

Note to Self

23rd February 2013

Dear Owners and Investors,

Today is not really going to be about property management, it isn't really about investing - it is just about LIFE!! There are some things that you hear that stick with you. One day back in 2008 we were driving into Cairns listening to the ABC as we do. The Richard Fidler show was on, and the guest was the Grey Man. The link is

<http://www.abc.net.au/local/stories/2008/08/27/2348678.htm>

It wasn't so much what he does, but it was just one thing he mentioned that has stuck with us all these years. He had a friend that was saying how bad the world was, all the wars, famine and everything else and he said something like, you can't fix them all, so pick one, just pick one and do your best to fix it.

Ramon and I try to give back as much as we can, and sometimes it isn't with money - it can just be our time or knowledge. We don't just write a cheque to a charity, as we don't think it really will change things or really make a difference. We do lots of things for lots of different people and organisations. We never expect anything back as it is part of who we are and what we do. Today I want to share just one of those stories with you.

Way back in 2006, Kylie announced she would be doing the Show Girl Tour. This was after her battle with breast cancer. I am a huge singing budgie fan so there was no way I was going to miss out. I tried to convince Ramon it would be a great idea to come with me - he was not having any of that! I tried lots of other friends but no joy. I had two choices - be the sad nearly 40 year old sitting on her own at the Kylie concert, or buy some extra tickets and try bribing some friends. At that moment a light bulb went off and the decision was made. I bought 4 tickets and then donated the other three to Camp Quality.

I was lucky enough that the organiser had three girls in mind. The three girls were sisters, with the middle one having had Neuroblastoma when she was a small child.

If having Cancer wasn't enough, the parents were junkies and the girls were left on their own for days at a time. My heart nearly broke when they told me about the oldest sister taking them to the supermarket, saying eat anything and everything you can until we get caught and thrown out. The Grandparents stepped in and they had been living them for the past eight years and had a good stable life, but money isn't something they have much of to spare.

For whatever reason, our lives have crossed paths, and Ramon and I have taken this family under our wing. Of the three sisters, I have the strongest relationship with Miss Tenille - she is the one that had Cancer. Her older sister had such potential, but chose to take a different path in life and we now have very little to do with her.

Ramon and I have tried to show Miss Tenille that there is a different life out there to living in a Housing Commission property. We are trying to help her break the welfare cycle. I really think that many in this cycle just don't realise what else is out there or more importantly how to achieve it. For the past few years, we have flown her up on the school holidays to be our Office Slave - I save all those really crappy jobs like putting the address stickers on the back of envelopes for when she comes!! I am a big believer that for a young person to be able to make it, they really need to have a driver's licence - and a car.

Ramon and I don't believe in just giving someone something as they won't appreciate the value of it, so we came up with a plan. We opened a bank account for Miss Tenille, and each week until she turned 17 we would put some money into it. She would have the book and could go to the Bendigo any time to get it updated and see the money going in.

When she turned 17 there would be \$2000 in the account - ah but here is the catch. She can only have that money if she actually buys a car. She was able to put money into the account as well, but she couldn't take it out. For every dollar she put in, we would match it with another dollar. She took us up on that offer and by the time she was 17 she had a good amount in the account - especially when we matched her deposits. Now here is the next catch - if she doesn't buy a car by the time she is 21, she gets any money back that she put in (not matched just what she put in) and Ramon and I get spending money for our next cruise.

Many of you know Ms P and will be aware that I am her Guardian and Administrator. I have been given the job of selling her unregistered car, which is a bit banged up but mechanically very sound. It is the perfect car for Miss Tenille, and within her budget. We flew her up just after her 17th birthday and she helped to organise the CTP Insurance, the Road Worthy Certificate, car insurance, transporting it down to Brisbane and best of all cleaning it.

The car has been under a tree at the back of Sheridan Street for nearly six months so it was pretty grubby. On the Sunday we went to lunch with the other Dinosaurs and left Miss Tenille at home with the vacuum cleaner and all the car washing things. She sent me a text about four hours later saying she now understands why people pay other people to clean their cars!!

