

Downsizing Your Home,  
A Three Week Guide to Making the Most of Moving On  
**WEEK ONE**

## Slide 1

- In this first week we are going to discuss planning your downsize – with emphasis on the word “planning”! The more planning you can do, the less stressful your eventual move will be.
- Of course, we are a computer club, so we will emphasise utilising technology to downsize, but because we are also seniors, we will also include our experiences of non-computer related information to make this course more useful to you.
- This three week course will hopefully give you some food for thought and perhaps even help you to decide to start now, no matter how far ahead your potential move may be.

## Slide 2

### DISCLAIMER

## Slide 3

Today we will deal with things that take up space – both physical and mental:-

- **De-clutter your mind.** We will look at the tools and skills you need in order to get your mind in shape for the big move. We will talk about using your imagination, sometimes tricking your mind into taking action on planning, and staying in control.
- **De-clutter your technology.** We will ask you to take a good, hard look at everything that plugs into a power point and how relevant it is to you now and in the future.
- **De-clutter your paperwork,** books, photos, correspondence, and those filing cabinets full of old paperwork. We’ll talk about working towards having a paper-free household from now into the future.
- **FINAL POINT:** – You’ll be surprised how much you have kept over the years, so it’s important to learn that your stuff doesn’t own you, and to ensure that you don’t drown in your own belongings when it comes time to move.

## Slide 4

### Decluttering Your Mind:

### Mental Shifts towards Moving:

- **Start small** – When you have been living in that place you have called home for a long time, it becomes difficult to imagine yourself living somewhere else. But of course, you HAVE lived somewhere else. Even if you still live in your childhood home you have gone on holiday, or stayed with other people, so everybody does have a memory of being somewhere else, living a different in a different place. So next time you are in someone else’s home, or actually

looking at homes such as the one you think you might move into, take a little time to imagine yourself living there. What would you change? What would you add or take away? Allow your mind to imagine your life in this place.

- **Getting out of the mind cyclone** – Remember the first time you ever switched on a computer or your new phone? How did you feel? One of the first things that our minds tend to do when we are contemplating any big change is to overwhelm us, and make us believe it is all too hard and we can so easily convince ourselves that we just can't do it. Almost all of us have experienced feeling overwhelmed by a task or situation that seems so large that we can't even imagine ourselves tackling or solving it. But when it comes to downsizing, that is not true, and in fact there is one sure way to convince your mind that it can be done.
- **Taking practical, do-able steps** – Our minds almost always resist change, and simple way to overcome these feelings is by TAKING ACTION with little, but regular activities. One way to start is to DECIDE that once a day (or at a particular time of day on particular days) you will look at some area of your home and catalogue the things you find. Mark this in your diary like any other important event, or, even better, set an alarm on your digital device to remind you daily that this is the time you allocated to doing something about your impending move.
- **FINAL POINT:** – Use your modern technology or even old fashioned post it notes to give yourself prompts and deadlines, but the actions you take NOW are the ones that will determine whether your downsize will drag you kicking and screaming or stepping lightly into your new lifestyle.

## Slide 5

### Decluttering Your Mind:

- **Know your stuff** – At this early stage it's a matter of creating a catalogue of the things you own, room by room. Here are some easy ways to do that: Download an app called "ListNote", a speech-to-text app on your device. It allows you to take voice notes as you go through your house, and the app converts it all to a neatly typed list. By the way, this is also useful for updating your contents insurance, and helps you to work out what is useful, valuable or simply taking up space. Take digital photos of all your stuff as you catalogue it. Develop a "can do" attitude to overcoming the plethora of emotions that may assault you at the mere thought of moving.
- **Communicate with those involved** – Tell the important people in your life that you are contemplating moving. These people can often be very helpful to us at this confusing time, but if you find they are not, then communicate as little as possible, but still keep them in the loop by email, text or phone. Here are some real life examples of good and bad experiences.
  - **Good Example Story:** A couple with five grown-up children invited them all to a good old fashioned Sunday roast lunch without husbands or children. At the table after the meal they announced their plan to move to a retirement home. They gave each one a box of different coloured stick-on dots and told them to go through the house and put a dot on everything they wanted. Anything with dots would be moved into storage or, if it was still in use, stay until the move. Where there were two or more dots on an item, there would have to be negotiations later, or a coin flipped, and things with no dots would go to charity if they weren't needed when the couple moved.

- **Bad Example Story:** On the other side is the story of a widowed father who re-married a woman who nagged him into signing his home, a holiday house and an investment property as well as all his material possessions over to her and her adult offspring while legally cutting off the man's own offspring. Then she kicked out of his own home to live in his only other asset, an on-site van that he had to park somewhere in the middle of nowhere. Only then did he contact his children. If he had told them what was happening to him sooner this story may not have had such a disastrous and irreversible outcome.
- **FINAL POINT:** – Communication is the key to avoiding the possibility of turning your downsize into a fight between you and your loved ones.

