

Note to Self

24th January 2013

Dear Owners and Investors,

The question is - did you miss me and my ramblings? Did I mention that we went on a cruise? Oh can't tell you how fantastic it was to have a break. I have to admit that the past few years have been very difficult, and it is not until I actually got to really stop that I realised just how worn out I was. If I could put the way I felt before we stepped on board the Diamond Princess in music it would be

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yzly2yGk4U>

After a break the music is now

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5UWRypqz5-o>

I really think that this year will be the turning point for Cairns. I won't be that we will pull out if it over night, but all the signs are there that we are on the way to better times. I will be writing a Special Edition in the next week to bring you up to date with the changes in the rental and sales market. In the meantime, I have sent you the email I wrote whilst on the ship but never got to send to you.

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

Linda

Ahoy from the Diamond Princess. We are in Melbourne today and I am actually typing this up the night before so I can get as much time shopping in as possible. As I was packing the suitcase at 12.30am - yes I do leave things until the last minute when it concerns something for me personally, I hurriedly threw everything I thought I would need into the case. For those of you that are new to this email, you will not know but in a previous life I am sure I was a Drag Queen - my sister swears I must have been. The size of my new bling shoes is even scary for me, these shoes were made for looking good, not for walking long distances. It is difficult to get a true picture of them, so I have put my phone next to the heel so you can see for yourself what I mean. I packed the wigs, well hair extensions, the bling dresses, the bling tops and of course the bling jewellery. If I could work out how to put false eyelashes on without poking my eyes out they would be in there as well. I thought I had every based covered - that is from a North Queenslanders point of view. Now we are in the colder climates we have both realised that we didn't pack any where enough jumpers and warm clothes.

I thought that I would give you a few tenant stories to finish off 2012. Ramon got the call to come back to fix a leaking toilet at our Grafton Street units. As he was heading out to the car, the big gangly guy from Unit 1 came out to bail him up. The question was one that even I haven't heard before "What are the rules on walking around naked in your own unit?" Ramon wasn't sure what to say so he came back with another question - "Do you want to walk around naked and someone giving you trouble?" With this he said "No the lady that just moved into the house next door never wears clothes." Now if I was there I would be tactful and try to dance around the answer, but no not Ramon - he just said I can't see a problem with that. With that he went around the side to see if there was a glimpse to be caught of the naked neighbour.

The morning that we were leaving, yes at 2.50am I got a text message from a tenant at Sheridan Street. He said the bathroom door closed and now he can't open it up. Just what we need before we fly out. Ramon went to see what needed to be done and thought it was going to be easy. The mechanism that pulls the latch in and opens the door had broken - great!! There was a bit of cussing, pushing and pulling and at one point deciding whether to just break the door down - but then out of the tool box comes the wire that is found under bra's. Don't ask me why Ramon has one in his tool box, but with a bit of jiggling about he got the wire past the latch and managed to get the door opened.

Ron from Sheridan Street normally looks after our two dogs when we go away, but he is getting on and we have found a fantastic alternative at the Murphy Retreat. They get a walk every morning, meals at least twice a day as well as treats. They have dog company, and a great place to call home whilst we are away. I still need to worry about Ron as he has no family or friends to look out for him. We do have the Red Cross call every morning, so I know that he is safe each and every day, but he is a stubborn old git and even when he knows he isn't great he won't go and get help. Recently we put in Mr S who is a bit weird, but he stops in each day and checks on Ron as do the other tenants. Mr S even puts the bins out for me each week - one less job for me to do. I hesitated when I put Mr S in as I really thought I was back to the bottom of the barrel again, but he has turned out really well - still weird but a nice enough guy.

The Government sends in a cleaner every fortnight to clean Ron's unit, but to be honest they aren't very good. We send in Dijon - yes Tasha to Ron as he can't remember her name. Tasha goes in every other week, but as we are away I like for some one to keep a better eye on him so we have asked her to go every week. Yes it will cost us a bit more, but what do you do?

Ron is now anorexic and although he does get Meals on Wheels, he also gets the high calorie and vitamin enriched drinks. Before we left I ordered another batch of these, paid for this and Meals on Wheels. The cost was \$380 - so when Ron gave me \$100 before we left I took it - and looked up to the Big Man in the Sky and asked if he was watching. As we left Sheridan Street and headed to the airport I wondered if this would be the last time we would see Ron alive. (for those wondering, yes he is still around!)

There is an air in Cairns that we have turned the corner. I can't tell you one specific thing, but things are changing. It is now common knowledge that we are going to be in a very difficult situation in 2013 as the vacancy rate is now below 2%. There are no new developments on the horizon so this is going to get lower. We took family down to the Esplanade for a BBQ the other night and I have to tell you even I was taken by just how many Chinese tourists we have in our city! Oh what a wonderful sight - I was taking photos of them with their cameras and saying Welcome to Cairns. My Aunt went for a round trip up to the Tablelands and she said every where they went there was a bus load of Chinese tourists seeing the sights.

In the National Bank whilst waiting for the next teller, I was surprised to see on just about every wall a chart titled "If you pay rent - this is how much you could borrow". The seed is being planted and I think when the rents start to go up again in the next year, this could be the push that many tenants need to go out and buy. Of course if the banks will actually lend it to them is a different story, but the balance is changing and quickly now.

To finish off, I will tell you not of a normal day, but that on the ship. I knew I was unfit, but until we got on board I didn't realise just how unfit. Our room is right at the front of the ship and we get a view from the sliding door out front. We can't open the door unless we are in port, and to be honest soon it will be too cold for this little North Queensland duck to go outside. We don't take the elevators and force ourselves to take the stairs everywhere.

We left the 11th floor to head up to to lunch - well it should have been breakfast but we missed that. That is on the 14th floor but fortunately they don't have a 13th floor. After lunch, we headed down to the Atrium which has various shops and this is spread out over levels 5 - 7. I head back to the room on the 11th floor to get my jumper, then back to the 7th floor where Ramon finds a comfortable chair by the window and reads his book. I decide my butt should not get any bigger than it currently is, so I go for a walk - yes more walking. The outside deck at level 7 is spectacular and the view from the ship as it is sailing along is magical. At the front you have a clear view of the horizon and at the rear you have the wake. Great view but cold, so I walk faster trying to warm up. If you go around 2.5 times it is equal to 2 miles. Today I set a target of 6 times around.

After this, I meet up with Ramon and we head back up to the 14th floor - for afternoon tea. Now here is a question - if you have a fruit flan does this count towards your five fruits for the day? If it does Ramon has had his share in large quantities. He loves the fruit flans. Another cup of tea down, and it is now a hard call. We have missed Trivia so it is either go up to the 18th Floor for the Cocktail Hour or to the room for a Nanny nap - Cocktail wins every time. They have the Elite lounge for people that have done lots of cruises like us. Not only do they have the cocktail of the day but today they had Bruschetta and lots of other nibbly things and CHEESE!! Oh no I sound like Heather from East Enders with her cheese. I have to tell you being a wog, this is one of my weaknesses - guess I am going to have to walk 8 laps tomorrow.

It was then back to the room on the 11th floor for that Nanny Nap and now we are heading off to dinner on the 6th level. After that we will head back up to the 14th floor for a late night cup of tea and then back to our room on the 11th. Oh it is a far change from my normal life as a Property Manager! I am going to enjoy every minute whilst I can.