



## PROPERTY MANAGER

**Andrea Elliott**, 44, owns and runs Click Property Management. She lives in Maori Hill, Dunedin, with her husband Andrew and daughters Ashley, 20, and Samantha, 17

AS TOLD TO **CATHERINE WOULFE**  
PHOTOGRAPH **SHARON BENNETT**

Ashley and I were both working in other jobs but also building up our rental portfolio. We looked at passing the portfolio on to other people to manage, but I didn't like what I saw. So I set up Click in January last year, and in February Andrew came on board too. I haven't had a bad day in a very long time.

We're both people people. We love helping people, finding out how tenants tick, and the landlords. Getting the right property and putting all the jigsaw pieces together is quite rewarding.

The first thing Andrew and I do each day is go out for coffee and a catch-up. Then we come back and it's into emails, phone calls. It's a very reactive industry. If the phone rings and people want to go to look at a property, you just drop tools and go and do it. It'll be a combination of viewings and new landlord enquiries. I'll also be doing property inspections and, of course, people ring up and say, "Oh, my plumbing's dripping, my tap's not working."

Another service we offer is project management of upgrades, especially for landlords who live elsewhere. So we're getting quotes for new hot water cylinders, heat pumps, ventilation systems.

We're self-professed workaholics. We work seven days a week and go right through until dinner. Then we usually go back downstairs to the office, to catch up on paperwork and contact landlords, until sometime between 9pm and 11pm.

We can take off and go to the hairdresser in the middle of the day, or have a massage – we do have a little bit of that, but not a lot. We don't break for lunch. We might have a lunch meeting instead, or coffee meetings with prospective landlords or tradespeople, getting those alliances built up.

**"WE HAVE A VERY STRINGENT TENANT-SCREENING PROCESS: DETAILED APPLICATION FORMS AND BACKGROUND CHECKS. WE LOOK AT THEIR FACEBOOK PAGES. GUT INSTINCT IS BIG"**

We're very big on branding. We've got three black Minis all sign-written with 'Click Property Management'. My corporate colours are fuchsia pink and black, so I wear quite a bit of pink and a bit of black, and everyone else wears a lot of black and a little bit of pink.

We employ an office administrator and two property managers, including our daughter Ashley. It's working really well.

We have a very stringent tenant-screening process: quite detailed application forms and background checks. We look at their Facebook pages. We're not scared of saying no. You've got to be really careful – we can't *deny*, that's discrimination. But we take the best tenant applicant on merit.

Gut instinct is big. We're self-professed human lie detectors. So someone will come in with their application in hand, shaking like a leaf, stinking of cigarette smoke, bloodshot eyes. "Do you smoke?" "No." "Why do you smell of cigarette smoke?" "Oh, oh, I was in the car with my mate and he smokes." Yeah, rightio.

The firmest I have to be is generally with students. I tell them when they move in, "I have high expectations. This house is immaculate – including the oven. This is how it will be left when you leave the property, otherwise you'll be up for a hefty cleaning bill." I treat them like my children, really: firm but fair. We can't tell them that they must do their dishes or make their beds, but if it's something that's going to be detrimental to the property I'll be on their case.

We encourage them to pick up the phone and talk to us, rather than text. It's like, "Oh yep got a house to rent what's the addy", you know? I'll think, 'Whoa, this is a good conversation. I can see it going far.'

Sunday mornings are our time out, unless it's a dire emergency where someone has to visit a property. We take our wee dog and walk along the beach and chill out. Yes, we do talk about work, but it's what we love and it doesn't feel like work.

I do think it's a different mind-set from some people. When I worked at ACC, I'd ask people, "What did you do last night?" and they'd say, "Oh, went home, watched telly." I'd say, "Oh, well we've been renovating a new property for the last three months, every weekend and every night till 10 or 11 at night." That might not work for some people, and that's okay, but it's what we do to get a job done and to better ourselves. You're not going to get anywhere in this life if you put your hand out and wait for it to happen.