## Slide 6

### Decluttering Your Mind:

#### What to consider:

- **Replacing** – Ask yourself what you would replace if your current home was burned down? Using the photos and lists you made of your belongings room by room, ask yourself if your house burned down would you really buy a new stationary exercise bike? Or replace that 1970's era sewing machine? Or all 7 of those rubber mallets you kept buying because you couldn't find the last one". What about your old desktop computer? It may not even be very old, but ask yourself if it really fits into your new life? Or does it simply take up too much space? Would a laptop or tablet suit your needs better?
- **Renewing** – Take a good, long look at your furniture. You know that that old lounge suite is SO very comfy, but what will it look like when you've moved it to a new place, You've sat on the right because it fits with your TV watching, but what if you have to sit on the left in your new place? Other burning questions you will need to consider is things like if your dining table is too big and how many dinner parties are you still planning to hold? Do you REALLY want to keep those old appliances just because they still work? Wouldn't new ones be more compact, less noisy or more efficient?
- **Removing** – You don't have to throw things out, especially things that have been special to you. For example, where will you place Grandma's carriage clock now that you won't have a mantle piece? What will you need a lawnmower for in a unit or retirement village? Why are you considering holding on to all 30 of your old nail polish colour range when you don't even paint your nails anymore? Almost all these things can be re-homed either among people you want to pass them on to or charity shops – though you should know that there is a long list of things, including anything electrical and things like mattresses that charity shops won't take, so ask before you leave your stuff there or you will be dumping and they have to pay for the removal, which is not fair.
- **Remembering** – If you have things that mean a lot to you, even if they don't mean a thing to anyone else, keep them. For example, say you've been around Australia and collected teaspoons from different places that were special to you. Your family laughs at the collection, but when you take them down to dust them, they still make you smile in memory. If the collection is large, take only your very favourites. Here's another example. Say you've decided to get rid of all your physical books, but then come across one (or more) that you waited in line at the bookstore to get signed by the author or someone special sent it to you with a

beautiful note written in the sleeve by a loved one. They are unique, so if they still mean something to you, keep them.

- **FINAL POINT: – Keep working at these thought processes** – You will find them invaluable and make the transition so very much easier when the time comes to actually to do it for real.

## Slide 7

### Decluttering your Technology:

#### What to consider:

- **Large Electrical Items** – Again, using the photos and lists you made of your belongings room by room, this time you'll be looking at all your appliances and devices. If it plugs into a power point or get charged regularly, it's in your spotlight. Starting with the big things, take a good hard look at your fridge. Will it be too big? Too small? Too old? Just right? What about the washing machine, dryer, dishwasher and room heater? Often the place you move to will have things like a dishwasher installed, so you don't need to move yours. You don't have to finally decide on any of these items until you have found the place you will be moving to. So why are we looking at them in the planning stages? Because they will need to be moved at some stage, so why not decide their fate now? It will make things so much easier on moving day.
- **Will these things still be useful?** – Your much loved and used mix-master. Will you really still be cooking for your family when you move? Will that radio alarm clock still matter to you when you don't need to wake up at 6 every morning? Besides, couldn't you set the smartphone alarm instead. You still have your trusty old desk fan, but since you will be moving somewhere air-conditioned, will you really still need it?
- **Audio & Video Equipment** – You may well still have all your old records, tapes and CDs along with the equipment to play them on, but what if you won't have room for all those great big sub woofers, tweeters and hi-fi equipment where you're going? We're downsizing, right? So let's downsize without too much pain. Yes, you will probably have to part with that stereo equipment you saved up for months or years to get back in the '70's. But you don't have to lose your music from the period. You can either digitise it yourself by buying a USB capable record player, cassette tape and external CD drive. Or, like your VHS or super 8 camera and films, there are lots of places that can update your audio-visual memories into digital format for you. Just start now, or you simply won't have time or energy to do it later.
- **Computer Equipment** – You may have a special room in your current house to put a desktop tower, monitor, mouse, keyboard and printer. But will you have that in a smaller living space? Probably not. So NOW is the time to back-up everything off that old computer, save all the photos, projects, and documents you have saved on it over the years onto a physical external hard drive or on your space in the cloud.
- **FINAL POINT: Start Early** – to avoid pain and suffering later. If you find your mind saying it's all too hard, or you are convincing yourself that you've got plenty of time to get it all done in time, just imagine yourself on moving day having to throw all your VCR tapes, or all your records from your teenage years in the bin, all because you didn't take the time to preserve them in a different format.

