

► **CASE STUDY 2**

All the right moves

ROB AND JAN BURDON are retired now, living comfortably in Port Macquarie. They're smart people who have always known the importance of putting money to one side. "We were always conscious that you need to try to save something," Jan says. But like all of us, their financial roadmap has had to change over the years.

Rob worked for Qantas in Sydney for 26 years; during that time, financial planning was fairly straightforward. Qantas had a good superannuation scheme and allowed its employees to make the best of it. "Sometimes, if he got a small raise instead of taking it in his pay packet he would put it into super," Jan says. She left the workforce for some time, not returning until the youngest of her three children was 14. Even so they put money aside where they could.

So far so good. But then change started to come to Qantas and the airline offered voluntary packages for redundancy; Rob opted to take one and to retire. It's one of those pivotal moments that changes the way your life will go and the way your finances will evolve and this was when Jan and Rob first took financial advice. "My husband's question was, 'If I take this early retirement, do I have to go back to work or live on what I've got?'" Jan recalls. "They [the planners] said, 'Yes, you can live on what you have'. So he stayed at home for maybe a year – I was working and earning good money – but then Ansett came looking for him and he worked for them, and then the NRMA. It was a matter of something to do."

Along the way in Sydney they had saved enough outside of super to buy two investment properties, sometimes allowing their three daughters to live in them and subsidising the rent as they got their own lives under way. This, too, is a life stage that changes the family economics for many of us:

children finishing education, leaving home, but perhaps needing help to get started in an entry-level job in an expensive city.

The next big change came with semi-retirement, when the two moved to Port Macquarie. They sold the Sydney properties in 2000 – "I wasn't comfortable with having property there and not being able to keep an eye on it," Jan says – and bought an investment property on the coast. They did some casual work for a time but options were limited and they decided to retire completely. They sold the investment property, turned the money over to their new financial adviser, Port Macquarie-based Julie Berry, bought a caravan and hit the road. "We travel four or five months a year with the van," Jan says.

They have now both reached the age where they can access their superannuation (Jan is 69, Rob 67). They place a lot of trust in their adviser. "She changes things for us as she thinks necessary and notifies us," Jan says.

Life is pretty good for Jan and Rob: two of their three daughters and their families have moved to Port Macquarie and the third on Queensland's Sunshine Coast. "I think we'll be all right," Jan says. "I don't think we would go for a holiday on the Queen Mary, but being able to have time away in the caravan, and knowing we've been able to help our children along the way, we're reasonably comfortable."

So what's the secret of navigating the different things that life throws at you? "Start saving when you're young," Jan says. "It doesn't matter if it's only a couple of dollars a week set aside: it's growing and compounding." And encouragingly, she thinks she's passed some of this onto the next generation, too. "Our eldest daughter has wiped the floor with us with what she's saved."



A comfortable life: Rob and Jan Burdon started early to save for a happy future in retirement.