

“Alas, poor Yorick! I knew him, Horatio.”

Before you get on the phone and berate me for misquoting the Bard of Avon, you had better read *Hamlet* again. We are so accustomed to hearing "Alas, poor Yorick! I knew him well", that we accept without question that this was what Shakespeare actually wrote.

It was not --- but that is not really the topic of this **RAAS Report**, so I will keep my discussion of the repetition of falsehoods (to the point of their acceptance as truth) for another day.

Many sad things have happened in the last few weeks, and your **RAAS Report** correspondent has been forced to give thought to his mortality --- thus, my reflections on Hamlet and the skull of Yorick.

Shakespearean scholars will tell you that the famous speech is a meditation on the "fragility of life".

The sudden passing of Steve Irwin and Peter Brock has rammed the "fragility of life" down the throats of most Australians in such an effective way that even an old cynic like me shed a silent tear as I watched the televised memorial service from Australia Zoo.

How can someone who spent his life wrestling crocodiles and looking cobras in the eye die freakishly, snorkeling on the Reef; how can someone who spent his whole life at "ten-tenths" --- sideways in a Holden at 250 km/h --- die against a tree in a friendly family motor rally? Shakespeare could have written a whole new tragedy about either tale!

Then, just as I had come to grips with the passing of Steve and Peter, I was told that Dennis Ivers had died unexpectedly. Dennis didn't wrestle crocodiles and he didn't drive over the Mountain at 200 km/h, but he was a great friend of the Management Rights industry, and many people reading this will remember him with great fondness. Dennis was one of the pre-eminent Management Rights accountants --- for many years associated with Archer Gowland --- more recently with his own firm.

Dennis was tall, distinguished, always well dressed and looked like --- (how can I say this) --- an accountant! I can remember telling prospective customers that if they were looking for some "creative" accounting cowboy who was willing to bend every tax law in the book, don't go to Dennis. But, if they were looking for good advice on how to structure their Management Rights investment, or an accountant to verify the Nett Profit, this quiet gentleman was their man!

Vale, Dennis! The industry is poorer for your passing.

So where does this leave us? We are still here!

What have we done as prudent business people to protect our businesses and our families in the event of our unexpected demise?

Do you have a valid will? Do you know where it is kept? Is it the old will you made years ago, when you were not as "asset-rich"

as you are today? Should it be up-dated? Have you re-married? Does your old will still name your previous partner as your beneficiary?

How is your business structured with reference to the licencing requirements of the Office of Fair Trading? If you are the only person in the partnership or company who has qualified for, and holds, a licence --- what will happen to your partner (and business) if you were suddenly removed from the scene.

I recently was involved in a situation where a friend's daughter died unexpectedly, at a comparatively young age and without a will. The dead hand of Government appeared in the form of The Public Curator to take over all aspects of the deceased's estate. Believe you me, if you value your life's work, get your will up to date and make sure if you have substantial assets, you seek professional legal advice in its preparation. Challenging the wills of wealthy people has become an art form, and as usual, it will be the lawyers who inherit the bulk of your hard-earned estate if you stuff it up!

Enough of all these depressing thoughts! The sun is shining, Spring is in the air, and Summer is just round the corner. May there be many more for all of you!

If you would like to comment on anything you have read in The RAAS Report please write to us at PO Box 1325 Sunnybank Hills Q 4109 or send an email to mike@raas.com.au.



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