## Slide 8

### Decluttering Your Technology

- **Do I Need This HUGE TV?** – A word about your current TV. The thing is that over time the prices have come down and the sizes have gone up. So, if you invested half your savings into buying that massive, wall sized TV five years ago, it still works perfectly, but you know it will take up too much room in your new, smaller home. You are going to have to make a decision about whether to keep it or get one that is better suited to your new place. Here are some ideas on how to make that decision. Firstly ask yourself why you bought the TV you have. Was it because it was easier to view now that your eyesight isn't what it used to be? Well, remember that if your new place is going to be smaller you will most likely be in a smaller room, so your TV can LOOK the same size, but actually be smaller. Next, TV technology has changed vastly recently and you may find that a smaller, but better quality screen is more than adequate to see all you need. Take a look around at what is available now before you decide to keep or ditch your current TV.
- **Radios and Stereos** – We mentioned that you don't need that huge stereo, but haven't talked about options to replace it. You still appreciate good sound quality, so how do you get your morning dose of news, your afternoon symphony and your late night audio book reading without having to have 3 different devices? The simple way is to use a WiFi sound system such as Sonos, Bose or any of the other systems. These work via an app on your smartphone or tablet and can stream radio programs from your favourite radio stations all over the world, serve you up your taste in music from various dedicated music services, and of course play your own digitised music from your storage space such as the cloud, your laptop or tablet. If you have a huge music collection that you've digitised, then a laptop with a connection to a removable hard drive would be the best way I can think of to continue listening to all the music you love. Go Tech window shopping well before your intended move because it helps you to be able to let go of your old stuff, knowing you can still have quality without all the bulk
- **DVDs** – This is a bit of a thorny issue because while you can just sign up for a streaming service such as Netflix, Stan or a dozen others, you do just get cinema version of the movie. So if you particularly enjoy watching the longer version, the "Director's Cut" or you like playing the commentary to hear out how the people behind the scenes put the movie together, or even watch the out-takes and bloopers, then your life will be a little diminished if you get rid of all your DVDs. One answer is to carefully go through your DVD collection, well before your move, and watch the commentary and special features on the DVDs you like. Many movie crews do this very badly, but there are some real gems such as Lord of the Rings, The Hobbit and the TV Series ROME. Those examples have such vast and excellent extras that you can watch the same footage 4 or 5 times and still learn something new. My best suggestion is only to keep those few DVDs with good commentaries. Imagine the fun you can have having movie nights in the name of downsizing research!
- **Small Technology Equipment** – Just accept right now that you will make some mistakes. Everyone who has been in one place for a long time is going to take stuff they never will use and get rid of stuff they suddenly find they need after all. The aim of this presentation is to help you decide what will be useful and what can go, but the actual decision on a particular item is of course up to you. Let's look at small electronic items. You may never have used that battery operated citrus squeezer someone gave you for Christmas 3 years ago, and you may well want to pass it on to someone else. But if you are developing arthritis and you know it's not going to get any better, wouldn't it be prudent to keep the juicer? Then there's your collection of old mobile phones. You haven't disposed of them because they still work and also they have your contacts and other information on them. Besides, they were expensive and you don't want to just throw them out.

Well, there are some excellent phone recycling projects in places like Taronga Zoo, Officeworks and other places. If you can't delete all the information by yourself, get someone to help you or look it up on Google. But do ditch those extra phones, you have no more room or need for them in your life!

- **FINAL POINT:** – Go through all your small electric and electronic gadgets and decide their fate in advance of your move. It makes moving so very much easier knowing what you intend to do with the thing you find in your hand when hovering over the moving box.

