental property he had. It was a duplex half and I don't think much was done to it from the day it was built. We were repainting the gutters and barge boards. I am up on the ladder and painting when I notice a hole in the gutter. I asked him about it and his answer - with arms waving and broken English,

"Man in the aeroplane he no see the hole, doesn't matter - just paint, be alright!"

I just love wogs! I guess I am allowed to say that as I am one and very proud of being an Aussie wog.

I will finish it off with a tenant story. It is not only a tenant story, it is a reason why there will always be tenants in the world that will never make the leap to become owners themselves.

We have a lovely one bedroom loft town house on Cannon Street in Manunda. It is just down the road from the Colonial Club - well within stumbling distance. We have a tenant that is giving notice to leave this lovely unit that he currently pays \$170 per week for. It has parking at the front door, a bathroom with a washing machine and dryer, a kitchen with a fridge, the living area is fully furnished with a sliding door that leads onto a private courtyard. Upstairs is the bedroom that is nice and airy as it has cathedral ceilings. Apart from the rent, the tenant has to pay for the electricity and depending on his use of the air conditioner I would say this would be \$15 - \$25 per week.

He hasn't left officially until this Friday, but he has been good enough to allow us to show people through his place whenever we have needed to. I had another two groups that want to see it on Monday afternoon.

He had family come out to visit him for three weeks, and it turns out they stayed at the Colonial Club as it was cheaper to do that than stay anywhere else in Cairns. They do short term rentals for a month as a minimum, then monthly after that. He decided that he would give up his unit and go and move into the Colonial Club instead. I always like to know what the competition is, so I asked what he was paying and what he gets for that. He is paying \$252 per week and this is essentially for a hotel unit. It has its own bathroom, but no cooking facility, no washing machine but there is a nice laundry mat (which he has to pay to do his washing), the electricity is included in the price of the rent.

There are more facilities at the resort - they have a tennis court (he doesn't strike me as the physical type) they have lots more pools, a spa, a sauna and even a gym. My mind is ticking over and none of it was making sense - why give up a place that is bigger, where you can cook your own food and wash your own clothes to go to a smaller place and pay more money? Then the real reason came out and it all made sense. He works night shift and comes home around 7.30am and at the Colonial Club they serve beers from 7am! No seriously this is the reason he is moving. On the flip side, our owner should get a good tenant and if all goes to plan, no vacancies and rent increase of between \$5 and \$10 per week.

I hope you are all happy and well in your world.

Linda Tuck