

It seemed the right thing to do at the time - buy a small unit in Cairns so that I could travel and work and continue to live on the Tablelands, where there aren't the employment opportunities.

It is a tiny place - believe me, at less than 50 sq metres, little more than a large cupboard with a bathroom attached.

Costs were manageable initially - then the rates went up. Now \$2000 a year for such a tiny space. Then the power bills went up. Then the cost of fuel went up. Now an enormous hike in insurance costs will break me. It will no longer be viable. I cannot sell because the market has dropped so much I owe more than the unit is worth. I can rent it out but not for enough to cover the bills - but it is what I will have to do.

And I don't understand what the insurance issue is all about - is it company's covering the costs of all those payouts for people who suffered so much damage and loss during the floods and the cyclone. I don't begrudge them that - it is what we pay our premiums for - peace of mind and recovery when disaster does hit. Did the insurance company's get it wrong them? For all their risk assessment and management did they imagine the day would never come when they would have to pay out instead of take in? Why such an enormous hike when they are in the business of risk - what happened to their calculations that I now have to lose my unit because they need to recover costs. My unit has never been flooded or been hit by a cyclone - I don't consider the risk any greater this year than it was last year, and the one before that, and the one before that to 25 years ago when the complex was built. I am not sure what the insurance companies are saying here - that, all of a sudden, it is a greater risk?

I am not sure what the answer is. To be honest I am not even sure what the question is. All I know is, it is enough - it has broken me. On the one hand so many people are saying "Pay me more for this, and this, and this" but there is no one on the other hand saying "hey, the cost of living has gone up x, y, z - have a pay rise". No, in my own work I am asked to do more and more for less and less. It feels like everyone wants a piece of me but the piece the insurance companies are now demanding comes after so many other pieces - there is nothing left.

Saddened small unit owner
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