## Slide 9

### Decluttering Your Gadgets

#### What to Consider:

- **Do I Use it?** – As you pass through the rooms of your home, right from the attic to the cellar, the garage and the shed, open drawers, take out gadgets and ask yourself if you currently use it. Naturally if you do, then it should be on the “keep” list... but should it? This examination of your things is more than just a “keep or chuck” exercise, it is about deciding how you will live your life in the future, what you will do with your time once the move is over. This is why we keep reiterating that it is vital to start many months or even years ahead. The more you have shaped your new life in your mind, the easier it will be to decide on what to do with your stuff when you're in the stressful time of moving.
- **Will I continue to use it?** – This seems somewhat obvious, but it is actually a valid question. Will you really have the time, energy and space to make outdoor furniture? If not you will have to re-assess all your tools and equipment. Will you keep on with your photographic equipment? Will you use what you have, or update? All your pottery making equipment. Will you have the drive and enthusiasm to keep making something special for each of your grandchildren now that they are growing up?
- **Does it enrich my life?** – Taking a good look at what makes you feel good and what gives you a neutral feeling can be a very useful guide as to what to consider keeping and what can pass out of your life. If you have been making handmade furniture or done quilting all your adult life and you still love it, then you need to plan your future to include these hobbies. You will look at properties that include space for you to keep doing those things. Don't automatically assume you won't have space if you're downsizing. That is the very point of working at it so far in advance, to help you define who you want to become in your new life and tailoring your belongings to fit that image. You will thank yourself if you have done all the pruning in the planning stages.
- **Does it just take up space?** – This is another area fraught with difficulty if you leave it until the actual move. Have you ever received a gift from someone who cares about you but doesn't seem to know you very well? Well, that gift is still sitting around your house and hasn't even been opened has it? It has sentimental value, but no practical worth. One way to look at it is that someone else might love it as much as you have, but for a different reason... they want to USE it. So lovingly pass it on to that person even if you don't know who they are. Sell it on Gumtree or eBay, give it to a charity shop or the recycling shop at Kimbriki. Someone will treasure it somewhere so allow it to do what it was intended to do.
- **FINAL POINT:** – **If these thoughts scare you** – consider the excitement of taking up a whole new hobby... anyone for yoga and typing?

## Slide 10

# INTERMISSION

## Slide 11

### Decluttering Your Paperwork:

#### What to Consider:

- **Getting Prepared** – Consider the humble piece of paper. I'll bet you that as soon as you walk in the door when you get home today, one of the first things you will see is something paper. It is the most ubiquitous item in most homes. Even if today we are only talking about the planning towards downsizing, paperwork is one area where you should actually START decluttering before it overwhelms you. There are lots of ways to go about doing this, and we are going to discuss a few, but if you take anything away from today's presentation take this "START DECLUTTERING YOUR PAPERWORK NOW". So, back to where to start. As with all changes in our lives, it can easily become just too much, so the idea is to make a start. One of the ways to do that is to begin in a room. It doesn't have to be the home office yet, but let's start with a place where paper is at a minimum – the kitchen for example. Look through every drawer and cupboard in your kitchen and take out all paperwork. It could be the bills and pictures drawn by grandchildren on the fridge, or recipes cut out of magazines or old shopping lists in a drawer. A single pile can be a very satisfying thing.
- **Getting Organised** – Put it all in one pile in one place, preferably somewhere in the way. I say this because if it's in the way you will be motivated to put it somewhere else. Paperwork can draw you in and distract you like no other stuff in your home. Beware of this distraction. Yes, you do have to read it to find out what it is, but if you can limit yourself to headings or any way that generalises the paper, this is the way to go forward. If you find something completely fascinating (and you WILL at some point) resist with all your might going off and sit down with a cuppa tea and a bikini to read it in full. That's not what this is about! Sort, Sort, Sort! That's what you are doing. Make piles that make sense to you. I can only make suggestions about this. For example, you could have a keep pile, a chuck pile and a "to be read before making a decision" pile. Another way is to sort things into type. Bills, bank records, tax stuff, personal papers, letters etc. However, be warned that if you go the category way, you are likely to take MUCH longer to do the job, so do whatever suits your time frame and personality.
- **Getting Going** – Being motivated can be tricky when you only plan to move many months into the future. But don't let your mind trick you into believing that you have heaps of time. When it comes to paperwork, you NEVER have enough time! This is especially the case if you're not the organised type, and your paperwork is not filed neatly under categories in filing cabinets. Even if it is, the chances are that you haven't looked through those cabinets for some time and there is lots of stuff you could throw away now. Here are a couple of ways to motivate yourself to get the job done (Well actually it's more ways to trick your mind into doing something.) One way is to take all the paperwork out of a room, put it on the dining room table and then invite friends or relatives

around for a meal in a couple of days' time. Now, you have tricked your mind, you will have set a goal and you will sort out your paperwork. Another way of getting motivated is to deliberately place an important piece of paper (like a bill that is due in the next week or two.) Bury it at the bottom of a pile of papers you intend to sort and then make sure you don't forget all about it by setting an alarm on your phone to remind you daily that you need to pay that bill. Make sure you have sorted out all the papers on top of the bill before the due date.

- **Getting Results** – So, you're looking at a pile of paperwork and it all seems just too much. Here are a couple of ways to get results. Pick up the top item and DO NOT put it down until its fate has been decided. It will either be put on a pile to be scanned or filed, placed the shredding pile, left for someone else to deal with as it isn't yours, or put it in that useful round filing cabinet on the floor beside the desk for chucking out. As mentioned before DO NOT READ IT to decide. If, for example you have found a recipe torn out from a magazine, but you don't have a binder for recipes and you still want to use that recipe. What will you do with it? You HAVE TO deal with it as it is in your hand.... Personally I would scan it and then throw the paper copy away, but the final decision has to be yours. Another way to get results is to put a time limit on getting that pile of paperwork done. It may be a good idea to start 2 or 3 hours before you have an appointment somewhere. Set yourself a goal to get THIS pile done before you leave, go to bed or some other time restriction you give yourself.
- **FINAL POINT:** – **If you leave paperwork to the last minute** – it will most certainly become too much and you will definitely end up throwing out things you should have kept and keep a lot of stuff you have to throw out later.

