



FROM THIS



The existing East Maitland offices

TO THIS



The proposed new two storey office building

Redevelopment of our Maitland Office

Work begins

As we write, the demolition crew has moved in and work is underway at East Maitland to construct a two storey office (see artist's impression). The existing building was one of the very first at Greenhills and it could be the new development will act as a catalyst for further enhancement along the strip. Architects Jackson Teece, who had received major awards for their work in Charlestown, was engaged to "create a contemporary design." Maitland is one of the fastest growing regions in the country and Greenhills is a hub in the region; that will be further reinforced when Leasecorp undertake their massive additions next year. When Leah Jay moved into Maitland just over seven years ago, it was with a feeling of confidence in the area. This development not only reflects what has occurred in those seven years but also continuing optimism about what the next seven will bring.

A close call at Council

Council obviously gave approval for the project but it was extremely close with the vote going to the wire, seven to six. It proved to be a very interesting exercise and provided insight into local government politics for our project manager, Cassie Lantry. To maximise the chance of success we had enthusiastically presented the project to one of the senior Councillors and sought his advice and assistance, which he gave. Or at least we thought that's what we were getting. We anticipated there might be some opposition (rarely is there none!) but at the council meeting in question, it didn't come from where we expected. Indeed if it were not for an independent Councillor from another ward championing the project, it would most likely have failed to pass first time around.

He had taken the time to examine the proposal closely, believed it had merit because of the quality of the project and that it would both enhance the precinct and complement next year's major redevelopment

of Greenhills shopping centre, directly across the road. He argued the case forcefully and convincingly and it got up, despite opposition from our advising Councillor and his group. We were stunned; not once had he signalled his opposition in our face to face meetings and phone discussions! That's politics as they say.

First floor available for lease

We will occupy the ground floor of around 200 square metres and the first floor is available for lease. Given the quality of the building (including a lift), the location and street frontage across from what will be the front entrance to the revamped Greenhills Shopping Centre, we expect there to be some keen interest from businesses. At this point, for the first time, there is no available space in the whole complex and very little in the surrounding precinct. We feel the 160 square metres upstairs will be ideal for government or professional services such as health/medical but it will suit a number of uses. We anticipate being able to occupy by November, certainly before the year's end. If you know of someone who may be interested and they want to chat before we go to market, contact Cassandra Lantry on 0408 414 758.

Temporary East Maitland office

With the development pending we had to seek out temporary premises. We could have leased offices in the same complex but elected to move a little further away in order to take our vehicles from the site and thereby ease activity during the building phase. This appears to have been appreciated by the other tenants but then construction hasn't commenced! So we have relocated to Shop 6/4A Garnett Road, which is just a few hundred metres from the site of the previous office. All contact details remain the same.

Future Newsletters

Since Leah Jay began almost 17 years ago, newsletters have been issued quarterly. It would seem that over that time they have been welcomed as a useful and enjoyable read. We now find however there's more information than space available or rather, we believe that most owners don't want to be bombarded with any more information in one hit; so from April, we will be providing monthly issues. However the additional newsletters will be sent electronically. Please note we will still send the quarterly newsletters in hard copy as they have been and ALL newsletters, electronic or otherwise, are available on our website leahjay.com.au

In coming months we plan to cover such topics as:

- Mould - a difficult issue to deal with, not only in terms of avoiding or removing it but in determining who is actually responsible.
- Landlord insurance – it's a must have these days but is one insurance policy virtually the same as any other? We think not, there are differences that owners need to be aware of.
- The Tribunal - some owners are lucky to only hear of it in passing; some Property Managers have an intense dislike of it while others see it as one of the challenging elements of the job. What does it do and how does it actually work?

If you wish to receive all electronic newsletters and alerts and we don't have your email address, please email subscribe@leahjay.com. They will be also be available on our website leahjay.com.au

The New Tenancy Laws – now in play

After five years of reworking, the new tenancy laws came into being at the end of January. Now we are seeing the impact of these laws, firstly with an enormous amount of work in training and the complete redrafting of forms and documents, plus changes to software and the like. Then there's the matter of informing owners and tenants. So with the laws in effect just over a month, we thought it would be interesting to get the early reactions from a few of our property managers...