I will back track now slightly to 2010. Kylie had announced her new tour. I loved the last concert, but this time I wanted to really experience it, not just see a spot on the stage from the nose bleed seats right at the back. Miss Tenille and I were off to Sydney in the very front row - I mean so close I could just about touch Kylie! I have attached a picture of us from the concert. We stayed at the Four Points in Darling Harbour. Each morning we would amble down to have breakfast then off to go shopping. Remember at this time Miss Tenille would have only been 15. I asked her what her ambition was and this was her classic reply.

"I want to be the first Grandchild to actually get her drivers' licence, and not have a criminal conviction."

Well, what can I say, I forget that I live in a different world to many others. I can now proudly tell you that Miss Tenille has fulfilled her ambition. She passed her driver's licence, she has no criminal conviction and she has her very own car that is paid for! We chose not to have children, but I can tell you I am a very proud fake Aunty.

The GFC has been a very difficult time, but it has been a great learning curve for me personally. I have learnt lots about who I am, what I can do and how I can make things happen. Ramon and I are very fortunate that we are nearing the end of our plan - and it is only a matter of time before we can slow down and really start to enjoy life. I received an email recently, and it really is worth reading.

[http://propertyupdate.com.au/how-many-properties-do-you-need-to-
retire/?inf_contact_key=1b8339d9f233987f3eba070cc0437262f7d8e2bbe33e85f7cca45e315b596df7](http://propertyupdate.com.au/how-many-properties-do-you-need-to-
retire/?inf_contact_key=1b8339d9f233987f3eba070cc0437262f7d8e2bbe33e85f7cca45e315b596df7)

Each of us needs to sit down and realistically look at what we really need to retire on - and more importantly what we WANT to retire on. Let's not be mistaken these are two very different amounts.

The next thing is work out how to get there. For Ramon and I, there was no way we could physically save this amount of money let alone earn it. We also just don't understand stocks and shares, so this isn't an option. For us it has been real estate. Our approach has been to buy as many as we can and when the market turns start to sell them down - but just enough of them to give us the passive income we want. Each of you will need to work out a plan that works for you. I want to share another interesting quote with you.

In fact only 1 in 200 property investors owns 6 or more investment properties, and you need at least that many to become financially independent.

We all have a bucket list, and in the past year I have added a few things to it:

- Cruise through the Panama Canal - actually just cruise anywhere, any time.
- I want to go to the AFL Grand Final - any of you that can help to make this one come true let me know. I wasn't going to explain why, but I will. We bought a property in partnership with another couple and their son. We were all renovating it, and it was the weekend of the Grand Finals. He stopped, sat down and watched it whilst the four of us continued working. We said that if he worked hard on this one, we could very well be at the Grand Final watching it for real next year or the year after. Needless to say, it didn't work out and the partnership broke down. This one I want to do just because we can, not because I am a footballer lover.
- Do the Santa Run in Las Vegas - actually running isn't my thing so it will be the Santa Walk
- Whilst in Vegas get married by Elvis - of course I would marry Ramon again, making him husband 2, 3 & 4.
- Do the Santa Run in Brisbane - working on that one this year as they have one at Christmas time - unless we are on a cruise.
- Buy a Porsche Boxster - that one is coming real soon, just waiting for the market to really turn.
- Go to the Mardi Gras in Sydney - now if you think I am going to line up for hours on the side of the road waiting for it to start - think again. They have just changed the age rules, and now Miss Tenille can come with me and we get front row seats in the GLAMSTAND. Yes, for a few dollars I bought tickets and there is an allocated seat on the parade route, with a bar, toilets and it is front row!! That will be one ticked off my Bucket List as we are flying down there next weekend.

If you had of asked me what my bucket list was back in 1999 when we arrived in Mission Beach - it would have been just to be able to pay the bills. It has been a long a difficult road, but it has been worth it. I know there are many out there that don't believe they can do it, but let me tell you that if Ramon and I can do it - anyone can. I hope that I inspire just one of you to make a difference to your lives, so that in turn you may be able to make a difference to someone else's life.

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

Linda