## Slide 12

### Decluttering Your Paperwork:

#### The Paperless Home:

- **Advantages** –
  - The number ONE advantage to going paperless when you are downsizing is the obvious one, namely that you will have less stuff to deal with during and after you move. But there may be other plusses that you possibly haven't considered yet.
  - What about the fact that if you store your documents and photos online you will be able to access them anywhere in the world. So you can have a scan of your passport, drivers license, airline tickets, passwords, friends and family names and addresses and all sorts of other important documents stored in a secure directory online.
  - Another tick for the paperless system is that e-books are a lot cheaper and easier to download, even borrowing from the library is simpler because you don't actually have to get in your car and drive there to pick up your book loans, you simply download them.
  - Of course your photos, important papers and documents can't be lost in a fire or flood if they are stored in the cloud.
  - Even if you still want your telephone bills from the 1980's you can have them. Simply scan and store, then throw out the originals.
  - With an app like Microsoft's free Office Lens, you can turn a photo taken with your smartphone or tablet camera into text. That makes documents even easier to store and you can do a word search for the content. You could keep every receipt you ever got safe and secure if you wanted to.
  - You will reduce your carbon footprint by going paperless, that may or may not be important to you

- **Disadvantages –**
  - Naturally all the time, effort and energy, both yours and your electricity supply will be taxing for some time.
  - You will need to buy a decent scanner and, if you don't have one, a computer to transfer the scanned documents to.
  - Another disadvantage is that you are then dependent on technology, the internet and the vagaries of your devices.
  - Screen time will naturally increase, especially when you change your printed books for e-books.
  - Dependence on electricity is also a potential hazard because if the power is out, so are you.
  - Security is another issue, and this is one to take very seriously. You will need to update your security systems and backups regularly.
  - If you back up to a physical hard drive of course you have the problem of having to retain some way of accessing it. For example, say you bought a Terrabyte hard drive and backed up EVERYTHING to that drive. Then you decided to get rid of your computer and only use a smartphone or tablet. Now you have no way of accessing all that stuff you backed up. So updating your devices also need to be carefully considered.
- **What Should Go Paperless –** We've already covered some of them, but here are some general guidelines. Everything you want to keep but don't have room for in your new home. For example, you can scan your favourite recipe books, but most people would prefer just to scan their favourite recipes and then get rid of the book. Also remember that you have the option of looking online for almost any recipe you can imagine and then more. Scan ALL your paperwork, even the ones you intend to keep in paper form.
- **Which Originals to Keep –**
  - Birth and death certificates
  - Medicare cards & Driver's license
  - Tax records (for FIVE years) or go to e-Tax
  - Pension and Superannuation documents
  - ID cards and passports
  - Marriage license
  - Business license
  - Any insurance policy (good to keep even if they have a digital copy in case problems come up)
  - Wills, living wills, and powers of attorney
  - Vehicle titles and loan documents
  - House deeds and mortgage documents
- **FINAL POINT:** – So well before the next time your grandchild, your pet, or mother nature decides to play with your paperwork, scan it and your problems will be halved.

## Slide 13

### Decluttering Your Paperwork:

#### Photos:

- **Advantages of Scanning –** Next week Greg will bring in a scanner and show you how to scan photos if you've never done it before. This week, because this is planning week, we discuss what your rewards are for the mammoth effort it will take you to get this labour of love done. Photos

are among the most precious things most people have, and if you don't have the negatives then the print is often the only record you have. When asked, most people say that in an emergency evacuation, the next thing they would save after their family and pets, would be their photos.

- Well, right there is advantage number one. If you had them all digitised, it wouldn't be such a great loss after all.
  - You can have digitised pictures re-printed if you wanted physical copies.
  - Scanned photos are easier to put into folders and albums easier than their physical counterparts, you simply drag and drop or copy and paste.
  - You can touch up scanned photos that are faded, yellowed and even damaged if you want to.
  - You can send a scanned photo by email, post it on social media and have it turned into part of a personalised photobook to give as a gift.
  - You can even create your own life history using your digitised photos and turning them into a video to be used at a special Birthday or even your eulogy.
- **What to do with Originals** – For those of you with no offspring or family to leave photos to, there are not many reasons to keep old photos. Even digitising them may simply be a waste of your valuable time if nobody is ever going to look at them. But most people have family, friends and especially grandchildren. They may well become interested in your photos and this makes it worth every second to leave them something to look at. If you leave them lying in unmarked, un-sorted and unexplained boxes you might as well toss them in the rubbish now. They won't mean a thing to anyone who isn't in them. One thoughtful way to deal with originals is, after scanning them you could give or mail your originals to those people to whom they mean something. Pictures of places could go to historical societies and photos of pets could go to family members for whom the pet was precious. Everybody wins.
  
