

For richer or poorer

Marriage can lead to couples pooling risks as well as assets, writes **Alex Tilbury**

ACHIEVING financial harmony is all about clear communication for Brisbane couple Simone James and Scott Cooper.

When the pair marry on Mt Tamborine in October they'll not only join their own lives but their children's, Caitlin and Zander from previous relationships, and Scott's business, which imports V8 performance car racing parts.

Simone is in the process of selling her Paddington home, while Scott will rent his place at Oxenford, so they can buy together at Ashgrove.

Theirs is a sweet story as they actually met as teenagers and then bumped into each other last year through a mutual friend.

"When you enter a relationship at a more mature age you have got more assets and there's more at risk," says Simone, 36, a retail marketer with Jones Lang La Salle, who was previously married for 10 years.

"But I am wiser for all my life experiences and I've entered this relationship a bit more mature. We have always been open and discussed our financial situations very thoroughly."



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SHARING everything ... Simone James and Scott Cooper have merged lives and business.

Picture: Kevin Bull

Scott feels a great deal of responsibility resting on his shoulders through his impending marriage and as a self-employed businessman.

"I drive a nice car and pay all my bills but I feel very strongly for everyone and I have to make sure the wheels keep turning not just for me but for everyone else," says Scott, who owns Quantum Racing Industries at Woodridge with his partner Jason Bonney.

"I treat my business very personally and if my business owes people money, I owe them money. I don't differentiate and don't hesitate to break out a credit card if I have to. Other companies don't see it that way.

"The biggest thing that weighs on me with Simone is that she's selling her house

and of course, she wants to protect what she has but she doesn't of course want to appear nasty about it. So there was a bit of a Mexican standoff.

"Also to be fair to my business partner I have to protect what I've got too and I didn't want Simone to have to be involved in my business liabilities but it cannot be avoided."

Linking yourself, your finances and your future with someone else can be one of the hardest issues for a couple to deal with.

Finding a soul mate is one thing but getting joined at the hip pocket can sometimes mean stress, rows or resentment.

This Thursday financial planner, author, mum, wife and Money Mum blogger Justine Davis will present a seminar in Brisbane on

this very topic. Her latest book *How to Afford A Husband* discusses what happens if he is happy to spend every last cent in your joint account and you get nervous if there is only \$2000 in there.

The seminar, hosted by Brisbane networking group Girls Learning About Money, will provide practical tips for those in relationships as well as for singles.

You'll get some suggestions on how to run your daily finances more successfully as a couple and enable you to make big picture financial decisions with confidence.

GLAM
Thursday, April 2 at 5:45pm
Suncorp Centre, 36 Wickham Tce. Entry \$30.
Visit: www.girlslearningaboutmoney.com.au