

# Breaking up is hard to do

Collette Mann banks on financial freedom – but she'd prefer it without the paperwork

**S**tart singing the national anthem and get the big gold medal ready, because I have just completed a backward somersault triple pike dive with a 10.1 degree of difficulty!

Don't panic – it wasn't performed in water and you don't have to see my ample frame squeezed into a slinky Speedo swimsuit. No, my fantastic feat was of the financial variety. Yes folks, I have successfully liberated myself from the shackles of a major bank! Ooh, I can hear you murmur. It was one of the hardest manoeuvres I have ever had to accomplish – and that includes giving birth to Sam, with sky-high blood pressure levels and suffering from toxæmia and pre-eclampsia as an elderly primagravida (read: "old first mother").

This bank battle was way harder and took way longer. You see, earlier this year I sold my house with a very long settlement period. I negotiated to obtain the deposit

early so that I could pay off the mortgage and an accompanying business loan. Sounds easy, hey? With internet and phone banking these days, it should be a piece of cake, right? Well, no!

Firstly, I visited my local branch and filled out enough paper forms to deforest an average-sized Third World jungle. Then I calculated and repaid the interest accrued, argued and finally won the hidden doozy of "discharge fees" and was sent on my way with the friendly bank-speak assurance that "all was in hand". Faster than a *MasterChef* pressure test, the appropriate amounts were ripped out of my temporarily flush account. It happened literally overnight – I had been moderately rich for exactly 36 hours!

So, of course, I wanted my prize: the Certificate of Title. I wanted to hold that aged piece of parchment in my hot little hands for just a few months until settlement and feel really successful, important and independent. Well, it appears that even

though it only takes the push of a button – by, some would say, a mindless minion – to take my money out and place it securely back into the bank's coffers, it takes six to eight weeks to "process the paperwork".

So what has followed is an ongoing argy-bargy between the so-called "business centre" of my bank and me. The "in-betweeners" at my local branch have taken to hiding under their desks when I walk in. Apart from the various phone calls from various business bankers from various banking departments requesting extra pieces of endangered forest paper to be "initialled" since the initial signing, and then the re-signing of the "initialled" signatures, it has all gone swimmingly. Not!

Every time I thought I was done, there would be another hitch! Another department required another piece



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## Building Prosperity

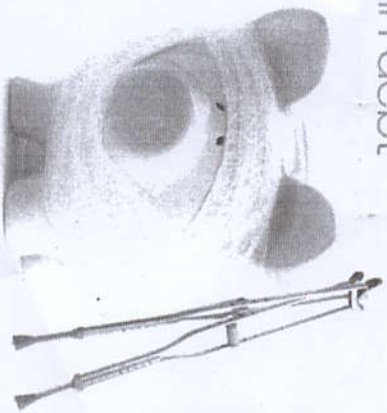


of paper... and all of this paper procrastination while they were holding all my money, I realised, in a moment of excruciating enlightenment, that the banks want us to be in debt. We are no good to them at all if we have money. We are only good to them if they lend us their money!

The final straw was the matter of who would discharge the Certificate of Title at the Titles office. The bank was happy to do it for me - for a fee of \$230! I declined, ever so sweetly, saying I was more than happy to do it myself. I did that today and it cost \$4 in parking and half an hour of my time. Not to mention a trip to David Jones' and Myer's cosmetic counters for a little browse and purchase with the money I saved. After all, I was in the area.

**Next week: Roland Rocchiccioli**  
*Bravos, boos, and air kisses welcome.*  
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