  - **Where to store Digital Photos** – Having done all the hard work of scanning, naming and categorising your newly digital photos, you now need to decide where to keep all those little pixels. Cloud storage is the obvious place and there are lots of options. For example, Flickr allows you to store a huge one Terabyte
  
  - of data for free. Other cloud storage services make you pay after 10 gigabytes. Now there's nothing wrong with paying for storage, but it may be worth checking out all the options before making a decision. You may even opt for a series of options. If you don't like the idea of online storage, then another option to store your digitised photos, videos and documents is on a removable hard drive or a series of USB memory sticks. You can put these in a safe place where nobody but you can access them, or duplicate the whole device and give the copy to a trusted person.
  
  - **Keeping Digital Photo Albums Tidy** – There are lots of programs and apps to help you keep your photos, documents and videos tidy, easy to find and ready to be looked at all over again. You could use Google Photos with their face recognition which seems to be able to find the same face in every photo taken between the cradle and the grave! You can also file by month, year, event, particular person or animal. The important thing is to work out a functioning system for you, and to stick to that method throughout the digitising process. Look up how other people do it by doing a Google search on the subject. There are programs and apps to help you with the process, but you need to understand how it all works, it's your stuff so file it in ways that are helpful to you.

- **FINAL POINT:** – Remember some of these? What would you do with a 3” floppy disc today. Always remember that physical devices can fail, or as I mentioned previously, you may update your technology and leave yourself with nowhere to plug it into.

## Slide 14

### Decluttering Your Paperwork:

#### eBooks:

- **Advantages of eBooks:** – There are lots of reasons to go to eBooks, and lots of reasons why people want to hang on to their physical books. Here are just a few other good reasons to go paperless.
  - Number one on the list is the obvious one since we are talking about your downsizing plan, you won't have to sort through, pack, preserve, unpack and find a place for 30 boxes of books. All the books you want will be on one device and that doesn't weigh much.
  - Here are some more less obvious reasons: eBooks cost less to buy than paper books because they don't have to go through the publishing stages, and you get them instantly without having to leave your armchair.
  - You can borrow eBooks from the library without having to go to the physical library
  - eBooks save trees, don't go mouldy or dog-eared.
  - On most e-Readers you can make margin notes and highlight passages you want to revisit, and then remove them again later.
  - Lots of eBooks come with links to further reading on the internet. You just have to click on the link to go wherever the link takes you.
- **What to do with physical books:** – So, say you have decided to buy an e-Reader, and you are looking at the shelves of books that you will never read again, but they are still there, sitting on your shelves looking placidly back at you as a constant reminder. What a waste it seems! Just throwing away all that money you've spent over the years collecting up those books. Nobody wants them, right? Wrong, there are things you can do besides taking them down to Kimbriki for recycling (Though that is probably the only option if your books are torn, mouldy, in a foreign language or marked with notes and highlighters.) Here are some suggestions:
  - Give them to family and friends. You could do this while having a bit of fun throwing a book party. You just invite people you care about and let them go through all the books you've decided to part with and take them home.
  - If you have lots of popular authors, you can sell them on eBay or Gumtree as a job lot.
  - If you are craft oriented, you can even turn your books into artworks, simply look up “What to do with old books” on Google and you will find a stunning array of ways people have turned old books into beautiful artworks and useful other items. I even saw a jewellery box made from an old book.
  - I found a really interesting article on ways to let books out of your life physically and emotionally and the link is in the Useful Links part of these notes.
  - Remember, the point of culling your book collection is to make yourself happier. If you're making yourself miserable getting rid of books, accept that sticking with your book hoarding ways is the better choice for you
- **Keeping special books:** – There will probably be several books you will want to keep no matter how small your new environment will be. Be sure to keep them in mind when choosing a home and planning where they will be placed. Will you need to buy or retain a bookshelf, how many can you keep? To whom will you leave them?

