March has been a month of Professional Development in my small organization. I think our industry bodies view March as the quietest month so schedule all the professional development seminars into the month. I have attended courses on the implementation of the new privacy laws and details on updating all my forms so that I am compliant, with both REIQ and ARAMA. I have attended a Building Owners annual meeting and had an opportunity to review out Work Place Health and Safety Procedures, and other compliances tasks to make sure that we are not neglegent in any area that may result in litigation against us. I have attended a Social Media seminar with REIQ and the Property Managers Annual Confernece run by REIQ. This conference is attended by over 600 property managers from all over Queensland and is addressed by some very informed and influential industry leaders. Now my head is spinning and my to do list is long!

Your new committee had their first working meeting on 24-03-14 and we have a big year ahead.

The major project for the first half of the year is replacing the over water pool feature with a fiberglass equivalent. The current water feature is made of metal and is rusting. We are at the stage of refining the quoted work and hope to commence with the cooler weather.

The committee have asked that I pass on a few housekeeping matters for your attention.

1. **Smoke Alarms**. For those of you living in your own apartment or privately managing the proeprty, you need to be aware that the smoke alarms are nearing the end of their compliant life ( 10 Years) and you will need to make arrangements to have them changed over. You will need either a qualified electrician or a smoke alarm specialist to do this work for you as the smoke alarms are hard wired into your electrical supply. If you would like a recommendation of suitable tradesmen for this task please email me.

For all the Landlords, your subsciption with Smoke Alarm Solutions has this managed for you and the cost covered in your annual subscription.

1. **Noise and your balcony**. This is a hazard of compact inner city living. You should be aware that when you are out on your balcony or courtyard there is no such thing as a private conversation. Every word you say floats around and your lucky neighbours get an intimate working knowledge of your daily trials and tribulations. Even if you are on the top floor, those on the ground floor get to join the conversation, especially on still evenings.

The trick here is to be very politically correct in your conversation content, and to be considerate of others as to the volume and duration of your discourse. If you think that you might be starting to wear a little thin on your neighbours tolerance levels, just take the conversation inside.

1. **WET FEET**! We all love a swim on a hot day. There is nothing better than knocking over the housework on a steamy day when you are nice and cool from a swim and still a bit damp. However if you are so damp that you are leaving puddles in the lift then you might be unconsciously creating a safety issue for someone not quite so stable on their feet. May you please make sure your feet are dry and that if you make a puddle in the lift, you wipe it up as you exit the lift.
2. **Pooches and Pees**! Those of us that own and babysit the most adorable pets in the world, are reminded that everyone gets in and out of cars on the patch of grass immediately outside the front entrance doors. We know our dogs are busting to pee first thing in the morning and last thing at night, but we are respectfully asked if we can encourage our dogs to hold on a few seconds longer and pee further down the street. As the chief lawn grower in our complex, I would ask that if you can, take your dog across the street to pee on their grass! Those little brown patches in the grass are a direct result of concentrated efforts from our most beloved. Doogle is as guilty as the rest of them. May we all see if we can make a bit of an effort to spread the love to other bits of grass for the next month at the very least, and make a bit of a clean entrance for those arriving at the complex. Thank you.
3. **New Privacy Laws.** Will have an impact on some of the activities and services I have been able to offer in the past. For example, I will no longer be able to send around group emails advertising furniture or cars etc for sale by departing residents. I am no longer allowed to divuldge any information about sales prices achieved or rental figures for properties that are not owned by the person asking the question. I am allowed to use the personal information that I collect about each one of you only for the purpose for which it was collected, and that is to manage your property for you. I may pass on personal information to a tradesman, but that is solely for the purpose of him contacting you to arrange access to the property, or for him to invoice you.
4. **Tradesmen onsite**. Just a reminder that if you have booked a tradesman to come into your property , they need to be sent the contractor induction information sheet before their arrival (a copy is available digitally from me) and they must sign in at the office before proceding to your property. Any trademan entering the site must hold appropriate licences and insurnances. This is a body corporate stipulation to ensure that we are compliant with the work place health and safety act and that the body corporate (each one of us) is protected against litigation.
5. **Most importantly**: We welcome two new additions to our community. Both little girls born this month. Congratulations to Chelsea and Adam(Ariel) ( U23) and Sam and Yuki (Sakura) (U27).

