



STRAIGHT TALK

PROPERTY INVESTOR / OWNER NEWSLETTER

October 2015

Making Use of Modern Technology

If you are as old as me, you will remember the days before computers and mobile phones became common place. When I started my property management career way back in 1984, all records and accounting were done by hand. The most modern piece of equipment we had was an electric typewriter and a photocopier. During those days, it took two people working full-time to manage around 80 properties. All rents were paid by cash or cheque and all monthly Statements for our Owners were typed one at a time by hand.

How things have changed! Our first computer and first property management software cut our end-of-month procedures from two people working 4 days each month to one person doing it all in half a day! The results were simply astonishing! That was the day I realised that computers were definitely the way of the future.

Today, one Property Manager can manage 130-150 properties with appropriate accounting back up from a support person. Inspections are now done with iPads and emailed to our clients. Rents are all paid electronically as are pretty much all disbursements of funds. The savings in time are considerable!

At Kevin Hodges Real Estate, we are always looking for improvements and efficiencies in our work. We are currently looking at implementing internet access to records for our Landlords and Tenants, somewhat like being able to check your bank statement on-line. We are also investing in video in-going inspections to further enhance accuracy and save time. We will of course be keeping our clients fully informed as these new developments take place.

What We Have Rented in the Past Month

Once again, we have had a very busy month of August and have leased the following properties:

Elizabeth South	3BR Semi - \$200 per week
Glandore	3BR Unit - \$300 per week
Elizabeth East	3BR Semi - \$215 per week
Munno Para West	3BR House - \$285 per week
Munno Para West	3BR House - \$310 per week
Munno Para West	4BR House - \$325 per week
Gawler	2BR Unit - \$245 per week
Davoren park	3BR Semi - \$220 per week
Elizabeth Downs	3BR House - \$255 per week
Elizabeth North	3BR House - \$245 per week
Mitchell Park	3BR Townhouse - \$340 per week

Please contact our office to find out how we can help you with your investment property.



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Water, water everywhere!

One of the more helpful changes in recent years to Tenancy Regulations in South Australia has been the ability to now have tenants reimburse owners for water usage and supply charges. This is in keeping with the principle of 'user pays'. It does not extend however to sewer charges. Such a condition must be written into tenancy agreements (leases) and it has been our agency practice since the change was made to recommend to our clients that these charges be passed on to tenants. The net result is effectively a rent increase to that amount.

Unfortunately we do not have the same situation in our State as they do in Victoria where the resident has the water account put into their name just like electricity, gas and telephone. In SA, the account stays in the owner's name and we then on-charge the tenant. We have approached SA Water, but they have informed us that such a change will never be brought into SA!

The Tenancy Tribunal has however ruled that tenants must be charged according to SA Water accounts and then only for three months in arrears. Once this time limit is reached, there is no further opportunity to charge for the water.

Many of our Owners have given us instructions to pay the SA Water accounts directly. In these cases, the Invoices are sent directly to our office. This enable us to pay them promptly as well as create the invoices for our tenants. Where we do not have these instructions, Owners are required to send us the Invoices so we can process them.

If you are one of our Owners who still have the account sent directly to you, you may wish to consider having them sent to us for payment and processing. Just give our office a call and we will quickly arrange this for you.

Considering Pets in Your Rental Property



Most people have a soft spot for pets, however when considering whether to allow a pet in your rental property it does require a bit more thought for property investors. It is natural for property investors and Property Managers to be wary of allowing pets into a rental property based upon a prior experience or concerns over what damage could occur to the property. Should you decide **not** to allow pets in your investment property, this must be incorporated in pre-tenancy marketing to avoid any confusion by prospective tenants which could hinder or delay the tenancy application process.

Should you decide to allow a pet in your rental property, some definite guidelines should be placed at the start of the tenancy and written as additional terms of the tenancy agreement so there is a firm understanding and agreement as to the consent that you have granted. Firstly, when checking the tenant's reference, additional particulars should be sought as to whether the pet created a disturbance, nuisance or damage during a previous tenancy. Also find out the number and type of pets. Is the pet for this tenancy the same as in other tenancies?

Although near impossible to police during a tenancy, clear guidelines should be sought and made regarding whether the pet will remain outdoors at all times or will be allowed indoors and under what circumstances. If you decide to allow a pet in your property you can set guidelines. In addition to terms such as the tenant fumigating the property internally and externally and steam-cleaning the carpets at the end of the tenancy, restriction of the number and type of pets should be written into the agreement.

Our experience has shown that by making it clear at the start of the tenancy that consent is granted upon the terms set out in the tenancy agreement it is possible to have a harmonious pet friendly tenancy.