- **eBook readers:** – Consider the cost of an e-Reader compared to buying physical books over time. I looked up the most expensive e-Reader I could find, which was the Kindle Oasis priced at \$450 and the cheapest one, the Kobo Glo at \$100.00. If you take one in the middle priced at say \$225.00 then your e-Reader will have paid for itself if you bought just 9 x \$25.00 printed books
- **FINAL POINT:** – Do promise yourself that you will take a good, hard look at your books. How attached are you really? Will you really re-read them? Will you pass them on as heritage items to your grandchildren or are you simply putting off letting them go? So, they did cost you money, but that was then, won't they cost you even more if you keep them? After all, as mentioned before, you will have to get boxes to put them in, pack them, tape them up, label them, then move or have them moved, then find a place for them in your new place or in storage, then build or obtain new book cases, then unpack them and finally dispose of the boxes. Think about that before you decide just to keep them.

## Slide 15

### Decluttering Your Paperwork:

#### Letters & Cards:

- **Keep or Not to Keep:** – Here are some valid ways to check with yourself that you really need to keep letters written to you before the days of email and the internet.
  - Ask yourself: Are keeping these objects because they prove that someone cared enough to write to you back then? Remember this, they wrote a letter because there was no other choice back then. Then ask yourself if that person would still care about you if you let their letters go? The answer is, for a start they would never know that you even kept their correspondence, let alone agonising over whether to keep it.
  - Of course there may well be some letters, like love letters from your life partner, that you may well want to keep. These can be turned into all sorts of loving, but useful memorials, like putting them under a sheet of coffee table glass, rolling them up like scrolls tied with ribbon and placed in a display glass dome or vase, framing the best ones or putting them in a binder for future generations to read.
- **What to do with Originals You Don't want to Keep:** – If you have kept correspondence and good wishes from other people in plastic bags with the year written on the front, tied letters in red ribbons, or simply plonked in a box for umpteen years, and you are still reluctant to part with them, here are some wonderful ideas to keep them sacred while not actually storing them.
  - Sort them by who wrote the letters and cards, buy a pretty folder, box or other attractive binder in date order and mail or give the letters back to the original writer. (thought it may be a good idea to find out if they actually want them back)
  - A similar but more space efficient way to do the same as above is to scan the letters, turn them into a PDF (Portable Document Format) and email them to the original writer, then destroy the originals.
  - Yet another way to digitise those letters and cards is to photograph them and catalogue them on your computer or cloud storage.
- **Turning Letters into Biographies:** – Here is another wonderful way to keep the memories, but not the paperwork. Obviously you have to really like the person you are doing this for and be aware that it will take a long time, but if you love writing then why not read your old letters and type up a list of things that happened along with the dates from the letters. That will give you the bare bones of a great life story that you could put together for a precious person in your life. Fill in the

details in your own or their own words and you could even illustrate it with any photos they may have included with their letters. Then lovingly let the originals slip into the round filing cabinet on the floor and know that you have honoured someone dear to you.

- **Scanning to OCR:** – OCR means Optical Character Recognition. It means that you scan a page of text (it doesn't do hand written as well as it does typed text) and turn it into words rather than a picture. Greg will be doing a demonstration of scanning next week when we get into the practicalities of downsizing, but in the meantime, consider it a valid way to preserve paper objects that are dear to you. It may take a long time to do, but aren't your beloved correspondents' worth the effort? If the answer is no, then by all means throw the correspondence out.
- **FINAL POINT:** – The best way to decide if you want to keep any object, including old letters and cards, is to hold one in your hands, find out how you feel about each one at that moment and then do what you feel is best. Remember, filing stuff in your memory is just as valid as keeping it in a box and then having to find a physical place for it to live.

## Slide 16

### Decluttering Your Old Technology:

#### Film & Video & Audio Tapes and Slides:

- **Keep or Not to Keep** – The important thing to consider when deciding whether to keep old film reels, video tapes, audio tapes and slides is to ask yourself if you also want to keep the equipment on which to show them. The decision may well already have been made because a piece of that equipment has broken and you have no way of showing them anyway. Obviously you will want to keep it all if you have an interest in old technology and know how to fix it when it goes wrong, or you want to show the grandkids how it all used to be, but otherwise why keep it? If you still want the movies then you can have them digitised (or do it yourself if you have the conversion equipment).
- **What to do with Originals** – Unless you want to pass all your equipment to your offspring or a museum, then the only logical thing to do is to dispose of it before you move. Don't leave this sort of thing until the last minute before you leave, it should be decided during the cataloguing phase of your downsize. Unfortunately, the tape component of video and audio tapes are not recyclable, but the cases are. So if you're willing to pull them apart, do so, otherwise you have to put them in the non-recycling rubbish.
- **Turning Videos & Slides into stories** – Once you have had all your old media digitised you can breathe new life into it in oh so many ways. You can create your own movies on a variety of apps or programs available on the internet. You can mix the old cine movies up with the slides and stuff you shot on your video equipment, old scanned photos and even add in the newer ones from your phone camera and video. You could create your whole life story or someone else's. You are no longer constrained to the type of media or equipment it was captured on, so let your imagination run wild and make something special or simply store them all for a future generation to marvel at.
- **Uploading and Sharing Your Videos** – Once you have done hours of work on making something special out of all your digitised media, why not consider sharing it with others? You can do this on YouTube and then set the privacy settings to restrict who gets to see your movies or let the whole world in to look. It could be that you only want to give one person access and that's OK too. It's all free and providing it doesn't have any really naughty bits it will just stay there until you take it down.