I recently read in the opening comments of the Real Estate Industry Journal for March. It caused me some concern to think that I might be grouped in with this opinion…

*“A recent survey of the public asked them to rank professionals and who they trust. And there we were – real estate agents – fifth from the bottom. Only just above car sales people and telemarketers. Three spots below professional footballers. We even had sex workers on top of us. Who topped the list of most trusted professions? The Ambos. And Paramedics who are highly-skilled, there at those critical moments in life.*

*We don’t deal with life and death, but we do manage most Queenslanders’ greatest assets – their homes and their investments. It is a critical service, yet some treat it so casually. Our educational standards are too low. There’s no compulsory professional development. We haven’t yet earned that public respect.”*

I would hope that none of our community consider myself in that light, but it gave me cause to think.

I didn’t really have to apply for the job of managing this complex. I bought the right to do so, well mortgaged myself to do so, with my hard earned life savings and have invested everything I have it in. But you didn’t get to know anything about me before I started. You have no idea of my credentials, experience or history in this industry or any other. You have had to trust me with your major investments and hope that I would come through for you. Thank you for the trust you have placed in me.

I am proud to know that I have increased the rental returns in the complex by 13% since starting here just over three years ago. I am proud to know that the gardens and common areas are in top shape and well maintained. I am proud to know that we have a harmonious group of people living in the complex. I am proud to know that the accounts are in order and the budget controlled, and that I have some input in helping achieve that outcome. I know that I work really hard to make my investment in the complex grow, and I am proud to take your investment growth with me.

So a little late, but here are my credentials.

I have a Bachelor of Business from QUT, major in Marketing specializing in Retailing. I won the McDonald and East Prize at QUT in 1984 for the most outstanding Retailing Student.

I am also an award winning embroider, but no-where near the standard of Vanda in U46! Her work is spectacular. You should ask her to show you.

I worked in the Retail Jewellery Business for 17years, both on the shop floor, as a regional manager and eventually as the Diamond, Loose Gem and Jewellery buyer for the group, travelling all over the world sourcing products for resale in the retail business. Back then I was in charge of what was considered a very significant budget and sales turn over for 27 stores and a manufacturing business. I was privileged to be included as an associate board member for this firm for 7years.

Then I got married and had two beautiful children. My husband, a lawyer turned property developer, took over the development of a project in Fiji. We were to move to Fiji for two years and ended up staying for over 11 years. As the wife of the “Boso Levu” (Big Boss), I had many roles to perform in our small community:- Building a kindergarten, arranging the school bus system and rosters, fund raising for the school, the local Nadi Hospital, and the cancer society of Fiji. I entertained Prime Ministers their staff and security in my home on a regular basis. It was a busy and full life in a third world community, where one had to be very resourceful. The Resort was Denarau Island, modelled on Sanctuary Cove in Queensland. At the time I left it had 7 hotel/resorts, a gated community for 360 residential properties, golf course, country club, tennis courts, marina and retail precinct. All built out of a mangrove swamp at the mouth of the Nadi River.

Life took many turns, my marriage dissolved and we moved back to Brisbane. I had to find work and took a job at the local real estate agent, across the road from home (Newstead Realty). Initially they hired me to do a bit of archiving and organization in the office and of their computer storage systems. 10 hours a week. Before I knew it I was managing the repairs and maintenance for all the properties on the rent roll. I took myself off to do a Real Estate Licensing Course with the Real Estate Institute of Queensland (REIQ) and came out with a full real estate licence, which allows me to manage properties off site and sell real estate. I keep up with the professional development courses run by REIQ and keep my licence and skill set current. I also obtained a Justice of the Peace (Qualified) to assist with the paperwork in the office. I loved the work and was making a real and tangible difference in the office and the efficiencies of day to day jobs, but the number of properties needed to make a commercially viable office meant that the personal service had to suffer.

There had to be a better way to do this job and offer a higher level of service to my clientele. Whilst doing some more study on my real estate licence, I learned about the Management Rights Business and believed that this format suited my skill levels, my commitment to professionalism and gave me the opportunity to offer a more personal service and get to know all my clients and their needs.

Since starting at Newstead Terraces, I have become a member of ARAMA, an industry group for management rights operators, which runs a network of mentoring and assistance for junior members and many information evenings. I am also a Private Member of REIQ (Real Estate Institute Queensland). Whilst I am not an expert in the industry, I have 7 years under my belt in property management and a pretty good understanding of the residential tenancy laws. My 17 years in the retailing sector have taught me about providing service. I am a property owner and investor myself and my Management Degree and experience in the corporate world give me a degree of empathy with landlords and tenants alike. I have lived in Newstead full time now for 7 years and most of my family are also in the area. I feel that after managing many properties in the street, and living in two of them, I have a unique understanding of the street and the area.

I do love my job and I do love my community. I am thankful for the opportunity you give to me to manage your precious investment and I know that your trust in me and my work ethic is well placed.