- *I think we need to make all landlords aware of the 90 days required to issue a termination notice with no grounds. I am finding so many still think it is 60 and are getting quite upset when you let them know we are required to do 90 days.* (Cheryl Skene - Senior Property Manager - Warners Bay)
- *I really like being able to serve a termination notice into the mail box of a property. Taking a few minutes to go to the property saves four days postage. This is particularly good when the property has sold and 30 days notice is required, or if you have a tenant who is regularly in arrears. Now you don't have to worry whether the tenant is home, the termination notice is valid immediately.* (Renée Ross - Property Manager - East Maitland)
- *Change is good, especially when it clarifies many uncertainties landlords had previously.* (Emma-Kate Hart - Senior Property Manager - Hamilton)
- *The average water usage in the Hunter region for a household is \$311.22 per annum (www.ipart.nsw.gov.au). The average cost of complying with water efficiency measures for new legislation to ensure tenant pays for their water usage is around \$110 Inc GST. That seems like a good investment to me.* (Perri-Anne Fehily - Property Manager - Warners Bay)
- *I have had a few queries from landlords over the past month or so in relation to water saving devices and water usage charges. While there is still about ten months before this comes into effect I believe it is important to act on this issue sooner rather than later.* (Janelle Osborne - Senior Property Manager - East Maitland)
- *The abolishment of lease preparation fees for tenants means that owners' costs have risen slightly but on a positive note, we can now be assured that terminations for No Grounds can be enforced much more easily, despite the additional time frame required for notice.* (Sue Johnson - Property Manager - Hamilton)
- *It's important to remind owners that ALL tenancies, including those in place before the 31st January, are subject to the changes brought in by these new regulations. As to the impact, we'll be watching very closely to see how the Tribunal (CTT&T) interprets some elements of the new laws in particular.* (Leah Jay)
- *It's a very steep learning curve, while many of the changes are understood, questions continue to arise and will do so for some time.* (Jan Padgett - Senior Property Manager - Hamilton)

The unexpected becomes the expected!

Property managers come across all sorts of scenes when inspecting or showing properties. Often it's amusing, in fact absolutely hilarious at times; sometimes we're dismayed and unsettled or even disturbed by a truly bizarre encounter. And occasionally it can be extremely sad and confronting, as two of our young property managers found recently when they entered a premises and discovered the tenant, deceased and on the bathroom floor. Unfortunately, long time property managers are unlikely to go through their careers without experiencing something similar.

Just as we go to print another of our property managers has told us of spending a very unsettled night last night after receiving a phone call from police at 7pm; earlier, she had gone to inspect a property at the arranged time but was unable to raise the tenant. Our property manager spoke fondly of the woman, as she had dealt with her for nine years as a tenant. She left her card at the unit, hence the police were able to contact her to let her know they had been called to the premises and after breaking in, found the woman deceased.

Babies, babies!

There has to be something in the water at East Maitland; with the news in recent days that two of the women, Property Manager Ashlee and Receptionist Rebecca are expecting...and in quite a coincidence they are due on exactly the same day! Set to take maternity leave shortly are Danielle from Warners Bay and Rebecca from Hamilton.



Good luck ladies.

Property Manager in Focus



Perri-Anne Fehily, Property Manager Warners Bay

There was a time when Perri-Anne managed a motel & restaurant with 45 staff, before changing career paths. Her move to property management occurred in Glen Innes but she relocated to Newcastle to try her hand in sales. She soon realised her passion was with property management and it wasn't long after that she joined Leah Jay. Perri-Anne works alongside the Senior Property Manager at Warners Bay in looking after one of the portfolios. Perri-Anne relishes the challenge and in particular gaining the trust of owners...or as in one recent case, a prospective tenant who had Perri-Anne hold onto her one week old baby while she inspected the property.

Please note: As at 25/03/2011, this newsletter is intended as general news and not as advice, as each individual's situation will vary depending on specific circumstances relating to that individual. You should seek professional advice as it relates to your own circumstances.