- **FINAL POINT:** – It does seem wasteful to throw away your old technology, and truth be told, there isn't much that is recyclable, and you can break it down to its recyclable components, but the fact is that we all leave our footprint on this planet, it's the price we pay for living here.

## Slide 17

### Decluttering The Rest of Your Home:

#### Room By Room Planning:

- **Kitchen** – Ask the three questions, Do I use it? Do I like it? Do I want it? Rinse and repeat for everything you pick up. Here are the top 8 tips for downsizing your kitchen:
  1. Get rid of multiples, but keep the best. Look at your salad tossers, platters, mixing bowls and baking trays & pans. Figure out how many you will need and give away or sell the rest.
  2. Forget about "everyday" vs. "good." At this stage of life it really doesn't pay to keep anything for "best"
  3. Consider your single-use gadgets – Take a good, hard look at those egg poachers, garlic peelers and Jaffle irons. Do you really want them in your new, perhaps tiny kitchen?
  4. Add more multi-use appliances – Downsizing isn't all about throwing away, it's also about intelligent replacing. Perhaps considering trendy stemless wine glasses for water and all other cold liquids will work better than 3 sets of specific use glasses.
  5. Cut down on appliances – Will you still need or have room for a side-by-side fridge freezer? Will you still use a dishwasher? Can you make do with a food processor rather than a juicer, blender and mixer
  6. Consider Vertical Storage – If you use magnetic knife blocks and rails with hooks to hang large items like your whisk, ladle and egg flipper.
  7. Consider your Pantry – You can do a stocktake of spice racks, packaged food, flour, dried fruits and get rid of everything that is out of date and taking up space.
  8. Your Jar and Container collections – How many empty jam or vegemite jars do you need? Donate them to the recycle bin and then, if you still need one or two, keep just them.

Even if you just look but don't actually do all these things your downsize will be all the easier for having made all these choices ahead of the actual move.

- **Bedroom** – Charity shops are reluctant to take mattresses, but bed frames are welcomed in the larger shops. If you opt for a new bed on a frame rather than a double base, you'll have some extra sneaky storage space in your new place. Bunnings sell some very nice, under-the-bed storage boxes on wheels for easy retrieval.
- **Bathroom** – Take a look through your medicine cabinet and drawers and throw out all expired medicines, tubes of ointment and old makeup. Don't forget to take old medications to a pharmacy so they don't end up in land fill or the water table.
- **Lounge** – Make your decision about your furniture by carefully considering if it will fit into your new lifestyle and space.
- **FINAL POINT:** – Even if you've already forgotten everything we've said in this past two hours, please remember this one old adage, Failing to plan is planning to fail.

## Useful Links

- Developing the Moving Mindset <http://blog.jacobsonrealty1.com/uncategorized/need-move-move-mindset.html> and <http://www.relaxandmove.com/moving-house-stress-management-guide/>
- ListNote Speech-To-Text App
- Home moving planners <http://www.relaxandmove.com/moving-house-stress-management-guide/>
- Sonos <http://www.sonos.com/en-au/home>
- Bose [https://www.bose.com.au/en\\_au/index.html](https://www.bose.com.au/en_au/index.html)
- Cloud Storage Comparison & pricing <https://www.cloudwards.net/comparison/>
- Flickr provides 1 Terabyte of space for FREE <https://www.flickr.com/>
- Becoming Minimalist: Ways to allow yourself to let go of your books <http://www.becomingminimalist.com/breaking-the-sentimental-attachment-to-books/>
- How to choose a scanner <https://www.choice.com.au/electronics-and-technology/computers/scanners-and-printers/buying-guides/scanners>
- Best e-Readers review <http://www.techradar.com/news/portable-devices/portable-media/10-best-ebook-readers-for-the-uk-1292130>

## Useful Apps:

- Zedge – To get interesting alarm and ringtones to inspire you. Select “Notifications” to change alarm sounds.
- Microsoft Office Lens – Free app that lets you take photos of receipts and documents and they look scanned. Also creates PDF (Portable Document Files).
- Photo Transfer App – Allows the transfer of photos from one device via WiFi.
- ListNote Speech-To-Text App – Creates lists, ideal to list all your belongings when doing an assessment of your home’s contents.
- Borrow Box – App used by Mona Vale Library to download library loans.