

It's our services that make us unique

PROGRESSIVE
STRATA
SERVICES
PTY LTD

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As we approach the end of the year and we start to wish each other peace and prosperity for the year ahead, it is an appropriate time to review what owners can do to help enjoy peace and prosperity in their schemes.

Harmony in schemes, or the lack thereof, is something that people will often look at when considering the purchase of a strata title property. It is more likely people will look to buy into a scheme that is harmonious, and not choose it just because it overlooks a park or is in a quiet street etc!

What can you do to improve how harmonious your scheme is?

A scheme will more likely be successful if the Executive Committee and managing agent have a good shared understanding of the various objectives of the Owners as a group. It is easier to manage a scheme when everyone is focused on the same issues.

It helps if all owners attend their Annual General Meeting (AGM), where the Owners determine what the levies will be for the year ahead (assuming there are no surprises – like a fire order). It is at this time you should review what work will be needed maintain the property in the short and medium term. How well do you want your building to be maintained? The timing of funds controls when work can be done. The structure of the two funds determined at the AGM per the legislation is as follows:

- administration fund budgets cover the known and expected day to day expenses the scheme has, such as cleaning, lift and garden maintenance, fire equipment inspections, small repairs, insurances, the strata manager fees and so on. The majority of the levies paid go towards these costs as they are constantly recurring.
- sinking fund budgets, are for longer term costs such as replacement of downpipes, re-wiring the common areas, internal and external painting, new roof and so on. Hence, while these items of expense are huge when they fall due, you generally have several years to save up between each replacement item and so the sinking fund portion of your levy is smaller, compared to that of the administration fund.

Remember that raising a certain amount for a project via the annual budget, will come in each quarter and so will take a full year to see all the required funds build up in the scheme's account. So before attending the AGM consider what input you wish to have at the meeting regarding maintaining the property in the manner you want to see it in 12 months to 2 years time, so it can be budgeted for and achieved in that time.

Another consideration is that greater harmony will be achieved where each apartment is maintained at a similar standard. Rental levels will be more consistent and the tenants will have similar expectations.

You also need to consider the social aspects of the scheme. Individual owners will have different expectations in this area, as happens in most communities. The challenge is to encourage each owner to explain their view and listen to and try to understand others' objectives. The more the owners have in common, the easier it is to manage the scheme's affairs and there will be far fewer disputes.

We hope that this information assists you in understanding what you can do to help achieve your objectives and those of your fellow owners, so that you may live harmoniously together in 2011

Security over the break

Some handy hints to improve the odds that your property will be secure over the holiday break. Thieves look for opportunities while people are away.

- Lock up effects like bikes, surfboards etc, ie don't leave them on the common property or where they are highly visible.
- Never buzz in strangers to the building, even if they seem trustworthy.
- Never leave balcony doors unlocked, even in the warmer weather.
- Ensure fire exit doors close after use - these provide easy access to people to get into a building.
- Mark your property with your drivers license, so if stolen, the owner can be easily identified if the item is recovered by the police.
- Change your home message service to say you can't come to the phone right now. Do not say you are away.

Christmas/New Year arrangements

We will close at 3pm on 22 December and reopen 9am on 10 January 2011.

Our emergency service operators will be working during this time, 24/7 to attend to **URGENT** repairs, **ie if the problem is not rectified within a few hours there will be damage/injury to person or property, so call them on 0417 251 311** at any time.

They do not have access to your files, our computer system to look up levies etc, nor the authority to arrange ordinary repairs eg cleaning gutters, rectifying a TV antenna. **They can only arrange urgent repairs, with our usual contractors.**

Should you have any queries regarding this service please call before 22 December.

Looking forward to 2011

We trust that both the newsletters and talks which we introduced as new services in 2010 has been beneficial to you and your scheme and we look forward to servicing you in this manner in 2011. If you wish to suggest a subject for a newsletter, please email karina@prostrata.com.au